

Honi Soit.

WEEK 10, SEM 2 2022

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY - FREE STUDENT NEWSPAPER - NEWS, CULTURE & ANALYSIS

Est. 1929



Five years on and sexual assault persists on campus. What now?

When the results of the first Nationally coordinated survey on student safety became public in 2017, they confirmed what many on campus had long known: that our universities were complicit in the endemic sexual violence that pervades society. These findings and subsequent reporting uncovered a toxic culture of harassment in residential colleges, drawing the focus of a growing global movement against rape culture to our campus. Since then, the University of Sydney has commissioned

an investigation into the cultural failings of its colleges, known as the Broderick Report, committing fully to implementing its recommendations. Consent education made its way into high school curriculums and, more recently, into state legislation. Conversations around sex and sexual violence slowly became destigmatised, and the stories of those who have experienced harassment received public attention. Institutions were acknowledging their historical role as wilfully blind bystanders.

Christian Holman writes — continued on page 12.

Have we seen the last of Tropfest?

Adam Spencer could barely hear what Tropfest founder John Polson was saying, even as he sat merely a metre away. They were both cooped up in a dressing room in the lead up to the annual short film festival and the rain outside would not relent. Like many years previous, Spencer was due to host the world's largest short film festival in Sydney's Domain. Each year, thousands of sub-seven-minute films would be submitted in the hopes of becoming one of the 16 finalists shown on the night to a crowd of fans and a panel of celebrity judges.

Zander Czerwaniw investigates — page 8.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Honi Soit is published on the stolen land of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. Sovereignty was never ceded; the invasion of this land was, and still is, a process of immense violence, destruction, and theft.

The Editors of *Honi* acknowledge the suffering caused by ongoing colonial structures and commit to confronting the political, economic, legal and social systems which continue to oppress First Nations people.

As a collective, we acknowledge that we are each living, writing, and working on stolen Gadigal, Cammeraygal, Dharawal, and Darug land. Further, the university which we attend is an inherently colonial institution, one which upholds the systems of knowledge and power that have caused deep harm and pain on this continent.

As a student newspaper which operates and distributes within such an institution, we have a responsibility

to remain conscious of, and actively combat, complicity in colonisation.

It is important to recognise that First Nations people have, since 1788, resisted and survived colonial violence. Our newspaper needs to platform the voices of this ongoing resistance, truly valuing and heeding Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

Honi has stood on stolen land since its inception 93 years ago; embedded in the history of this paper is the tireless resistance to oppressive, colonial structures within society by First Nations writers, contributors and editors — it is our duty to uphold their legacy, champion their voices, and continue to fight for First Nations justice.

We pay our deepest respect to Elders both past and present, and extend that respect to all First Nations students, staff, and readers of *Honi Soit*.

Always was, and always will be Aboriginal land.

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Email us at editors@honisoit.com.

Scan the QR code to use our anonymous tip form.

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EDITORIAL

By Christian Holman.

Every week, when this paper finally comes together (and by some miracle it always does) a lucky editor gets their turn to write a foreword to all of the hard work that lies in the pages before you. Thoughtful, creative, and all-too-often thankless hard work contributed by many of our student artists and reporters, which any *Honi* edition would falter without.

To edit *Honi* is immense; not just the workload and sheer size of the paper's operations, but also the weight of its legacy. It's impossible to not feel a sense of reverence for an institution that has interrogated, stood up to, and even shaped power over time. To glance through its archives and find yourself familiar with the voices of those who, once students, now enjoy power is daunting.

We must disabuse ourselves of the notion that acting blind to this power this university represents is somehow a right and worthwhile practice of humility, because it is something we cannot ignore.

To acknowledge such a history is not to be so assuming as to suggest that one day we also will inherit influence by mere nature of attending this university, or even a university. We trust that society has moved beyond only pulling from such narrow corners of class and privilege.

Rather, it poses a valuable intellectual exercise, where we must ask ourselves: what does it mean to be seated at the head of the table, or even at the table? Leaving this institution with a moral education

rests on understanding our place in the world, and the service that follows.

Among the writings in this week's edition is the feature. This piece has been a long time coming and is of particular importance to me. The cause against harassment and sexual violence has benefited from the coverage, and consequent awareness, that has been built this past decade by hands with the courage to grapple with injustice, and demand it accountable.

The release of the 2017 and 2022 National Student Safety Surveys (NSSS) led to calls for change on our campus. You are heard, is what they were told. And so public attention journeyed onwards. What followed, however, was the intransigence of institutions washing their hands clean of cultures they oversee, allowing their ostensible values to be disfigured in turn by complacency.

And therein lies the theme of this edition, "The Follow Up", to reopen stories with loose endings. This is best found in action in Tropfest (pg 14), Executive's abuse of expenses (pg 8), Julian Assange (pg 15), Labor's promises on "The Age of Independence" (pg 5).

Honi by no means sets the agenda of the media or public discourse, but it does require us to formulate our own. I hope that this paper, like power — as uncomfortably as it may sit in your lap — encourages you to form your own conclusions about the time you live in, and any purpose that follows.

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Sex & the City Rd

Rude Girl laces her corset!

Put a horse-drawn carriage, four hundred USyd Law Whos, and a canyon of champagne in a cruise terminal, and what do you get? Something close to Law Ball 2022, Rude Girl thinks.

I hear that Saturday night was a snooze, with SULS' obvious splashing on the event (because what says SSAF fees at work more than white horses?) failing to make up for bad music and too many campus conservatives — Ben 'I Love Malcolm Turnbull' Hines, in a cringeworthy self-referential moment, even whipped out a megaphone during his speech to remind us that, apparently, 'these things are louder than microphones'.

But like any Regency party, amid the moneyed mediocrity floated rumours about power struggle — particularly for the upcoming SULS elections.

Mournfully, prez candidates have fallen from four to one, with Eden McSheffrey being stood down by Naz 'not Ben Hines' Sharifi two weeks ago. Rude Girl has heard whispers of one Michael 'Con Idpol' Kallidis running against the USU Board Director for the crown. Apparently, Kallidis has been offered Vice President for Social Justice on Sharifi's ticket in a potential attempt to prevent a contested election, but isn't too keen about it. Other ticket members are rumoured to be Julia Lim, Kaela Goldsmith, Nivedetha Sethumadhavan, and Yijun Cui as Execs, and Arasa Hardie as VP Ed Officer.

Sharifi sinking her claws into both USU

Board Director and SULS crowns would establish a pretty toxic pattern of USU and Law Society power overlap, initiated by Hines. Pick a struggle (CV stack)!

Rude Girl spent her Wednesday night doing what she does best — sipping red wine at the Royal Hotel. This week, she was rudely interrupted by Satvik 'USyd Rants top fan' Sharma.

"SHE'S A FAKE THATCHERITE!" Sharma shouted in Rude Girl's direction — I shouldn't have brought up politics at the dinner table. But rest assured, like clockwork, friend-of-the-newspaper Nick Comino disagreed: "Let me take this. Liz Truss is the embodiment of everything the Tories are at the moment."

Bored with discussing Milk Snatcher Thatcher, Rude Girl moved across the bar, where 'Tsar Perkins threw out a bold prediction for next year's SRC race: a four-way Prez shit-fight between SALT, the Libs, Groots and NLS. Rude Girl certainly hopes so.

Michael Spence Column for Disagreeing Well

Let them do coke

Fabian Robertson snorts.

It seems like it's every other week that a young Australian sportsperson faces vilification in the media for suspected drug use. The routine is well-rehearsed: a photo emerges of a prominent player on a night out with a bag; salacious journalists circle like jackals; law-abiding citizens



respond with outrage; the player apologises unreservedly and is suspended.

Although their careers may survive the media onslaught, public perception of that player is forever tarnished. Once-squeaky-clean individuals are now deemed undisciplined, untrustworthy, unethical. They have not only let down the teams that employ them, but the hordes of adoring fans that look up to them as role models — what they have done is irredeemable.

Well, frankly, I'm fucking sick of it.

Sportspeople, just like anyone else, should be able to do whatever they want in private (as long as it doesn't hurt anyone). The notion that players shouldn't do drugs because they are in the public eye is absurd — their pursuit of athletic endeavours should not condemn them to a higher code of conduct that precludes the use of recreational drugs.

The loudest critics of such players only do so due to a lack of exposure to the real world. What these individuals perhaps don't understand is that, on any given day, illicit substances are doing the rounds at pubs, clubs, house parties, and office buildings across Australia. Their presence is pervasive, inescapable, and largely harmless.

The pearl-clutching fuckwits at the throats of drug-taking sportspeople are in the same category of loser as Gladys Berejikian, who responded to heightened calls for pill-testing in 2019 off the back of an upbringing of not being invited to parties. Berejikian just could not conceive of having any tolerance for drug-taking — "I've never even taken a panadol," she once said.

Sadly, people like Berejikian have been socialised by Healthy Harold and crusty old lawmakers into responding to any mention of drugs with subconscious

alarm bells. Ding! Ding! Ding! Drugs = bad, and there's no way around it. This attitude contributes to regressive social discourse where sensible harm-reduction policies are undermined and public money is funnelled into inhumane over policing. Drug dogs patrol NSW venues, cops can strip festival goers naked looking for caps, and lives can be ruined over the justice system's response to largely innocuous recreational drug use.

What pisses me off so much about the journalists and citizens who hate on drug-taking sportspeople, then, is the fact that they only push society further away from where we need to go in terms of harm-reduction legislation. We need education, regulation, and radical overhauls of our current systems, and shitting on young sportspeople sharing a bag with their mates is not gonna help us get there. In summary: let them do coke.

Letters

Councillor of the City of Hobart, Will Coats:

Hi,

Thank you for publishing the article.

Just wanted to mention if you wanted to include in that 4 of the candidates (and two sitting councillors including me — number 117) actually took the effort to write a submission to the [University of Tasmania] enquiry. Jeff Briscoe is the other elected member.

Amazing how many are now running on a 'save the utas campus' run but didn't actually engage with the process...

Kind regards,

Will Coats – Councillor, City of Hobart



The Gig Guide

Tuesday 11th

Doltone House // SASS Annual Ball // 6:30pm

The Vanguard // Teresa Green // 8pm

Metro // Arrdee // 8pm

Cellar Theatre // SUDS' Machinal // 7pm

Wednesday 12th

The Landsdowne // UNI TUNES w/ Atari Y, Astral Juice, Before the King, Chuey, The Lenores, & Rozera // 7:30pm

Enmore Theatre // The Kooks w/ The Vanns // 9pm

Oxford Art Factory // Ben Camden // 9pm

Parramatta Lanes Night 1 // Daphne, Zhuli, Aless Arias, and more // 6pm

Cellar Theatre // SUDS' Machinal // 7pm

Thursday 13th

Cellar Theatre // SUDS' Machinal // 7pm

Oxford Art Factory // Mild Orange // 8pm

Factory Theatre // Big Scary // 8pm

Enmore Theatre // The Kooks w/

DM to be featured, Editor's Choice marked with

The Vanns // 9pm

Parramatta Lanes Night 2 // Basstraps, Prodikal-1, Liyah Knight, Iresh // 6pm

Friday 14th

Cellar Theatre // SUDS' Machinal // 7pm

The Vanguard // Sonny Grin // 7pm

The Lansdowne // Daily J // 7:30pm

Oxford Art Factory // Montaigne // 7:30pm

Waywards @ The Bank // Miramar // 8pm

Enmore Theatre// Passenger //

8:45pm

Bootleggers @ Kelly's on King // Lora Keet // 7pm

Parramatta Lanes Night 3 // Joseph Liddy and the Skeleton Horse, Mung Mung, Nicole Issa, & more // 6pm

Saturday 15th

Cellar Theatre // SUDS' Machinal // 7pm

Manning Bar // SOMEDAY SOON ft. Methyl Ethyl, Holy Holy, Ruby Fields, Middle Kids, Winston Surfshirt & more // 3pm — late

The Lansdowne // Leisure // 8:30pm

Vic on the Park // Rest for the

Wicked// 9pm

Sunday 16th

Metro Theatre // The Darkness // 7pm

The Vanguard // The Murmurs // 8pm

Upcoming

21 Oct // Manning Bar // Metal Gods with Ripper Owens & Simon Wright // 7pm

29 Oct // Poof Doof @ The Ivy // HalloQween // 10pm-5am

COMIC BY ZARA ZADRO

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SRC October Recap

Khanh Tran, Ellie Stephenson and Sam Randle.

In the penultimate SRC meeting of the year, dressed in a small sea of red following Socialist Alternative's election of a record 10 Councillors, New Law was packed with hacks from across the political spectrum to convene over issues affecting campus and the world.

Opposition to USyd's new Confirmation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identity Policy

Former Sydney University Law Society (SULS) First Nations Officer Ben McGrory proposed the motion, supported by SRC President Lauren Lancaster, responding to USyd's draft of a new admissions policy for incoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The new policy would require students to provide a Confirmation of Aboriginality rather than the current process, which requires students to sign a statutory declaration.

"Students are scared to come forward because they are afraid of losing their scholarships or their jobs because they may not have a Confirmation of Aboriginality," McGrory said.

A draft of the *Aboriginal and Torres*

Strait Islander Status Policy 2022 seen by Honi, represents a substantial revision of the 2015 Policy, which prescribes a much smaller number of procedures. Compared to the previous 2015 version, the proposed policy looks set to significantly increase the burden of proof of Indigenous status for prospective students.

One student, who wished to remain anonymous, told the Council that, "at the University, many times I have had my identity questioned not only by students but by staff."

"For other people to quantify our identity, the Elders that they had today, I do not think that's appropriate. They should not be able to tell me whether I'm Blak."

Citing USyd's abysmally low Indigenous admissions rate, among the lowest in the nation, postgraduate student Siupeli Haukoloa explained that the policy would worsen existing barriers for students who have been affected by the Stolen Generations and child removals, and therefore do not have access to confirmation of their Indigeneity from their community.

Support for Week 10's 48-hour strike

A pair of motions were moved regarding Week 10's impending two-day strike by

the USyd branch of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). SRC Education Officer Deaglan Godwin (SALT) led the discussion on the first motion.

"We're facing a totally intransigent management whose tactic has been to drag this on for as long as possible," Godwin said. "The University of Sydney sets the bar for the entire sector. If they give the union an inch, other workers will take a mile elsewhere [around the country]... That's why it's so important that we support the strike."

Fellow Education Officer and President-elect Lia Perkins supported the motion, citing significant cuts to FASS units between 2021 and 2022: "The Future FASS program and these other cost saving measures are pretty shameful. I think it's an important time to be escalating the student solidarity campaign."

Respectability politics = doomed

The Council moved to condemn the reverence and disproportioned grief surrounding Queen Elizabeth II's (QEII) demise, particularly in light of historic and ongoing violence against Indigenous communities in Australia.

SALT speaker Julius Wittfoth said of the

motion, "I think that it's very good that the Queen is dead, and we shouldn't have any problem with saying that it's good that the Queen is dead."

Julia Robins, Secretary to Council, broke her usual coat of impartiality to put a simple demand: "Bring on Irish Reunification."

Resistance against Iran's morality police

SRC Global Solidarity Officer Jasmine Al-Rawi introduced a motion standing in solidarity with Iranian women after the murder of 22 year-old Mahsa Amini by Iran's morality police.

Ella Haid, a first-year student and incoming Councillor of the 95th Council, spoke in support of the recent protests, particularly those at universities across the nation.

Haid implored Councillors to support Iranians' campaign to overthrow the Iranian government: "They are demanding death to the dictator and this is absolutely right."

Next month will see RepsElect on 19 October and the last Council meeting of the year prior to the incoming representatives' term.

More than 170 arts undergraduate units scrapped from 2021 handbook

Lia Perkins and Carmeli Argana.

A total of 175 undergraduate units in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) have been removed since 2021, according to a dataset seen by *Honi*.

The cuts have been spread across 39 subject areas, including coursework areas, such as the Education programs and the Politics and International Relations stream.

Languages and Education have suffered the most severe cuts, with the Faculty removing 30 language units and 21 education units since 2021.

This is followed by History (17), Politics and International Relations (16), and English (14).

Celtic Studies has been abolished altogether as a major, with remaining units only on offer as English electives.

The number of unit cuts in FASS is more than ten times the estimated amount the University provided in a press release at the start of the year, where they claimed that only one dozen units would be rested.

"175 FASS unit cuts represents the reprehensible tip of the iceberg of austerity at this university," SRC President Lauren Lancaster told *Honi*.

"While we experience the shrinking of degree diversity available to students, staff in these units are made redundant and laid off, while those who remain are overworked and underpaid," Lancaster said.

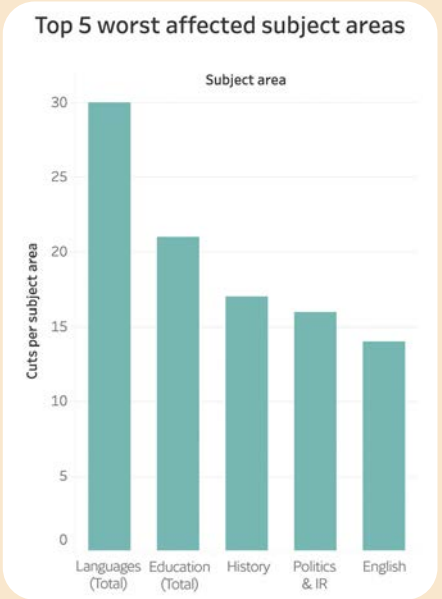
"It is this myopic idea of tertiary education that the NTEU [National Tertiary Education Union] and students are fighting against, which makes it important to join us on the pickets October 13-14 to yet again fight for a better future at USYD."

The data was retrieved by student Shane Areni, who scraped all the available units of study from the 2021 and 2022 Arts and Social Sciences (Undergraduate)

Handbooks, which are both accessible to students online.

Honi has also cross-checked each individual unit code to both the relevant handbooks and the University's website via its 'Find a unit outline' function as part of our efforts to fact-check the data.

The final figure does not include Open Learning Environment (OLE) units, Dalyell units, and cotaled units, none of which are listed in the handbooks from which the data was collected. It has also taken into account units that have been renamed or moved into different departments, particularly due to changes in the Bachelor of Education courses.



Last year, FASS attracted widespread criticism after leaked documents revealed that up to 250 undergraduate units and 240 postgraduate units were at risk of being axed.

The proposed cuts were part of an early version of the Faculty's controversial Future FASS plan, which initially proposed

to remove units that attracted fewer than 24 enrolments.

"These cuts are the result of changes to schools and departments in FASS that the Education Action Group fought last year," said SRC Education Officer Deaglan Godwin.

"They demonstrate that management will prioritise their bottom line, over the quality of our education," Godwin said.

Early Future FASS proposals also planned to dissolve the School of Literature, Arts and Media (SLAM) and the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry (SOPHI).

However, a highly successful Save the Arts campaign by students and staff resulted in the preservation of Gender and Cultural Studies, Theatre and Performance Studies and Studies in Religion.

Since the campaign, the University has begun implementing a reformed version of the Future FASS Plan, which has promised no departmental changes or staff redundancies, but has made no commitment to reducing its reliance on casual staff.

The cuts to units in FASS, which affect both students and staff, occur in the context of the University recording a \$1.04 billion surplus in 2021.

The NTEU is currently involved in negotiations with USyd management for better working conditions, including retaining the 40/40/20 teaching-research-administrative model, reversing the high rates of casualisation, and a real pay rise in line with the rate of inflation.

As part of their campaign, staff have gone on 24-hour and 48-hour strikes throughout the year, including setting up picket lines at entrances to the University.

In a statement to *Honi*, a University of Sydney spokesperson called the data

"inaccurate" and a "misrepresentation".

"The handbook is a static document, which is not searchable and does not provide accurate sessional data or indicate which units of study have been closed or added after the handbook deadline," the spokesperson said.

They also described the way the data had been grouped as "problematic", claiming that "even when it is analysed via the categories adopted, there is a net difference of just 16 units between 2021 and 2022".

"The majority of changes are accounted for by the rotation and retirement of units as well new degree structures (for example in Education) that have superseded those that were in place in 2021," they said.

In an additional statement, the spokesperson said: "Fundamentally, the method used to capture and assess this data was deeply flawed for a range of reasons that we explained to *Honi* prior to publication. Our own data confirms the reduction in the number of FASS units of study this year compared to last is 16."

It should be noted that the University has not provided a dataset that refutes the original figures, and therefore *Honi* has been unable to verify these claims.

"These units were carefully selected to remove duplication between disciplines and to produce a more consistent student experience. These units had historically low student enrolments and were not required for student progression or completions," the spokesperson said.

USyd staff will be going on strike for 48 hours on Thursday and Friday in Week 10, on 13 to 14 October after University management failed to concede on key demands.

NUS releases report on student poverty in Australia

Thomas Sargeant.

The National Union of Students (NUS), the peak representative and advocacy body for Australian tertiary students, released their report on student poverty in Australia on Wednesday last week. Prepared in partnership with the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), the report calls for the age of independence to access Centrelink to be lowered from 22 to 18, and for Youth Allowance to be raised above the poverty line to at least \$88 per day.

The NUS argues that "right now, the Australian Government's Centrelink system provides essential income support for people over 22, but is failing hundreds of thousands of 18 to 21 year-olds denied access to financial support. All young people should be able to study with a safety net to pay for rent, books, and food."

The report outlines the results of a survey of 673 current and former students impacted by the Centrelink Age of Independence rule and payment rates, and includes primary data from the Department of Education. All polling and research took place in 2022.

It builds on previous research and reports, including Universities Australia's 2018 Student Finances Survey which found that one in seven full-time domestic undergraduate students have regularly gone without food or other necessities due to a lack of finances. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, this proportion rises to one in four.

Impact of Student Poverty

The NUS report found that living in poverty had a wide range of profoundly negative effects on the lives of students. This includes an increase in housing instability, which exacerbates existing crises such as domestic violence.

Student poverty was also found to have a severe impact on risk of depression and psychological distress, which is particularly concerning given that cost of living pressures are currently the highest risk factor for suicide according to Suicide Prevention Australia.

Of students who were unable to access Youth Allowance, 60 per cent noted that it had a negative impact on their academic achievement, 35 per cent said that it impacted their job prospects, and 23 per cent had seen impacts on their physical health.

"The biggest barrier to higher education at the moment is this welfare system that doesn't support students," said NUS President Georgie Beatty.

The impact of student poverty intersects and compounds markedly with other forms of structural inequality and disadvantage.

The report finds that LGBTQIA+ students are disproportionately excluded from Youth Allowance, and that almost 45 per cent of surveyed students with a disability who applied for Youth Allowance were determined to be ineligible under current rules.

The Disability Support Pension (DSP) is currently higher than the maximum Youth Allowance payment (\$667 compared to \$530), and in most instances students are unable to qualify for the DSP if they study more than 30 hours per week. Consequently, the NUS' report finds that students with a disability are financially penalised for

studying a full-time course load.

13 per cent of surveyed students rejected from Youth Allowance also noted that it impacted their caring responsibilities, as they had lower financial security and were unable to dedicate as much time to care.

Of surveyed students, 30 per cent of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students were determined to be ineligible for Youth Allowance or ABSTUDY payments. This is particularly concerning given that Universities Australia's 2018 report found that almost 28 per cent of ATSI students had reduced their course load due to financial hardship, with 16 per cent deferring their studies entirely.

The impact of student poverty is additionally not fully captured by this report, as many prospective students choose not to attend University or TAFE at all due to the perception and realities of financial barriers to study.

Access to Youth Allowance

The main focus of the report is on the inaccessibility and inadequacy of Youth Allowance in assisting students to cover their cost of living.

The NUS found that the majority of Australian students aged 18-21 are excluded from Youth Allowance payments due to the age of independence being 22.

Youth Allowance and its predecessor, Austudy, was available to students over the age of 25 from 1997 to 2010, until the age of independence was gradually lowered to 22 by the Gillard Government.



The age of independence is the age at which young people are considered to be 'permanently independent' from their families by the Australian government. Below this age, students hoping to access Youth Allowance must prove their independence to the government or be considered dependent on their parents, which means their payment can be reduced based on parental income. The process of proving this independence is often arduous and requires a high burden of proof and large amounts of administrative work.

This administrative work and inequity of Youth Allowance is highlighted by the NUS' report, with students sharing statements on the hardships that they have faced.

Tara, aged 21, describes being unable to access Youth Allowance due to being considered dependent on her parents. "The only reason I was not eligible [for Youth Allowance] was because my parents earn over the threshold, but it's not like I see that money or receive their income. My parents

are smokers and drinkers so a lot of their money goes there, not to me. I understand that Centrelink's logic is that I receive support from my parents, but I don't."

"The Australian Government can change Centrelink's Age of Independence rules, so all students have equal access to higher education. Students should be able to put food on their table, rent a stable home and enjoy studying with their friends, with a safety net of knowing Youth Allowance is there if they find themselves out of work," Billy Zimmerman, NUS Welfare Officer stated.

Many students surveyed also noted that it would be unsafe to declare independence from their parents, as it would require a Statutory Declaration confirming family violence or an unsafe home environment. 90 per cent of surveyed students who said that a lack of access to Youth Allowance impacted their experience of family or domestic violence were LGBTQIA+.

Gaining proof of family violence is incredibly difficult, and creates an additional burden and danger for young people trying to escape unsafe situations. This difficulty is highlighted in a survey response that describes how "the scariest part of it was that I needed to get verification from my parents that it was unreasonable for me to live at home. Which is a ridiculous barrier that people face in accessing Youth Allowance, often when it's not safe for people to live at home it's difficult to get that proof and people usually won't even have a relationship with their parents."

The report notes that 22 is an arbitrary age which does not align with other Australian policies. The family tax benefit ends at age 19, and out of home care support in most states and territories ends at age 18. This creates a gap in which students who are not entirely supported by their parents between 18 and 22 are left without sufficient income support.

The current maximum daily rate of Youth Allowance is \$13,790 annually, which is under 60 per cent of the Henderson Poverty Line.

Despite this inadequacy, access to existing payments remains essential for students. The NUS' survey included 121 respondents who were successfully able to access Youth Allowance payments. Of these students, the vast majority reported the positive impact that the payments had on their life and studies. It allowed them to afford safe housing and mental health support, as well as prioritise their studies while improving their job prospects.

Policy Recommendations

The NUS' report makes a number of recommendations to policymakers on a path forward to improve the wellbeing of and outcomes for students.

Firstly, it recommends that the Government lowers the age of independence to 18 from 22, and raises student social security payments above the poverty line to at least \$88 per day. This policy has been costed at \$5.7 billion per year.

Secondly, the NUS recommends that Centrelink payments are indexed to the cost of living (as the Age Pension is), and that Commonwealth Rent Assistance is raised to reflect current rental prices.

Beyond the issues of Centrelink payments for students, the report makes further recommendations of government intervention to alleviate student poverty. The report recommends new policies across the housing sector to tackle rental and housing affordability in Australia, as students currently feel locked out of home ownership and priced out of the rental market.

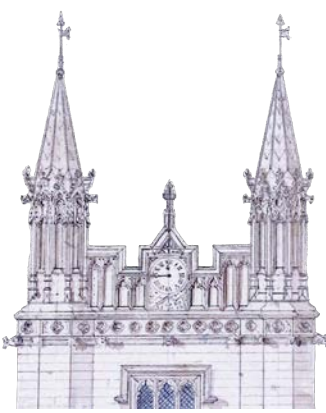
The NUS also recommends the abolition of junior employee pay rates which entrench age-based discrimination, as 57 per cent of young people aged 20 and younger are currently earning below their relevant award wage.

Research from the McKell Institute estimates that on average, a junior employee is paid \$8,483 less annually compared to their counterpart in the same role who is over the age of 21. The abolition of junior employee pay rates is also estimated to have a positive increase between .03 per cent and .05 per cent of GDP.

Finally, the report recommends a review of the Disability Support Pension and the funding of further research into international student poverty, as international students are often excluded from the financial support available to domestic students.

Regarding future advocacy, the NUS told *Honi* that they are "planning to continue this campaign; we hope for more from the Labor Government and will continue to agitate inside of parliament and out of it to convince them to help students. The government has the power to instantly lift many out of precarious situations and must act."

USYD’S ALTERNATIVE CAMPUS



Drawing from the extensive University Archives, the Quad may have looked very differently had history taken a different turn, with five alternative visions for the Carillon Tower and a forgotten blueprint for its iconic facade.

Crown steeple and a different Fisher Library

It is hard to imagine an alternative to what stands before University Avenue as one ascends from the Victoria Park Steps — USyd’s iconic Quadrangle dressed in Sydney sandstone. Yet the institution’s imposing facade may have seen a very different future had the University proceeded with a different vision for Fisher Library.

In 1890, a plan was drawn up where the Carillon Bell Tower would have been accompanied by an enormous, elaborate crown steeple soaring high directly behind it. This structure was one of the first iterations of Fisher Library following a £32,000 bequest from Thomas Fisher’s estate, the equivalent of over \$3.5 million today. Situated just below the crown tower, this Fisher Library was to house a large, airy chamber resembling a rotunda. The rotunda separated USyd’s Carillon Room and the Anderson Fellow’s room and would have occupied two floors above the Quadrangle’s main entrance, protruding into the Quad by a substantial degree.

The crown chosen for the 1890’s design is likely an imperial crown, similar to the ones at King’s College in Aberdeen and St Giles’ Kirk in Edinburgh. At King’s College, such a crown tower represented claims to “universal dominion” rather than a mere royal connection. For USyd architectural historian Professor Andrew Leach, the early, elaborate plans for Fisher Library is evident of an institution seeking to project itself as a bastion of moral authority and cement its place within the British empire. Despite USyd’s roots in Benthamite secularism, the influence of the High Anglicans and Protestants among its founding professors was indelible.

“Neo-Gothic architecture was one of the languages used by institutions with a moral underpinnings that universities were supposed to have, a Gothic building suggests what your moral mission is about,” Professor Leach told *Honi*. “It was conceived of as a British building in Gadigal Country.”

In this lens, USyd’s plan for a crown steeple, had the University Senate opted for this option, would have further entrenched the institution’s reputation as a symbol for Britain’s invasion of Australia, exacerbating an already violent relationship between Sydney University and Gadigal Land.

Khanh Tran unearths unexplored blueprints from the Archives.

Another feature that was abandoned was a double cloister that would have clothed USyd’s Quadrangle. The blueprint would have seen two internal arcades dressed with Corinthian columns in a classical Italianate style reminiscent of Italy’s older universities like Padua.

Another change in this blueprint was an extension to the building’s facade beyond the Great Hall, featuring an ornate Tudor arch and a second lead spire to rival the Carillon Tower where the MacLeay Museum lies today. Adjacent to Nicholson was a dramatically different look for the now-dormant Nicholson Museum, in what resembles an ecclesiastical Chapter House, originally planned to be just behind the Great Hall where the Vice-Chancellor’s office now resides.

“A plan was drawn up where the Carillon Bell Tower would have been accompanied by an enormous, elaborate crown steeple soaring high directly behind it.”

However, all was not lost with an early prototype of MacCleay Museum clearly visible in the Western elevation (or the back of the Quad). Here, the early MacCleay Museum, identical in structure to what was eventually realised, features a double height gallery surrounded by two floors reserved for specimen displays. However, in contrast with 1890’s blueprint, MacCleay was built not in the Perpendicular sandstone of its easily design, but rather, expressed in Romanesque redbricks instead.

Little is known about why the plan fell through. However, USyd ultimately commissioned NSW Government Architect Walter Liberty Vernon, together with William Mitchell and George McRae to build the Nicholson Museum and old Fisher Library in their current incarnation.

Five visions for the Carillon Tower

Had things turned another way, the Carillon Tower may been very different to its current form. Endowed with one of Australia’s only Carillons together with Canberra and Bathurst, it has played a role in greeting countless new students and congratulating graduates. Prior to

construction, colonial architect Edmund Blacket designed five other versions of the structure, ranging from more austere yet playful plans to vastly more ornate designs.

One of the designs would have seen the Tower soaring with a set of crocketed sandstone pillars, featuring curled leaves motifs, adorned with a lead-cladded spire. Not to be beaten, another drawing witnessed the Quad being topped with a series of pinnacles atop a fancy Mansard roof and embellished with a miniscule gold-gilded flag at its peak.

Among the simpler designs was a Tower topped with a leaded Mansard roof, somewhat echoing what was built for Otago University’s Registry Building. A similar drawing shows a series of decorative crenellated battlements, eschewing spires altogether, putting the Quad on par with the romantic architecture of Scotland’s castles. As for Professor Leach, these two plans were his firm favourites due to his affinity for Scottish baronial architecture which was reflected in these seemingly pared down, “playful” yet striking designs.

“I just have a bit of a sucker for Scottish Baronialism so that’s my reason there, there’s a kind of playful addition, just because it seems so ridiculous. For me, it’s a toss up between the Disney princess tower and the Mansard [roof], both of which would have been silly but also made them fun!” Professor Leach declared.

A radically different Physics Building

Also abandoned was a plan for a Neo-Gothic vision for USyd’s Physics Building. Had the University realised the plan, designed by NSW Government Principal Designing Architect Gorrie McLeish Blair in 1917 under Walter Vernon’s tutelage —famed for the Mitchell Library and Sydney’s Central Station—Manning Road would have looked very differently. Under Blair and Vernon’s masterplan, Physics would have been located directly behind the Quad where the MacCallum Building sits today.

In Professor Leach’s view, the pair’s plans, though “extraordinary” in scale, were not “aspirational” in terms of its outlook, being intended to complement the older Fisher Library’s style as a continuous, harmonious complex. Under the design, a grand entrance, flanked by two massive towers, would have greeted students and professors where the MacCallum Learning Hub currently stands. The gothic edifice was designed to house three departments: Organic, Inorganic Chemistry and Physics



alongside a small extension for the Arts.

The building formed what was Vernon’s science complex, who laid out a masterplan for USyd’s science precinct. The plans, Professor Leach observes, were abandoned when Professor Leslie Wilkinson was appointed University Architect one year later in 1918.

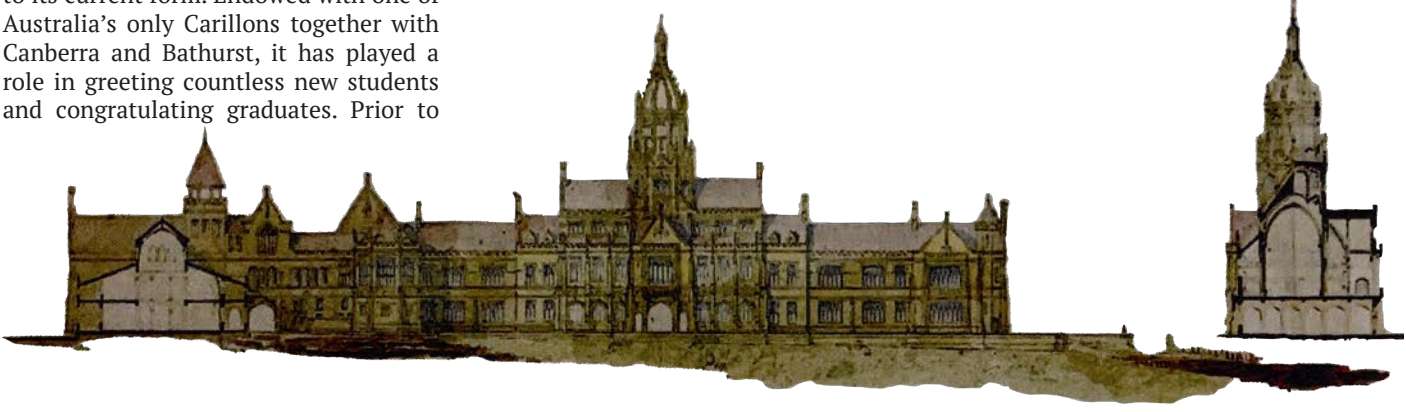
“The interesting thing around Wilkinson’s appointment is that in 1917, they’re [USyd] already interviewing for that position,” Professor Leach said, 1917 being the same year of Blair and Vernon’s plan, Wilkinson eventually joined USyd from UCL. “When the Chair [of Architecture] was being sought, all of the search and discussions happened in London.”

“So I think it [Blair and Vernon’s plans] was a victim of the ambitions of Wilkinson’s which is not necessarily a bad thing!”

Indeed, Professor Leach praises what Wilkinson and Keith Harris designed for the Physics Building in 1926, in opting for a simpler Italian Renaissance style as opposed to the aged Neo-Gothic already taken up by the Quad. For him, Wilkinson’s Italianate style offered a far more refreshing campus than repeating the Perpendicular Gothic of bygone years.

“The earlier generation built so that we can be seen everywhere, the Fisher Library is about visibility everywhere whereas Wilkinson would like to be low to the ground as long as we’re able to see along an axis,” said Professor Leach, referring to what is popularly known as the Wilkinson Axis together with the Edward Ford Building, also a brainchild of Wilkinson.

“I think the Physics Building is one of the best buildings of that generation on campus. It’s beautiful.”



1890’s proposal for Fisher Library and Nicholson Museum. Courtesy of the University of Sydney Archives.

The lies we believe at graduation

Joshua Krook reflects on the years since his graduation.

Graduation ceremonies are typically billed as celebratory events, but mine was more like a company awards ceremony; full of glitz and glamour, and signifying nothing. We lined up in black robes to receive white certificates, given out after lengthy speeches lauding the status quo, corporate jobs, and a ‘skills-based’ curriculum. Like every cohort before us, we were lauded as the “brightest minds of our generation,” equipped with “transferable skills,” ready to take on the “important jobs” for building the Australian economy.

“A corporate lawyer once told me they believed that ‘it’s normal to never make friends after university.’”

The University of Sydney’s marketing team had been working overtime that year, making red banners to blanket Eastern Avenue with “#Leadership”. “Leadership for good starts here,” they read. The ads suggested we were “unlearning” old ways of thinking. But now, looking at my graduation class all these years later, all that we seem to have unlearnt was our commitment to ethical integrity. We had learnt skills, but a values-based education had entirely eluded us (or, we had learnt skills, but almost nothing about values).

Ten years on, these classmates have now all graduated again, into the ranks of the Border Force or into the headquarters of big oil, coal, or gas. Many more have

dedicated their lives to becoming reverse Robin Hoods, transferring wealth from the poor to the rich. Others staff the forefront of cutting edge scientific research on how to improve our use of drones... in war zones. All of these graduates are from the University of Sydney.

It is unclear what exactly my generation got out of USyd, but it is clear that the alumni posters could’ve used a bit more honesty. Committing a generation to a skills-based curriculum with little to no mention of ethics, morality, or even religious thinking, has consequences. Studies of modern law schools, for example, show that a skills-based curricula turn their students away from public service, and toward pursuing and advancing solely corporate ends.

Marie Iskander, UNSW Law Class of 2015, writes, “Despite being reluctant about pursuing a clerkship, because I didn’t feel drawn towards private law, I was convinced by peers, older lawyer friends and, of course, HR from the big law firms that “this is the right path” and “what do you have to lose?”

But the losses are always real and significant. Corporate firms take the most productive and formative years of someone’s life. Meanwhile, graduates, having only been taught a skills education, understandably find it hard to know what to use those skills for.

The many lies my class were told at graduation centred on an invisible ideology. The ideology had a few core beliefs to it. First, education is only ever a means to an end, and that end is to get a job at a superficially elite institution, regardless of the ethics of that institution. Second, activities that

don’t make money are always childish. Third, maturity is to be determined by compliance with corporate thinking, rather than independent thinking. This ideology had been re-packaged under the terminology of “the real world,” “growing up,” and “accepting responsibility” for our lives.

On the face of it, these beliefs are appealing. Sydney is one of the most expensive cities in the world, and so anything that celebrates money-making is intrinsically attractive. Corporate life is glamorous, with cocktail evenings, gleaming phallic skyscrapers and free cruises on the harbour. Meanwhile, alternative lifestyles are risky, unrewarding and socially isolating. So, the choice is a simple one. Conform, or become an outcast.

Like most ideologies however, corporate propaganda has illogical underpinnings. A Big Four accountant once remarked that I had Peter Pan syndrome – the inability to grow up – because I wanted to write a novel. The presumption being that only children write novels. Even more tragically, a corporate lawyer once told me they believed that “it’s normal to never make friends after university.” This was someone working sixty hours a week. Conversely, a consultant told me “people who don’t work on weekends are lazy.” This, they submitted, was the real work we ought to get used to shortly after graduation. Compromise and disappointment.

But the commitment of our University to a new, corporate ideology is not even that “same learning.” Oxford and Cambridge celebrate the arts, music, philosophy — even if that appreciation

is often reserved for elite, narrow forms of it. They find and celebrate a place for religion and mediaeval history, courses that have been eroded by many cuts at USyd. They teach certain values necessary for life, not just skills that will date by the year. Speaking to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, Louise Richardson, I asked her how they managed this continued commitment to a moral education.

She replied, slightly baffled, “that’s how it’s always been, and how it always will be.”



ART BY KHANH TRAN

Where did USyd’s ‘Great Quad Race’ go?

Amelia Koen goes for a run.

In 1983, a new Sydney University tradition was born: The Great Quad Race. Organised by the Sydney University Athletics Club (SUAC), it consisted of a 180 metre (or 210 depending on who you ask) dash around the Quadrangle and became a hotly contested mainstay of USyd Orientation Week in the 1980s. According to a 1983 edition of *The University of Sydney News*, the sprint is said to be inspired by the racing scene around Cambridge in the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*.

The dash was held on the first day of Orientation week at noon, just an hour after the official welcome in the Great Hall. According to archival advertisements for the race, “all first years are invited to participate” in the “Freshers’ Section”; there were additional open and Women’s events. In its inaugural year, Ross Hawthorne won overall with an astonishing time of 25.4 seconds — though apparently he was a three time State 400-metre champion. Out of the 52 entrants, only one other beat the 26 second record established in the earlier heats.

However, not all participants took it that seriously. In the subsequent edition of *USyd News*, a headline that reads “Champagne athletes cross the line” is

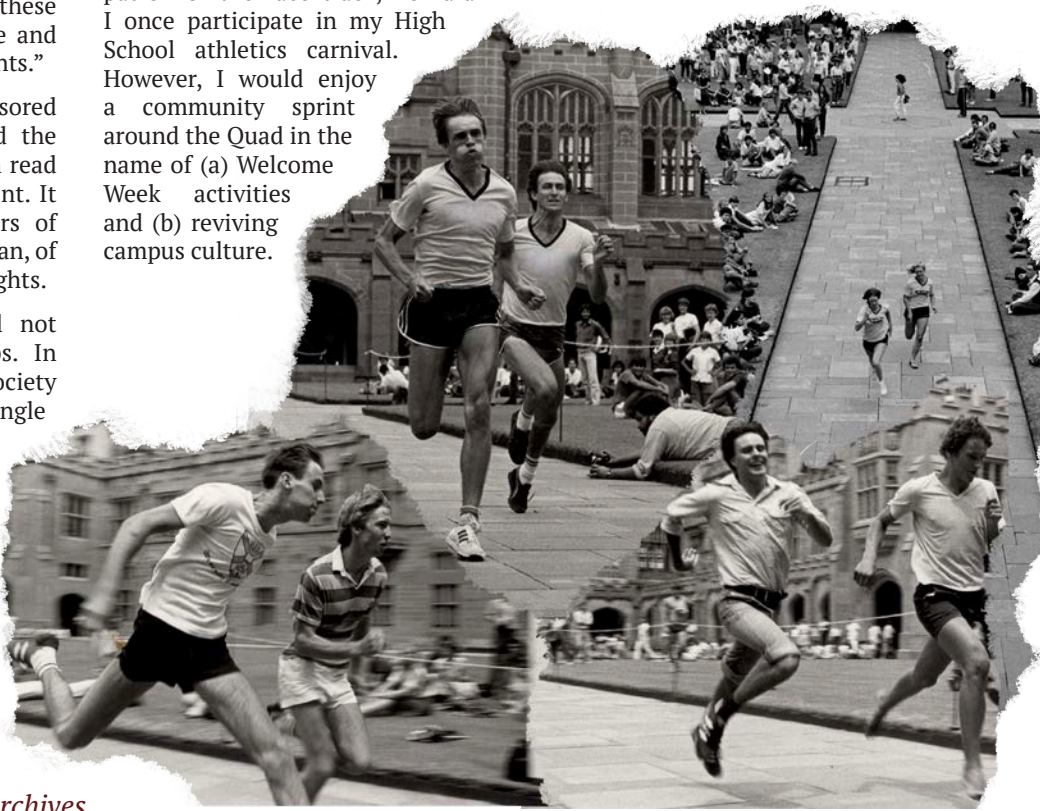
accompanied by a photo of three dapper students running through the centre of the quad. Champagne glasses in one hand and the neck of the bottle in the other, they are dressed in “1920s style” attire as they make the slowest time recorded in the race. Amusingly, these campus legends “retired to a table and chairs beneath a tree for refreshments.”

The race was reportedly sponsored by the Commonwealth Bank, and the top 20 students won t-shirts which read ‘Get With the Strength’ on the front. It remains unclear what the winners of each race actually received other than, of course, fame, glory, and bragging rights.

Notably, the shenanigans did not end with the champagne champs. In 1986’s race, the USU Debating Society was simultaneously in the Quadrangle attempting to obtain the Guinness World Record Debate title across 6 consecutive days of debating. Surpassing the previous record of 153 hours and 20 minutes, the 500 students, staff, and journalists who participated achieved a new world record of 155 hours and 30 minutes. The debate topic was “You can fool all of the people all of the time”, and for two multi-talented students,

they continued the debate with each other as they successfully ran in the Quad Race.

Seemingly, the last archival account of the race is in 1990. Now, I’m no patron of the race track, nor did I once participate in my High School athletics carnival. However, I would enjoy a community sprint around the Quad in the name of (a) Welcome Week activities and (b) reviving campus culture.



Images courtesy of the University of Sydney Archives.

CYBER

FRAUD

AND THE THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN SYDNEY

Khanh Tran looks into the cyber threats facing international students.

In recent years, online learning and educational technologies have gotten ever more advanced, from virtual Zoom classrooms, meetings, collaborative file sharing and a host of other platforms. With these changes have come the headache of cybersecurity breaches for thousands of students.

Indeed, this prompted the University to send a mass email to all international students in late September, cautioning them to take care of their social media accounts and be vigilant of cyber fraud attempting to extract money from unsuspecting students.

The issue hits close to home for Celine Zhao, a third-year Media and Communications major and international student from China, whose friend was scammed on Weibo – one of China’s most popular social media platforms – following a case of impersonation back in 2021.

“He made an account with very little differences in terms of the name and he has the same profile picture as I do and exactly the same [social media] content that I do,” Zhao told *Honi*. “He basically pretended that he was me.”

“He told her that ‘I’m going back to China from Sydney and I had some issues when [I was] going over to the airport

and needed money for an emergency’.”

Zhao said that initially, her friend raised suspicions. However, the scammer soon alleged internet and technical issues due to China’s version of Weibo: The social media platform is well-known for having two versions of their app, an international and domestic version reserved for Chinese residents.

“He made the excuse that because of the domestic version of Weibo he can’t use WeChat because of internet issues. He said that I can only chat with you [Zhao’s friend] and had issues with the airport,” said Zhao.

In the end, the scammer successfully scammed \$2000 out of Zhao’s friend, mistaking them for Zhao until it was too late. For Zhao, the scammer was “really smart” in circumventing others’ suspicions and managing to avoid her friend’s instincts, relying on a variety of distraction tactics and obfuscation to lure victims into believing that they were genuine.

Similarly, Arian Valaei, a postgraduate cyber security at the University of Technology (UTS), told us of his frustration surrounding the sheer volume of scam calls to his mobile phone.

He received frequent periodic calls from fraudulent call centres with random numbers. The turning point came one day when he decided to challenge an anonymous caller, calling out his bluff.

Retaliating against Valaei’s challenge, the caller threatened to distribute Valaei’s phone number to his global network. A few days later, he realised that this was the case, receiving fraudulent calls on an almost daily basis.

“I told him that this was fraud and he said that I offended him, he got angry and showed my phone number to his fellow frauds. And so, for the next couple of weeks, every day I had calls from all over the world, like several calls in a single day,” Valaei said.

Following his experience, Valaei warns that students should attempt to, whenever possible, avoid answering fraudulent phone calls, with many cold calls designed to spread one’s mobile phone number across fraudulent networks even if the caller does not respond.

“Once they receive a call, they know that it belongs to somebody, so someone is using this phone number and can use this phone number for fraud and they

update their database.”

In response to these incidents and the risk of cyber security breaches, the University asks students to “report any incidents as quickly as possible, so our cyber security team can provide appropriate support and advice”.

“We’re keenly aware of the risks our students can face with regard to their cyber security and keeping their information safe. We take our own cybersecurity responsibilities seriously and continually review and improve our systems to manage and protect the University against such threats.”

USyd outlines a number of common incidents that should be reported:

- Where a student suspects that their computer or account has been compromised.
- Having evidence on how a technology may be vulnerable.

Students can report cybersecurity incidents to the ICT Service Desk at 1800 793 864 (1800 SYD UNI) or dial +61 2 8627 1444 (select option 3 for ICT) or email: ict.support@sydney.edu.au.

Chancellor spent \$600 of USyd money on 8-course meal

Fabian Robertson examines the lavish meal expenses of USyd Executives.

Expense sheets released to *Honi* reveal that the University of Sydney’s top Executives spent \$23,978.10 of University money on meals in 2017, with much of this sum spent at fine dining establishments.

USyd Chancellor Belinda Hutchinson spent \$600 on a single meal at the Quay Restaurant in The Rocks in 2017. Headed by celebrity chef Peter Gilmore and dubbed Restaurant of the Year in the Australian Gourmet Traveller Restaurant Guide, Quay is one of the most extravagant venues in the country. Quay offers two menu options to customers: a six-course meal for \$280 or an eight-course meal for \$340, with wine pairing costing up to \$250 extra per person.

Despite the high cost incurred at Quay – which exceeds the \$530 fortnightly payment Centrelink payment received by 18 to 22 year-old students who live out of home to study – the expense sheets do not explain the nature of the occasion or any justification for the \$600 spent. Rather, the released documents simply state that all meals were purchased in accordance with University policy.

USyd’s Non-Allowable Expense policy allows for “reasonable food and drink” expenses while travelling on University business, while the Travel Policy and Procedures allow meal expenses that are “reasonable business costs”.

It is difficult to understand why Hutchinson – a board member of

multinational weapons company Thales and owner of a \$20 million apartment in Point Piper – would ever ‘reasonably’ require the University to cover any of her meal expenses, let alone patronage at the likes of Quay.

Instead, the \$600 expensed at Quay was likely approved by former Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence, with the current expensing approval processes at USyd set up so that top Executives can spend University money with practically unfettered discretion.

Spence himself spends the most of any Executive, reporting a total of \$10,405.35 on 56 meals in 2017 and 2018 for an average meal cost of just over \$185.

Spence spent more than \$300 on a single meal on multiple occasions, at venues like Restaurant Pendolino and he Australian Club, the latter of which is an exclusive gentlemen’s club founded in 1838.

In 2017, Spence reported spending \$1,823.80 on an Executive Christmas function at Porteno, where the most expensive steak costs \$324. Other notable meal expenses include \$1,191.10 for staff at Matt Moran’s Aria Restaurant in Sydney, and \$1,138.37 for an alumni dinner at the Shangri-La.

In 2019 and 2020, Spence spent \$2,905.13 on meals with “donors” or “prospective donors”. Spence also claimed \$1,953.90 on meals with candidates to fill the role of Provost at USyd, which is currently held by

Annamarie Jagose. One such meal, presumably with a single candidate, cost the University \$526.

Candidates for the role of Vice-Chancellor were also well-looked after under USyd’s regime of lavish spending. According to the released documents, USyd paid \$652.96 for “gifts” for candidates involved in the hiring process for the role, which is currently held by Mark Scott.

Currently, *Honi* does not have access to sufficient data to assess the expenditure of Executives since the hiring of Scott. What is clear, however, is a pattern of exorbitant spending on USyd’s dime under Michael Spence, a culture in which the Executive’s relationships with money was distorted by their enormous personal wealth and the relative freedom with which they could claim costs on the University.

Such behaviour is only more alarming in the context of significant austerity measures at the

University, record wage theft from staff, and increasing casualisation. The luxuries afforded to the Executives also lie in stark contrast to the increasing financial pressures on students amid the rising cost of living. Indeed, while Hutchinson can spend USyd money gorging herself on Southern Rock Lobster and Smoked Confit Pig Jowl at Quay Restaurant, students juggling work, study and paying rent must avail themselves of the free grocery essentials provided by the SRC and USU’s FoodHub.

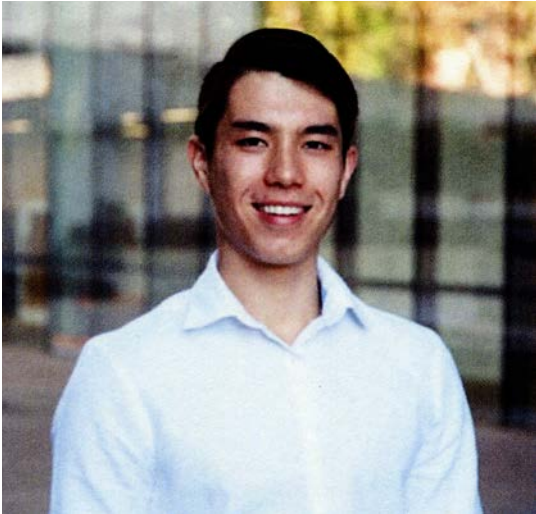


SENATE ELECTIONS 2022

Occurring once every two years, the race for the position of Undergraduate Student Fellow of the Senate is well under way. The Senate is the highest governing body at the University of Sydney. It comprises of fifteen members, including two elected student fellows, one undergraduate and one postgraduate. This year, three undergraduate candidates have nominated for the role. Voting is now open and closes on Tuesday, 18 October at 4pm.

Candidate profiles by Carmeli Argana. Read our full profiles on our website.

BEN JORGENSEN



A third-year Arts student, Ben Jorgensen describes himself as an experienced candidate with “a plan for the future”. He was involved in the Liberal-branded TIME, STRIVE and LIFT SRC tickets, and he managed Nicholas Comino’s (ModLib) USU campaign.

He cited his leadership experience on the executive of a number of clubs and societies, such as the Sydney Arts Students’ Society (SASS), the Multiracial Intercultural Experience Society (MixSoc), the Puzzle Society and the Conservative Club. Despite this, he faltered when asked questions involving institutional knowledge of the University Senate, struggling to identify Mark Scott as Vice-Chancellor.

Jorgensen expressed his desire to “give back to the community” as his motivation for running, but he also noted that he wished to “seize this opportunity”. It is unclear how Jorgensen will balance the personal opportunity of Senate membership against fighting for student interests.

When asked about his political affiliations, Jorgensen did not shy away from disclosing his affiliation with the Liberals. Whilst he said his personal politics would “inform the strategy he puts forward”, he did not think it should affect his ability to fulfil his responsibilities.

His policy also refers to addressing worsening student-to-staff ratio and ending recycled lectures, which are both issues linked to staff working conditions. Concerningly, when asked whether these policies were related to the National Tertiary Education Union’s (NTEU) campaign, he admitted that he was “not too familiar with that campaign”.

Jorgensen hesitated to be critical of outgoing student fellows Gabi Stricker-Phelps and Lachlan Finch when comparing his approach to theirs. He committed to attending SRC meetings regularly as a point of contrast from Stricker-Phelps, and meeting with both SRC and USU representatives bimonthly. Considering that previous Senate fellows have historically had distant, if not antagonistic, relationships with these student organisations, *Honi* is curious to see how Jorgensen plans to bridge that gap.

Jorgensen also repeatedly referred to the Senate as the ‘Board’. Whether this indicates his confusion with other organisations or his view of the Senate as a corporate rather than a democratic governance body, *Honi* is unclear.

YANG TU



Yang Tu is an Arts student in her second year. She currently holds two SRC office bearer positions – during last year’s RepsElect, she was elected Global Solidarity Officer with Penta, and in August’s council meeting, she was elected Social Justice Officer after self-nominating as an independent. Most recently, she appeared on the SRC INTERPOL for STEM tickets, which was managed by former USU Board candidate K Philips, a self-described centrist.

Tu pulled out of her scheduled interview with *Honi*, and therefore her institutional knowledge of the Senate was not assessed in-person. However, it appears to be lacking; in a follow-up statement, Tu was unable to provide a meaningful explanation of her understanding of the Senate’s role beyond copy-and-pasting from the University website.

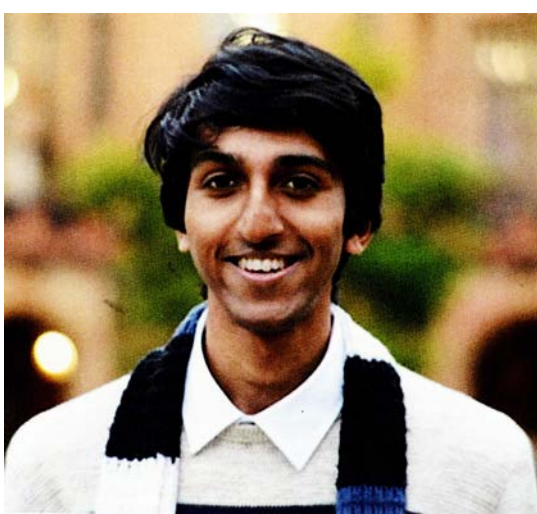
When describing her suitability, Tu cites her experience as an Undergraduate Student Ambassador, her SRC positions, and her role as the FASS Undergraduate Committee Representative. She states in her candidate profile that such experiences give her a “broad network and perspective within our cohort”. In the absence of an interview, it is unclear if there is any substance to these claims beyond being buzzwords.

Tu’s policy platform also leaves much to be desired. In her additional statement, she points to the volume of backlog cases within the Academic Integrity Unit, an issue that disproportionately affects international students. She proposed to dissuade the University from “certain pathways”, and “enhance sensitivity to student concerns”. However, she did not provide any further details as to what this looks like, especially in regards to the impact of the University’s punitive approach to academic integrity.

She also brought up concerns with the University’s budget and finances in her *Honi* statement, proposing more “effective management of budget” by “taking out loans to avoid austerity measures”. Given that the University returned a surplus of \$1.04 billion last year, it is unclear why Tu is proposing that the University take out loans to offset their austerity measures.

Overall, Tu’s policy platform and campaign for Senate provides vague details about the outcomes she wishes to achieve without any plan as to how she intends to implement them.

AARON KUMAR



Arguably the least known of the three, Aaron Kumar is a third year Engineering student positioning himself as the candidate “with the best shot at representing the left on campus”. In his additional statement to *Honi*, he admitted that he had no factional support, which will present a challenge. This appears to be Kumar’s first proper go at student elections (aside from a Facebook post campaigning for the SRC brand INTERPOL). While he supported his Labor MP in the most recent federal elections, he is not a member of Labor.

Kumar pulled out of his scheduled *Honi* interview last minute, and therefore his institutional knowledge could not be assessed.

However, he appears to have a firm understanding of the University’s operations, having held leadership roles across the University’s Education, Provost, External Engagement, and Operations portfolios. He highlighted his experience as an Equity Student Leader within the Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Educational Innovation) where he ran the Student Equity Collective (SEC), a team of students who work on “projects that promote diversity and inclusion across our underrepresented and disadvantaged cohorts”. However, given the SEC’s proximity to university management, it is unclear the extent to which this collective have been representative of disadvantaged students’ interests.

Kumar’s policy platform features a strong focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged students. He expressed a desire to look into the quiet reforms to USyd’s discontinuation not to count as fail and recent HECS-HELP changes that would mean students who fail more than 50 per cent of their units lose their Commonwealth supported places, however he has not provided specifics on how he plans to address this if elected. In particular, he pointed out that the University’s allocated Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPPP) funding was no longer going towards supporting the retention of disadvantaged students, and promised to address that.

Despite a promising policy platform that appears to address important issues based on his personal and professional experiences, Kumar is expected to have difficulty mounting a substantial campaign without any factional support.

INSIDE AUSTRALIA'S HIDDEN CONSPIRACY NETWORKS

CW: Mentions of homophobia, transphobia, racism, trafficking and abuse.

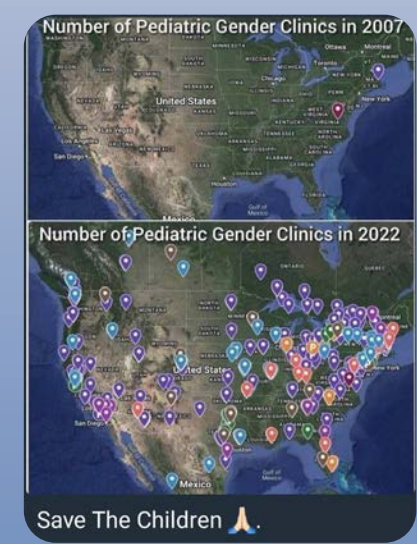
Thomas Sargeant investigates the pipeline from vaccine hesitancy to QAnon.

There is a very real digital pipeline that has already radicalised scores of Australians from being ‘vaccine-hesitant’ to becoming active members of harmful conspiracy networks such as QAnon.

I have spent four months infiltrating online message boards and group chats centred around conspiracy theories. Starting from an Australian group that provides fake vaccination certificates, I was quickly directed toward far deeper networks with fringe beliefs that grew increasingly detached from reality.

While it’s one thing to have concerns about government control and Big Pharma – or to have a level of scientific illiteracy that makes you wary of Australia’s vaccination program – it is entirely different to categorise it as a project of intentional mass-murder or ‘depopulation’ as many of these groups do. Once you believe the latter, it is an incredibly short jump to ideas that are entirely abstracted from reality, such as Satan-worshipping health officials and government-sponsored harvest of life-prolonging chemicals from the blood of tortured children.

Despite first joining a Telegram chat group ostensibly focused on false ‘Vaccine Passports’, broader and more insidious conspiracy theories are often sent to the group and draw users further down the rabbit hole. These include climate change denialism, Great Replacement Theory, anti-5G, as well as Adrenochrome theories (the aforementioned chemical harvesting). Links to join other group chats which go into more detail on these theories are periodically sent into the chat, providing a direct method to funnel members into more extreme ideologies. Notably, the vast majority of these are US-focused rather than Australian.



Many of these groups are implicitly or explicitly right-wing. They contain pro-Russian content, as well as theories that ‘trans ideology’ is a result of Satanic and pedophilic ‘elites’. With Australia’s COVID-19 restrictions now almost nonexistent, many conspiracy groups are shifting their focus to alternative topics, such as the idea that monkeypox is an exclusively ‘gay disease’ with bestiality as its source.

This kind of content can make it easy to dismiss conspiracy theories as a right-wing phenomenon. However, this is not always the case. I spoke to Dr Micah Goldwater, a cognitive scientist and senior lecturer at the University of Sydney, who explained the psychological origins of conspiratorial thinking.

“We all try to infer explanations for things all the time,” he explained, citing a scenario many will be familiar with in which upon having a message left on ‘read’, you may start to make assumptions about being ignored.

“A lot of our thinking about the world is in terms of attempted explanations, even if we don’t always articulate what those explanations are.”

“Many of these groups are implicitly or explicitly right-wing. They contain pro-Russian content, as well as theories that ‘trans ideology’ is a result of Satanic and pedophilic ‘elites’.”

Goldwater emphasised that the label of conspiracy theorist should not always be in the pejorative sense, as there are a wealth of very real conspiracies – the CIA supporting coups and assassinations in Latin America, Volkswagen cheating emissions laws, the Watergate scandal and MKUltra. But what makes the believers of these conspiracies different to flat-Earthers, for example?

Put simply, for the latter, a lack of evidence. Within conspiracy groups, articles from genuine news sources are taken out of context and reframed to support users’ pre-existing beliefs. For example, the headline of an article on Australia’s record low fertility rate is used as evidence for vaccinations as a forced infertility program. This is despite the text of the article attributing this decline to women *choosing* to have fewer children, as a result of improved education and employment opportunities. In this scenario, reading beyond the headline can be enough to debunk the supposed evidence of a conspiracy theory.

So how do you prove that a conspiracy theory is real? In the case of MKUltra, evidence abounds in the form of declassified documents, academic articles, and reporting from reputable news sources. Individuals with a worldview that trusts and prioritises academic and institutional knowledge are then able to consider this as a proven theory.

However, this same kind of knowledge is often ineffective in debunking more insidious theories. If you truly believe that there is a vast network of governments, scientists, and pharmaceutical companies that are falsifying the safety of vaccines with help from the ‘mainstream media’, then all of the evidence in the world from science and academia will be ineffective in disproving your beliefs.

Conspiracies within these online networks often fail to display a basic level of internal consistency – within the same group chat, you can find information proving that Princess Diana was killed by the Queen, as well as ‘proof’ that she is in fact still alive. To my eyes, it appears that the beliefs of these groups themselves are of secondary importance to simply denying mainstream narratives.

There are a number of factors that can make people more susceptible than others to being drawn into conspiracy networks; particularly when they already feel an uncertainty, anxiety, and lack of agency regarding their own lives. Individuals in these situations are able to fill this anxious gap with the “knowledge” that there is, in fact, a conspiracy going on in the world that they are able to feel certain about and in control of.

This is evidenced by a direct academic link between people who feel a lack of control in their own lives and experience ‘illusory pattern perception’, which consists of finding patterns and shapes in random, static visual-noise when one does not really exist. Individuals who perceive these non-existent patterns are more likely to hold irrational beliefs, including belief

in conspiracy theories or supernatural phenomena.

Dr Goldwater noted that successful conspiracy theory movements, such as QAnon, play into this lack of control felt by its followers. For those who buy into the conspiracy that there is a network of elites actively working against them, “you get to simultaneously have the status of persecuted victim, but then also regain agency by participating in the activity of the QAnon community,” said Dr Goldwater.

With fraught global issues such as COVID-19 and capitalist exploitation, it can often be difficult to find rational explanations in the midst of chaotic crises that feel inexplicable. Conspiracy theories offer a catch-all explanation of the world that can help people feel that they have regained control.

As well as regaining a sense of agency, a similar element of conspiracism that helps to bring members deeper is that the conspiracy networks, much like any political group, are also an active social group. People drawn into conspiracy theories are often already socially isolated and therefore rely on fellow conspiracy theorists as their new social group.

When all of your friends believe in a conspiracy theory, you have very little motivation to question it. According to Dr Goldwater, belief in a conspiracy is not only the basis of such a social group, but also allows them to feel like they are of a higher status than other social groups because of the perceived exclusivity of the information they are privy to – a status that only further encourages members to participate.

An additional predictive factor for those more prone to conspiracism is whether they



have an existing overarching worldview. For example, if you are a historical materialist, then you may understand the wrongs of pharmaceutical companies as a part of their for-profit, exploitative nature. Dr Goldwater explains that without an overarching political framework of this sort, it is “not where they put their scepticism, they end up going into this other direction like Bill Gates is putting mind control drugs into [pharmaceutical products].”

Individuals are also more prone to replace their own ideas with that of a conspiracy network if they have renounced their previous worldview – for example, people who have given up on organised religion and are now looking to explain the world around them in a different way.

Dr Goldwater argues that for those who “don’t have a good system of understanding why there’s all this bullshit out there, I think you’re more likely to fall prey to this other kind of explanation”.

This combination of factors also encourages members to continually dive deeper into conspiracy theories.

“Once [a conspiracy theory] becomes part of your group identity, you’re then motivated to invest more and more in it because it both increases your connection with the group and also maintains internal consistency in a way,” Dr Goldwater explained.

While this may paint a depressing portrait of conspiracism and critical thinking in Australia, all hope is not lost. For your loved ones who may be prone to conspiracism, Dr Goldwater explains that “pre-bunking” is the most effective prevention method and can act as an “inoculation” against misinformation.

“If you’re aware that there’s bad information spreading, warn people about it before they’re exposed to it.”

And if you think that you yourself might be at risk of believing in conspiracies, keep an eye on your own logic and sources of information. Interrogate your own beliefs with the same rigour that you would to those you disagree with.

THE IDEOLOGY OF A MEDICAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Oscar Chaffey opines.

The decision about what is taught and what is not taught at university is deeply political. Knowledge does not exist in an objective sphere; the norms that govern who is able to produce, access and use knowledge are themselves political. Unfortunately, when the politics within our curricula are pointed out, it is often through critiques that are reactionary and right wing. There is perennial panic about overly ideological teaching in the arts and social sciences, often manifested in specific conservative backlash to otherwise quite innocuous academic theories. For instance, anxiety about the teaching of critical race theory (CRT) in schools and universities in the United States has recently been heavily weaponised against movements for racial justice. These critiques are analytically lacking: they misunderstand what CRT is, its role in modern social sciences academia, or indeed how students are taught to use it in the broader context of teaching.

Nevertheless, critiques of the implicit value judgments inherent in curriculum design can be important and valuable, particularly where it is otherwise uninterrogated. In the conservative narrative of universities, STEM occupies a unique pride of place. Practical scientific knowledge and degrees are held to be a non-ideological safe haven, where students learn to reproduce uncontentious empirical facts and produce more of their own through research. Obviously, however, conservatives do not hold all scientific knowledge in this high esteem. Modern human genomics and physiology confirms that biological sex is rather unstable. This reality is rejected as an ideological perversion of a supposedly

uncontentious field because it confronts a transphobic vision of the world where gender is locked in by a prediscursive, unchanging sex binary.

Doctors are regularly ranked among the most trusted of all professions; however, reactionary forces are increasingly casting them as villains, insistent that young children are medically transitioning without appropriate oversight. Once again, these critiques are essentially entirely false and morally bankrupt. We know empirically that reduced medical gatekeeping saves lives and that the moral panic around transgender children does not describe a particularly real phenomenon. These criticisms are well-known, but perhaps what is less well-recognised is a critique of medicine’s sexual politics from the Left.

Medical teaching about sexual health and reproduction is enormously inadequate. Teaching in medicine is conspicuously different to undergraduate studies and most other courses. For one, there is almost no choice in what you are taught. This clearly makes sense on a surface level - a practicing doctor does not get to decide what diseases exist and all people. Additionally, teaching is organised very differently to even an undergraduate health science degree. The human body’s various major organs and body systems provide a convenient heuristic to structure blocks of curricula around.

As a first year medical student at USyd you can expect to learn how the lungs, heart, kidney, gut, brain and musculoskeletal system, among other organs, work within siloed blocks of content that last roughly a month each. Some organs are conspicuously

left out, like the mouth and teeth which are arbitrarily siphoned off to an entirely separate degree – dentistry. Others, like the eyes and skin, are not awarded their own dedicated blocks, much to the chagrin of ophthalmologists and dermatologists.

When I completed first year medicine in 2021, almost every block lasted for four weeks. Neuroscience was given an outsized six weeks, owing apparently to the unique complexity of the brain. The sexual health and reproduction (SHR) block was the seventh block of nine and was the shortest, lasting two weeks. I found the SHR block uniquely hard. In one week, we covered the enormous topic of pregnancy and contraception. In another we covered common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and the litany of treatments for them. Meanwhile, we learned the whole anatomy of the male and female reproductive systems. It was also the first time that queer people, particularly men who have sex with other men (MSM), were explicitly mentioned and discussed – we are a “high risk” population. In the two week flurry, diseases like endometriosis were given a passing mention.

SHR block was genuinely conceptually challenging and perhaps the most content-dense block I have studied in two years of postgraduate medicine. I constantly wondered why content that profoundly affects vast swathes of the population, especially vulnerable people, had been so short-changed in the curriculum design. This feeling was especially heightened when I remembered the full week I had been given to digest pituitary gland hormones

Italy’s landslide shift to the Right

Mae Milne writes.

Following a landslide election victory, far right leader Giorgia Meloni is likely to become Italy’s first female Prime Minister. With around 44% of the vote, her and her far right coalition are set to dominate both the senate and chamber of deputies (lower house).

Four years ago, Meloni’s rise to power was quite unfathomable, with her party *Forza Italia* (Brothers of Italy), receiving only 4 per cent of the vote in the 2018 elections. Nonetheless, her party was one of the only political entities to abstain from the national unity government that formed in response to the global pandemic. As virtually the only opposition, her party saw a sharp increase in support. Consequently, when Mario Draghi’s coalition collapsed in July, Meloni was primed to strike and subsequently managed to transform her largely fringe group into the dominant conservative force of contemporary Italian politics.

As a founding member of the EU, and Europe’s third largest economy, Italy’s new government has significantly altered Europe’s geopolitical reality. Although Meloni assured voters that she is pro-EU and pro-NATO, she nonetheless remains Eurosceptic, and wishes for “less centralism, more subsidiarity, less bureaucracy, and more politics”. Furthermore, Meloni’s coalition partner and former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, leader of Forza Italia, is openly Pro-Russia, with close ties to Putin.

Additionally, Meloni’s election is demonstrative of the power and sway held by nationalist populism, a phenomenon that has only increased in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her success sends a sharp message to Europe that voters are disillusioned with the systems that should support them, a message furthered by Italy’s low voter turnout of 64 per cent this year– the lowest recorded in the country’s history.

Furthermore, her election has set off global alarm bells for fascism, with CNN describing her as “Italy’s most far right leader since Mussolini.” Despite having roots in the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement, which was founded in the aftermath of World War 2 by the remnants of Mussolini’s supporters, Meloni is nonetheless adamant that fascism has been consigned to history. Despite this, her party continues to utilise fascist iconography and slogans, such as Mussolini’s tricoloured flame as the party’s logo, and neofascist rhetoric such as “Dio, patria e famiglia” - *God, country and family*.

On a smaller scale, Meloni’s election has young people in Italy worried. Although Meloni has promised to govern “for all Italians”, she nonetheless ran on a platform that targets and further marginalises minority groups. Her central election message was a call to return to “traditional” values, whereby the white nuclear family is the building block of Italian society. She is vocally against

LGBTQ+ families, and wants to continue the ban on same sex marriage and same sex or single sex adoption. She is also anti-immigrant, and calls for a naval blockade to prevent migrant boats leaving North Africa from entering Italy, and for Italian parents to produce more children to solve labour shortages, rather than allowing a reliance on foreigners.

“Meloni appeals to both men and women alike, without ever ultimately breaking the moulds of Italian society.”

Italian student Nadège Bisoffi told *Honi* that during this election, more than ever, “young people felt the need to go and vote... The threat of the far right scared young people into the booths”.

Although this was the first election in which some young people enjoyed full voting rights, with the minimum voting age for the upper house lowered from 25 to 18, their voices pale in comparison to the ageing population’s total eligible voters, of whom there are 51.4 million.

Meloni’s return to the nuclear family also creates a concerningly oppressive environment for women, reinforcing their role in the domestic sphere as mothers and caretakers. For this reason, it is ironic that Meloni herself is the woman

(a much more niche and simple topic) in the endocrinology block a couple of weeks earlier.

Recently I was reminded of that experience when checking the Sydney Medical Program’s 2023 central academic calendar. Much to my surprise, the first year curriculum has received a minor update. Most blocks have remained the same – cardiology is still four weeks and neuroscience still is given a generous six. The endocrinology and SHR blocks though, once taught separately over a total six weeks, have been combined together and shrunk into one five week block. If it were possible, the SMP has managed to crunch the teaching of SHR even further.

There are many legitimate critiques to be made of doctors. Routinely doctors fail to recognise patients’ pain. They hold unchecked sexist, fatphobic and ableist biases that often dovetail and result in materially worse patient care. It is a terrible reality that chronic diseases like endometriosis take on average seven years to be diagnosed. In these critiques, the shortcomings of individual doctors are often blamed. While this is not entirely unfair, it is important to realise that medical school is currently setting students up to fail.

The priorities that the curriculum sets up create a lasting schemata in students’ minds of which diseases and healthcare topics are important and which are unimportant. Medical school teaching is currently signaling to students that the study of sexual health and reproduction is unimportant, and increasingly so. This is at odds with reality. It ought to change.

likely to shatter the political glass ceiling by becoming Italy’s first female Prime Minister. But even in the political sphere, she has been careful to craft her image so as not to challenge mainstream ideas about what women can and cannot do. With her stern manner, she embodies the archetypal Italian “mamma”, ready to govern the country as one raises a child.

Consequently, her image both enforces and challenges gender roles, a paradox that has ultimately been one of her greatest political assets – she appeals to both men and women alike, without ever ultimately breaking the moulds of Italian society.

It is these oppressive gendered, sexual and racial policies that make young people concerned. USyd engineering student Giulia Emmanuelli told *Honi* that the thought of Meloni becoming Prime Minister makes her “feel sick”.

Other students, such as those at Milanese school Liceo Manzoni, protested by occupying the school building not even 12 hours after the victory of the right. They stated that the purpose of the occupation was “to speak about the situation that our lives are in. We are preparing to enter a political phase that is dangerous and repressive”.

Italy can expect to see more actions like these as actions of the right-wing government unfold. Time will tell if they have the ability to turn the tide of the neo-fascist wave.

Five years on and sexual assault persists on campus. What now?

Christian Holman

National Student Safety Surveys – What do we change when nothing changes?

CW: Sexual assault and harassment

When the results of the first Nationally coordinated survey on student safety became public in 2017, they confirmed what many on campus had long known: that our universities were complicit in the endemic sexual violence that pervades society. These findings and subsequent reporting uncovered a toxic culture of harassment in residential colleges, drawing the focus of a growing global movement against rape culture to our campus.

Since then, the University of Sydney has commissioned an investigation into the cultural failings of its colleges, known as the Broderick Report, committing fully to implementing its recommendations. Consent education made its way into high school curriculums and, more recently, into state legislation. Conversations around sex and sexual violence slowly became destigmatised, and the stories of those who have experienced harassment received public attention. Institutions were acknowledging their historical role as wilfully blind bystanders and committed to act on needs of those who had experienced assault, sometimes called survivors.

Earlier this March, the ANU’s Social Research Centre released the 2022 National Student Safety Survey (NSSS). The findings were clear, and damning. Five years on, and nothing has appreciably changed. 1 in 6 students, it showed, had been sexually harassed since starting university. An even greater proportion of students, more than 1 in 4, reported being harassed in their student accommodation.

“1 in 6 students had been sexually harrassed since starting University. More than 1 in 4 students in student accommodation reported being harrassed.”

But how? A module on affirmative consent is now a prerequisite for incoming students. The Broderick Report is available and formal action has been taken by the colleges. Awareness of sexual violence is now widespread. Yet the findings that harassment is still so rife came as no surprise to student unions, who had stressed the need for universities to take further action. With the issue of student safety on campus once again back on the agenda, how do we avoid the same mistakes and failures?

Consent can only go so far

This question was particularly on the mind of Sachi*, a now-graduated student who left her residential college and transferred after experiencing on-going harassment by fellow students.

“I was put into this really high pressure environment and then there was a lot of harassment, not just sexual harassment, but also a lot of racial

harassment at times, in classes and socially. And that really was difficult to deal with at the time,” she said.

By this time, the first NSSS results had become a point of discussion. Like other students, Sachi had undergone the consent education implemented by many universities as part of primary prevention. Much of the momentum following the 2017 NSSS aimed to change behaviours, to prevent sexual assault and harassment from happening in the first place.

The consent education that Sachi completed, which still exists, was delivered through a mandatory module; a half-hour course administered online that explains what is expected of students.

The course emphasises the affirmative consent model, wherein consent develops as a conversation, can be revoked at any time, and sexual partners bear an obligation to check in with each other. The deliverance of consent education by universities is central to their responses to claims of inadequate action, acting as a reputational safeguard.

However, these modules can be described as passive, non-interactive forms of education: mere box-ticking exercises that students often click through without reading or thinking critically about consent.

Naomi Smith is the Sexual Harm and Response Coordinator at the University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU) — a role established in 2019, two years after 2017’s NSSS. According to her, programs that engage with students’ ability to critically think and show leadership within their communities are more likely to counteract victim blaming and shape attitudes against sexual assault and harassment.

“These can be in-person workshops, which involve them having discussions with peers around difficult topics,” she said.

Some narratives about the need for cultural change can over-simplify the causes of sexual violence, blaming it substantially on a lack of consent education. However, the persistence of underlying misogynistic behaviour, as evidenced by the 2022 NSSS, calls into question the effectiveness of current consent education in preventing harassment.

“I think that there are a lot of perpetrators who honestly have an awareness of consent... who legitimately don’t really care about the impact they have on others, insofar as they abuse their power to their advantage. And they essentially know they can get away with it,” said USyd SRC Welfare Officer Grace Wallman.

“The University reproduces the sort of social issues that lead to harassment, as well as facilitating elitist cultures in certain parts of the University. These one-off attempts at education fail to develop a holistic intersectional understanding of why consent is important,” said Wallman.

In tandem with consent education, bystander training had also been introduced for students in leadership positions as a tertiary intervention against assault, aiming to induce behavioural change in populations and places where misconduct is most prevalent. This is particularly deployed at college or society events where

observers can intervene in potentially harmful situations or coercive dynamics. Students are similarly encouraged to report questionable behaviour to peers close by who they can trust.

“A lot of the harassment we experienced was at clubs by fellow students. There was a lot of what my friends call pre-sexual assault, things like groping and intimidating, where you feel violated, but nothing has quite happened yet,” said Sachi.

Conceptions of affirmative consent focus primarily on physical acts done in private, but behaviour done in private often slips under the radar of bystanders. Worse, older students or students with more relative power frequently escape accountability, as bystanders are socially pressured to take their side. Formalised, clear, and consistent grievance processes with systems in place to deal with conflicts would better solve this issue — but they largely do not exist at USyd.

The burden of reporting

Understandably, discussion in the wake of the 2017 NSSS has largely focused on awareness-raising and prevention. But as the 2022 NSSS indicates, there is a substantial body of students at our university to whom assault has already happened and continues to happen. For them, what now?

Sachi’s experiences at college provides an insight into the barriers to reporting sexual harassment. While on a dating app, an older student sent Sachi detailed and unsolicited rape fantasies.

“I hadn’t known how to deal with it. I don’t want this person after me, so I tried to make it into a joke but he was dead serious about it. He had apparently seen me around and had this whole thing built up. A friend told me to report, and I did, but nothing came of it,” she said.

“The general feeling had been, that because I’d made a joke of it and I tried to placate him over text, is it really worth following up? The fact that I was uncomfortable and as a young woman, I didn’t know how to call them out on it, and the fact I initially didn’t, was used against me... I was like... did I deserve to be talked about like that?”

Situations where victims are too uncomfortable to pushback against perpetrators are often miscast as consent. The conduct institutions condone and discipline has a normative influence on young impressionable students who are navigating what is acceptable and healthy, and what they ought to push back on.

Large institutions like colleges, clubs, and societies, are often incentivised to not properly address these issues, because doing so prolongs the cycle of public scrutiny on their approach to sexual harassment.

“I think that a lot of them have the incentive to just kind of push this out off the agenda as much as they possibly can, which often looks like only taking very minimal action,” said Wallman.

Sachi also spoke of the the futility of reporting repeat offenders.

“There was one person who, every few weeks there was an allegation against, and they just kept moving him around from room to room within the facilities,” she said.

“There was one person who, every few weeks there was an allegation against, and they just kept moving him around from room to room.”

At the same time, a friend of Sachi was kicked out of the college for subletting her room over the winter break, contrary to her contract, leaving a mark on her rental history, unlike those who had been internally relocated. As the alleged perpetrator remained, students began warning others, however these communication channels were only accessible to students in his physical orbit and visibly interacting with him in public spaces.

“They just kept moving him around. So every few months we would be like, ‘oh no, he’s gone from here to here,’ or ‘something must have happened’. ‘Oh wait, no, he’s here now, oh fuck- we should tell our friends to be careful,” she said.

“It was all kids trying to protect other kids. And it’s not just women, it was the men too. They would talk about it to each other. It was a weird whisper network where everyone was helping, but for some reason the authorities wouldn’t help. It just became like a point of commiseration for everyone, especially in our women of colour group, because everyone knew that everyone else had a story about it. So there would be a lot of sympathy and a lot of love that would come from us. But there was no official avenue that we knew of that we could talk to.”

After experiencing assault, it is often unclear where to go in the first instance. There are multiple points of contact that provide confusing responses and pushback, be it vague requests for more information or a referral elsewhere. When making a report, you may have to re-tell your story multiple times, to friends, to the college and then to university bureaucracy.

For students like Sachi, who live in off-campus accommodation run by external providers like UniLodge, the complaints process is different. When disclosures are made, either directly through official bureaucratic channels or via understaffed and inadequately trained RAs, they are investigated by a company that has little incentive to act and no power to deliver academic repercussions.

A current issue is that complaints of sexual assault are often made through the same processes as bullying and academic misconduct claims, the University Registrar, and are not trauma-informed. If you are assaulted, you suddenly become burdened further by having to navigate this bureaucratic system and a mass of documentation requests.

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Finding support

Students encounter numerous confusing and decentralised systems when seeking support. During what ended up being her final semester, Sachi found herself in a depressive state, no longer going to class or handing in assignments, developing a dependency on alcohol and ultimately being placed on academic probation. The waiting times for university counselling made psychological support inaccessible.

“It was really difficult to really navigate the processes at the time, especially as a young kid. I think if I was thrown into that situation now, in my twenties, I would be a lot more confident about where to go, what to do,” she said.

“But that guidance isn’t really given to students. We were children, we were teenagers, you know, so to throw us into the deep end like that and to not have proper systems in place... Looking back at it there was a lot of shame around it, but it wasn’t really our fault.”

Disclosing traumatic events and navigating care systems can be a formative experience that impacts students’ trust in institutions more broadly. When nothing is done with disclosures, victims can feel like they’ve overreacted, as they struggle to trust themselves and their sense of knowing what is acceptable, confronted with the fact their judgement did not align with the University’s.

One of the most significant takeaways of the NSSS is the extent to which having an incident can deteriorate a student’s mental health. Sachi had moved interstate to pursue tertiary studies, leaving her far from home and from her primary support networks. She had no access to mental health services at the time, as most of her money went to paying rent to live in student accommodation close to campus.

“Any sort of mental health, any help at the time, any sort of authority taking seriously what was going on, not just to me, but to others who could back up what had happened or who have similar experiences, would’ve helped so much.”

“If you are in a position where you need crisis support, and support in the intermediate term, the University really doesn’t have much to offer.”

Counselling and Psychological Services at USyd (CAPS) is limited to six free sessions a year. This means that those who have experienced sexual assault or harassment may not be able to access the amount of support they need through the University, according to Wallman.

“In the broader community, waiting lists for psychologists are extremely long. If you are in a position where you need crisis support, and support in the intermediate term, the University really doesn’t have much to offer you.”

Academic purgatory

Following an assault, a student can find themselves burdened with concurrently navigating reporting an incident, securing support and appealing against academic probation. This was the case for Sachi.

“I was basically catatonic and I hadn’t left my room in about three weeks. And so many people tried to reach out. I remember there were a few friends

who knocked at the door and I heard the knock, but I was so out of it that I couldn’t even get out of bed to answer. I was at the level where I was truly one jump away. My parents got on the first flight to bring me home. I left all of my stuff and my world shrank to my family’s house when I returned. Then I received a letter basically saying I had failed,” she said.

If the census date has passed, students have to go through the bureaucracy of special considerations or discontinue without fail, and they have an arbitrary and narrow time window to do so, meaning these are only options if students can secure documentation before the time limit expires. The expectation falls on survivors to develop resilience themselves and navigate these processes just as they have experienced one of the most stressful periods of their lives.

This has been exacerbated by the Job-ready Graduates Package passed in 2020, that brought back the withdrawal date and removed access to HECS for students with a completion rate of less than half of their coursework in an academic year.

For students to comfortably continue their degrees, there needs to be reforms to Special Considerations and restrictions on degree progression. Changes as simple as providing content warnings on sexual assault can make units more accessible, allowing students to remain enrolled. Informing students of when they may be exposed to potentially re-traumatising material and providing alternatives for assessment, where they do not have a choice of stepping away, may seem small but can be the difference between a survivor being able to take a course or not, and this, on an individual level, can be really impactful.

Resistance to special considerations reforms tends to rest on the belief that accommodations will be abused by students who are ‘faking’ or overstating illness or misadventure, which erodes the University’s capacity to produce employable graduates. This fails to consider that modern workplaces are not inflexible, and that same-day GPs who sign off on such documentation have to believe students they are seeking for the first time, and rely on their accounts of their symptoms or history.

Recent changes to special considerations at USyd no longer require students to provide documentation to secure extensions of less than 5 days. This was in response to advocacy by the SRC.

Safer Communities

The establishment of the Safer Communities Offices (SCO) in select universities, including USyd in 2019, has arguably been the most substantial response to the NSSS results. Embedded within universities’ structure, the Offices centralise response and support systems, dealing with not just with sexual assault exclusively, but also bullying and harassment.

“Safer Communities centralises the bureaucratic burdens and provides students with initial discussions and emotional support. Here, referrals are made to academic adjustments or psychological services, however this often takes the form of a letter of support. The labour of applying still sits on students,” she said.

SCOs are close to best practice, according to Smith, but at USyd and UniMelb they lack a physical space for

survivors. This limits their therapeutic potential for vulnerable students and limits awareness of SCOs as a supposedly centralised service.

“If you’re going to a counselling office, there’s usually an office in a waiting room and a space that you can be in and feel safe in. We feel like that’s lacking on our campus,” said Smith.

According to Smith, SCOs are also severely under-resourced and lack sufficient trauma-informed training, specific to disclosures of sexual assault. In order for culturally-aware outreach and community development to be effective, it is imperative that the employment of staff reflects the diversity of the student population.

For Dashie Prasad, the USyd SRC Women’s Officer, the fact the service sits within the University itself rather than its student union is also problematic. The extent to which they’re willing to engage in education and bring attention to the prevalence of harassment on campus is limited, while ever it poses a reputational risk to the University. This means students’ experiences are not being collected and advocated, particularly as the evidence is that these processes are inadequate and require change

“Inherently, I think survivor-centric care is not something the University can provide because the priority for the University is its policies, its insurance and making sure it legally is protected. There is an easy solution, let the student union do it,” they said.

For Smith, SCOs should be accompanied by a full-time role such as UMSU’s Sexual Harm and Response Coordinator, which she occupies.

“University administrations take advantage of the fact there is going to be a changeover of reps every year, where conversations and advocacy can progress over a year, and then backtrack or stall,” she said.

The establishment of a full-time coordinator within UMSU has avoided this in some way. It has enabled the student union to train incoming activists, sustain pressure and compile students’ experiences with administrative processes, and build an evidence base that validates student voices, particularly when speaking to University administration who have warped perspectives about what is valid.

Where next for activism?

The National Union of Students (NUS) is encouraging student unions to join its upcoming ‘Our Turn’ campaign, where universities will be given a report card on their progress in adopting the NUS recommendations. The campaign attempts to shame universities into action, seeking capitulation by appealing to universities’ sensitivity to reputational and financial harm.

Yet the onus to ‘mark’ the report cards of each university will be placed on individual student unions, and student activists have criticised the increasing demands this will necessarily place on them.

According to Prasad, the ‘Our Turn’ campaign would require the student union to “audit the University, services and supports for sexual violence survivors.”

The end result is imposing demanding and complex work on student activists, which, according to Prasad, would not be an “effective use of their time.”

If student unions ultimately did



Honi Soit 2016 S2 W2

decide to take the initiative up, ‘Our Turn’ could succeed in keeping sexual assault on campuses at the forefront of universities’ agendas. Sustained pressure is vital to incentivising universities or residential spaces to take action to ensure student safety.

“It’s very easy to get caught up in a cycle of just moving on to what feels like the next prominent issue, and [sexual assault] kind of just sort of falls off the agenda. I think that’s like a really main thing that we need to combat,” says Wallman.

Going forward

To properly respond to the issue of sexual violence on campus requires an assessment of the nature and extent of the problem at USyd. In response to 2022’s NSSS, the University only released a summary of statistics specific to our campus in the form of an infographic.

“The University is really keen to wash their hands of any responsibility around sexual violence to their students. I think that’s reflective of them not wanting to share the entirety of the data that has come out of the NSSS,” said Prasad.

The University of Sydney proudly invests significant resources into elite athlete and academic development programs, selling itself on the role it plays in empowering students to succeed.

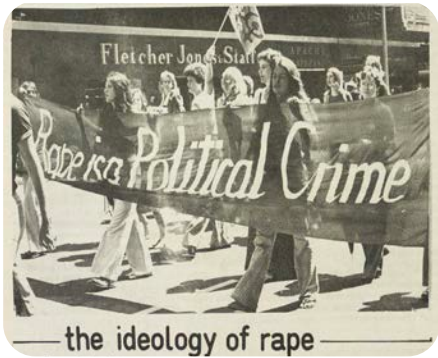
However, it has not responded to or adopted many of the welfare demands that have long been made, particularly from those who have experienced sexual violence. The University cannot both take credit for empowering its students when they want, and avoid accountability when they don’t.

Sachi has since graduated. She looks back on her experiences with the University poorly.

“I haven’t returned, and I find it too hard to reach out to the friends I made there, many who also went through similar stuff.”

For students who go on to graduate, they do so in spite of what happened to them and in spite of a lack of support. When the University tries to take credit for their successes, it is both dishonest and unjust.

* name has been changed.



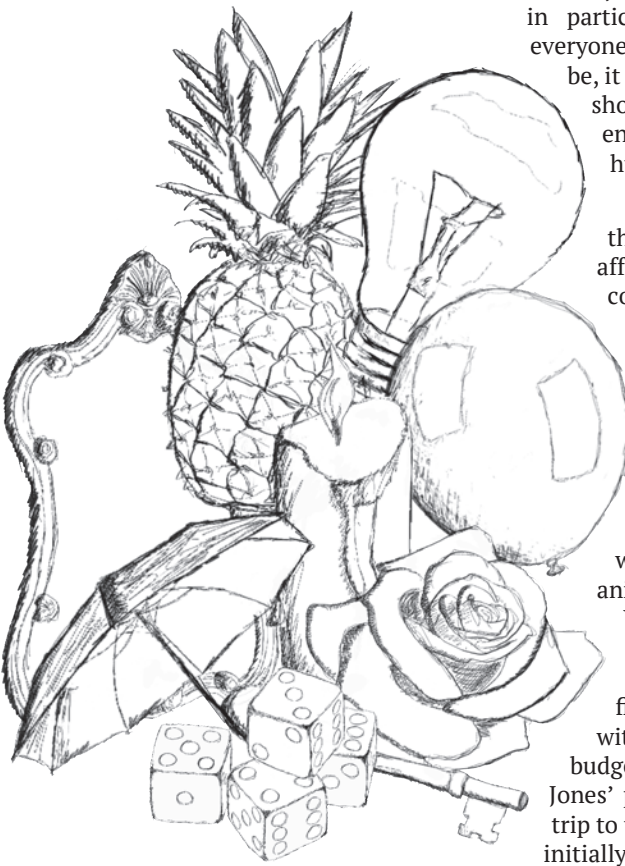
Honi Soit 1975 Issue 11

HAVE WE SEEN THE LAST OF TROPFEST?

ZANDER CZERWANIW REWINDS.

Adam Spencer could barely hear what Tropfest founder John Polson was saying, even as he sat merely a metre away. They were both cooped up in a dressing room in the lead up to the annual short film festival and the rain outside would not relent. Like many years previous, Spencer was due to host the world’s largest short film festival in Sydney’s Domain. Each year, thousands of sub-seven-minute films would be submitted in the hopes of becoming one of the 16 finalists shown on the night to a crowd of fans and a panel of celebrity judges. Enthusiasm aside, Spencer couldn’t help but wonder: “Who would turn up to watch films in the rain?”

As three o’clock turned to four o’clock, the crowds began to drizzle in. A break in the weather saw an eventual turnout of close to 50,000 people, all huddled beneath umbrellas on their picnic blankets and waiting for the action. At the time, Tropfest had grown rapidly from a small event in Darlinghurst’s Tropicano cafe to what seemed like an unstoppable cultural force; each year attracting the likes of Baz Luhrmann, Susan Sarandon, George Miller, Salma Hayek, Nicole Kidman, and more — a feat that Spencer says must be attributed to Polson. But just over a decade later, the Academy Awards for backyard filmmaking are AWOL. The festival hasn’t taken place since its abrupt end in February 2019; and no future date has been carved out in Sydney’s post-COVID calendar.



Filmmakers were first initially concerned when, at the last event, there was not an announcement of a Tropfest Signature Item (TSI) for the following year. Introduced in the festival’s second year with ‘muffin’, the TSI was required to be incorporated into each film — a way of showcasing that they had been tailored and made for Tropfest. In the months that followed, filmmakers waited for a new TSI to be announced, or a sign that the festival would return. Then quietly in December 2019, the Festival confirmed that Tropfest would not return in February 2020. The festival was seemingly dead for the second time in just five years.

"Tropfest had grown rapidly from a small event in Darlinghurst’s Tropicano cafe to what seemed like an unstoppable cultural force."

“One of the things that made Tropfest stand out from other festivals was that John Polson seemed to understand instinctively that it had to be more than just another film festival,” says *Rake* actor Matt Day, whose film *The Mother Situation* won the festival in 2017. “It had to be a calendar event, which of course is what it very quickly became. The film industry — and the Sydney film industry in particular — is very cliquey and everyone is looking for the right place to be, it helped that the films were truly short and more often than not entertaining, which drew in the huge crowds.”

Like many other Tropfests, the 2012 festival was a rainy affair. Winner Alethea Jones could barely hear Geoffrey Rush announce she had won, before hurrying out on stage and being warned by Cate Blanchett that the weather had bisected her trophy. Her film *Lemonade Stand* was written by a friend, Tim Potter, and made hurriedly in six weeks. It featured a hybrid of 2D animation and live-action footage. While stylistically impactful, it was a creative choice spawned out of the impracticalities of filming a child running around with a knife on such a tight budget. Like many other winners, Jones’ prize was an all-expenses paid trip to the United States. Jones had not initially planned to use the trip straight

away until she received a call out of the blue from Polson. “He kind of kicked me out of the nest,” Jones said. “He told me ‘You’re going to America, we have a bunch of events in America, you have to use your prize.’”

Polson had called following several previous winners not taking up the opportunity. “I’m really glad he did that because I get the vibe that women, especially young women, sometimes wait till they’re perfect,” Jones mused. “Whereas I have noticed that men just threw themselves into these huge situations in a fearless way. And I was waiting to be ready. I didn’t feel ready.”

Jones acquired an agent shortly after her arrival in America. “I don’t think the Australian [film] industry knew what to do with me at the time. I felt from my perspective, the young filmmakers that were rising in the industry were making these really powerful dramas and I was making these goofy, bright comedies. And when I got to America, people knew exactly what to do with me. I got my first job on the back of Lemonade Stand.”

"Young filmmakers that were rising in the industry were making these really powerful dramas and I was making these goofy, bright comedies."

While largely a family event, full of picnic blankets and food trucks, it also provided many young Australians their first brush with the entertainment industry. Years before comedian Dan Illic was a finalist in 2011 with his film *Y2Gay*, he was an 18-year-old attendee at Tropfest 2000 and managed to collect a VIP lanyard from a leaving celebrity. “I can tell you being inside a VIP area legitimately is a whole lot less fun than being inside a VIP area illegitimately,” Illic said. “You really feel like once you’ve crashed a VIP area that you’ve won something. You’ve won the prize of being amongst people who are richer and better looking than you. It’s a great prize for a kid from the suburbs who never thought he’d ever work in show business legitimately.”

After Rob Carlton’s mockumentary *Carmichael and Shane*, starring his infant sons, won Tropfest 2006, Carlton and his wife were invited abroad to the Tropfest showcase at the Tribeca Film Festival. This trip would be their first time away from their young children. “By the time we got to the festival, I was missing them

terribly,” recalls Carlton. “No words can describe just how magical it was to see their faces again, except this time on a 60ft screen in Battery Park, with the Statue of Liberty in the background.”

But Tropfest has not been without its flaws. In 2012, the Arts Law Centre of Australia criticised the festival for making finalists sign over the exclusive licence and rights in perpetuity to their films (a decision that Tropfest reversed in 2016). Three winners between 2008 and 2013 were accused of plagiarism, and in 2013 the winning film, *Bamboozled*, was accused of being transphobic and homophobic. The film depicted a man reconnecting and hooking up with his recently transitioned ex, only to find out it is a prank set up by a TV show. Speaking to the *Guardian* in 2016, Polson said, “We’re not perfect. I know [with] that film if we had our time again it might have gone down very differently. But you’ve got to take those on the chin and say, ‘OK, let’s try and do better next time.’”

Throughout its run, the festival also struggled to escape critiques that it rewarded filmmakers who were firmly in the industry or Tropfest alumni, rather than more emerging or diverse voices. When the festival was cancelled due to financial mismanagement in 2015, filmmaker Michael Taylor rejoiced, writing in *Mumbrella* that Tropfest “required filmmakers to submit unoriginal stories with cheesy dialogue, heavily-inspired low-brow humour and the inclusion of a B or C grade celebrity to be considered for selection.”

"From 2001–2010 a rival anti-corporate event called ‘Squatfest’ was run in abandoned and improvised venues around the city."

From 2001-2010 a rival anti-corporate event called ‘Squatfest’ was run in abandoned and improvised venues around the city. Showing their own program of films, the artists rejected the rising budgets and corporatisation of Tropfest Finalists.

When asked if, in his perspective, the festival favoured big names, Matt Day said: “Maybe, sometimes. Was that always a bad thing? I don’t think so. The massive crowds and the attention the festival drew speak[s] for itself. It had a

ART BY SAM RANDLE

hugely positive impact on the industry, and we can only hope for something this ambitious and wildly successful. Our industry sure could use it.”

The 2015 cancellation sent greater shockwaves than the one that came in late 2019. At that point, Tropfest had grown to be an international affair, with subsidiaries running to different grades of success in New Zealand, South East Asia, the US, and Arabia. One month out from the festival, Polson released a statement saying that the festival had been cancelled due to “terrible and irresponsible mismanagement.” Legal action was launched against the company licensed with the running

of the festival and the bill to revive the event was picked up by sponsor CGU Insurance. Fans rallied to the revived festival on Valentine’s Day, with 100,000 people attending the rescheduled event in Centennial Park. Twelve months later, the location was shifted to Parramatta Park, now under the administration of a not-for-profit. Crowds began to dwindle to the 40,000 mark (which in fairness, is still as big as the SCG) and weather conditions ranging from extreme heat to wild storms would put a damper on the following years.

It’s hard to blame Tropfest’s decline on one specific factor. Streaming services

and YouTube have provided newer ways to consume content, but it doesn’t replace the in-person elements that attracted crowds and celebrities alike. Relocating to Parramatta moved the festival away from the traditional crowds of the Inner West and Eastern Suburbs as well, and the change to a Saturday night instead of Sunday introduced more events for the festival to compete with.

In a recent email, the City of Sydney said that they were not involved with any upcoming Tropfest events and had not been associated with the event for many years. The City of Parramatta also confirmed that they were not working with the festival at this point in time.

When asked for comment, Polson said, “After laying low during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are now finally entertaining opportunities for relaunching Tropfest, hopefully for our 30th anniversary in 2023. While conversations are still very early, we are hopeful that we will be able to announce plans about our next steps in the very near future.”

While any renewed push for Tropfest would have to find a place in Sydney’s calendar between the Sydney Film Festival and the upcoming SXSW, hopefully, we will soon see the return of a grassroots platform for filmmakers.

TRANSITIONS TRANSISTORS TRANSLATION

How to speak to your sister

MOTH is one of my siblings, and listening to the album throughout its production has helped me better understand who she is and the nature of our relationship. In a way that straight talking often couldn’t (no pun intended), listening to and discussing her music bridged a communicative chasm in our relationship.

I’m a bit of a guy, which means talking about *things* comes easily, but talking about *feelings* (without precedent) is challenging. Fortunately, I’m very close with my siblings and we talk often, but my relationship with MOTH has been tightly interwoven with our shared interests: video games, emo music, and radical politics.

Moving from Melbourne to Sydney for university meant hanging out only once every few months. When we did, those in the same room would be assaulted by increasingly-raised voices as we explained the newest theory I’d read about, a great album she’d discovered, and, eventually, my shitty bass playing alongside her excellent guitar licks. While we’d extend a courteous “how ya goin’?” whenever I arrived in Melbourne, any other inquiry about mental wellbeing was usually implied in our interactions.

But on 1 June 2020, I learnt that our approach was grossly inadequate. I remember standing in the hallway watching Dad take a call in the kitchen: MOTH had been admitted to a mental health ward for severe depression and suicidal ideation. I can count the number of times I’ve seen Dad cry on one hand; this was one of them.

I remember the difficulty of catching a breath and the feeling of my intestines knotting themselves — a sensation I relive whenever I think about it now. Suddenly, I wished I’d spent a little less time talking about *things*.

I was never oblivious to the depressed state of my sister’s mental health, but its manifestation in emergency health care was heartbreaking. Entirely sensible, but nonetheless painful.

When she walked out 10 days later, it was the first time I saw her wear makeup. She wasn’t a new person but perhaps in the process of rebirth.

‘This is the end.’, the opening track of the album, resurfaces the pain we experienced as a family during that time. It explicitly references her stay in the ward, but in the context of her transition and battle against depression, the song is triumphant and proud.

I witnessed the song go through several iterations, and each time I woke up to the latest version in my DMs, I had an opportunity to check in with my sister and express my happiness for her progress — on the song and more broadly.

Now, undoing years of habitually leaning on *things*-talk when speaking with people is difficult; I’m still working on that. However, having a *thing* to discuss — that segues into a more meaningful conversation about how someone I love is feeling — has brought much-needed depth to our communication.

Beyond that, *FLORENZER* reminds me of the rich relationship I share with both my siblings. The track ‘r u stayin with me..’ takes me back to shared memories of UK Top 40s pop rap tracks on long car rides. ‘Aphrodite’ asks its listeners to dance together shamelessly — something my family is known to do.



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DOWN MEMORY LANE: SUBURBIA AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Suburbia has its problems, but there’s something about it that moves and enthralls me.

Ellie Stephenson goes to the park.

The image of Unanderra’s Western Suburbs pool punctuates my childhood like very little else.

The pools themselves are infinitely inviting (minus the kiddie pool): the water’s frigid temperature written on a chalkboard at the entry; the beat-up change rooms; the best hot chips on planet Earth; the octogenarian lap swimmers making their slow pilgrimage up and down the lanes; kids attempting handstands in the shallow end; kids attempting elaborate dives in the deep end.

When I was quite small and it was hot, my grandma would take me there. Grandma, my sibling Anna and I, we’d bundle into the back of her silver Subaru and arrive five minutes later at the pool. Our little bare feet would hop over the carpark asphalt and through to the pool. Grandma (a slight woman just shy of 150 centimetres) would give us ‘dolphin rides’ on her back, and we’d pile back into the car with a box of hot chips and a lingering smell of chlorine. Sometimes the waves of heat would congeal into ugly, grey lightning clouds and we’d depart early, dodging the angry weather.

When I was 16, I’d give up on studying for my English trials and flip-flop down to the pool, the heat bearing down on me and warping the Princes Highway, the buzz of late spring humming in my ears. The journey was different now: I was thinking hard about Sylvia Plath, and I was keenly aware of the back of my thighs as a man leaned out of his ute to offer his commentary on them. But the destination was much the same. It was still a glinting blue oasis in the surrounding heat, the old guys still breast-stroking *ad infinitum*, the hot chips just as delicious. And, as ever, the touch of the water — deeply and essentially comforting.

“My grandpa and I, sitting in Robinson Park across the creek from my old house, making ‘poisonous stew’ with the grass clippings left by the Council mower.”

These vignettes are accompanied by others which feel very similar.

My grandpa and I, sitting in Robinson Park across the creek from my old house, making ‘poisonous stew’ with the grass clippings left by the Council mower.

The time I convinced Anna to run away with me (to Robinson Park — out of boredom or ire, I can’t recall) only to be immediately thwarted by our neighbour, sitting on her front porch with a cigarette as she often did.

The way, each Halloween, we would make only one stop: to the door of our other neighbours, to collect a treasured takeaway container of homemade Greek delight.

The time we tried to sell chokos (home grown!) out the front of our house, with sadly minimal uptake from the neighbourhood.

There are two feelings which bind these images together. The first is a sense of loss: these memories, though vivid, feel distant. They’re almost part of another era, like the tales of youth told by a very old person. The second is a strong sense of place in suburbia.

Suburbia, though often maligned, is special to me. I always feel drawn to the suburbs. When I moved to Sydney for a year, I lived in Canterbury near the Cooks River, and would go on long lazy walks through Earlwood when it was sunny. Whenever I’ve travelled, I’ve felt a similar impulse: to wander through the parts of the city imbued with intense ordinariness and humanity.

“Suburbia, though often maligned, is special to me. I always feel drawn to the suburbs.”

Detractors might say mundanity, rather than ordinariness, but I think they’re wrong. Many of our lives are set to the backdrop of suburbia. The reason suburbs are special is that underneath the same-y patchwork of backyards and the buzz of lawnmowers, they are vivid and alive.

Suburbs can have their own idiosyncrasies, their own defining feeling. Because they usually have only a few points for people to congregate — like the Western Suburbs pool — they combine people in ways which are rare in a larger and more anonymous space like the CBD.

Suburbs are used primarily for living — not for running giant businesses, not for producing goods or entertainment. It’s in suburbia where pensioners can tend to their gardens and grandchildren. You can have little shops that couldn’t afford rent anywhere else, affable delicatessens who know your birthday, and bus drivers who’ll wait when you’re running late for school. You can have big, messy families with guinea pig runs and chickens and swingsets and decrepit trampolines. You know all the kids on your street — they might climb over your fence at any moment.

But suburbs are not always like this. In fact, much of my sense of loss stems from the fact that this character of suburbs is increasingly illusory and bygone. Many of the attributes that made suburbs so delightful for my childhood self are fading away.

How can you embark on childhood odysseys with the neighbourhood kids when there are no trees to climb and no parks to roam? How can you play handball on streets where a great, hulking Hilux or Range Rover might growl past at any moment? When your suburb swelters as a heat island, how can

you explore outdoors? As your suburb gets gentrified beyond recognition, how can you hold onto the sense of belonging it once evoked?

Suburbia is not idyllic. Disadvantage is suburbanised, compartmentalised into unseen and under-resourced pockets of cyclical poverty and immobility. Where sometimes the closeness of suburbs can provide personality, it can also be confining. The fungibility of suburbia, too, can have its ills. It is too convenient to create a mass expanse of McMansions that are unfit for purpose — ecologically and socially destructive. And increasingly, suburbia is also the frontline of the climate crisis, as flood-prone, treeless, black-roofed burbs get cooked and waterlogged by turn.

What’s more, suburbs face an existential problem. As city populations swell, it is unfeasible to infinitely extend the size of suburbia. Urban sprawl becomes less and less liveable, and harder and harder to adequately resource.

What I wonder, then, is whether the valuable and meaningful parts of suburbia can be retained in a context in which suburbanisation is so problematic? What would a city look like that still gave people immediate and distinct communities, but did not suffer from atomisation and sprawl?

Crucially, the design of our suburbs must become far more intentional than it is currently. Right now, suburbs pop up sporadically, blooming like fungal growths on whichever former swamp or newly acquired piece of farmland presents itself. Little thought is devoted to the amenity of these new settlements: it is not uncommon to see a new housing estate half an hour away from any grocery store, helplessly exposed to bushfire or flood risk, entirely reliant on a single road out.

Australian house sizes are among the largest in the world. My family home — which houses six people — only very recently managed to exceed Australia’s average floor size, which houses, on average, 2.5 people. When I drive past new housing estates, I am struck by the way the

hulking houses press right to the edge of their block. The sheer size of our houses is regrettable — it needlessly increases energy use, worsens flooding through the panoply of hard surfaces, and keeps trees small and sparse. This spread of houses leads to inefficient cities: infrastructure is spread thin and travel times inflate.

“As city populations swell, it is unfeasible to infinitely extend the size of suburbia.”

Making better suburbs requires us to think hard about how to make medium-to-high density housing usable. Big houses represent, essentially, the privatisation of many functions which used to be communal. The private pool ownership rate in Australia is high, and increasing. Many new builds now have amenities like media rooms, and two car garages are almost ubiquitous in many suburbs. So to sell a vision of more condensed houses requires the provision of these benefits communally. Investing in infrastructure like public transport, pools, parks, libraries and arts centres is essential — and conveniently easier when less space is taken up with houses. To make suburbs combine people, rather than abstract them from their neighbours, suburb design needs to induce them out of the door.

The multi-decade erosion of public housing has undoubtedly contributed to the problems of suburbia. People experience dislocation as suburbs gentrify, homogenise, and hollow out. It should not be unthinkable to live near one’s childhood home, and nor should people’s connection to their place be subject to the whims of financial markets.

A quiet life in the suburbs is a cultural fascination and long-term goal for many people. Reflecting on where the appeal of suburbia really lies is a necessity, or we face a future of McMansions, SUVs and urban wastelands.



Can virtual reality ease chronic pain?

Gian Ellis-Gannell explores how VR can enhance care for chronic pain.

An estimated 3.2 million adults suffer from chronic pain in Australia. It is often debilitating, restricting the activities that those affected can undertake as well as the work that they can do. As testament to this, 40 per cent of early retirements in Australia are due to chronic pain. Further, the wide-ranging impacts of chronic pain are disproportionately experienced by vulnerable societal groups, including women, the elderly, or low socioeconomic individuals.

Despite this immense burden, chronic pain is widely misunderstood by the general public, and modern scientific understandings are rarely translated effectively into healthcare settings. To discuss this, I sat down with USyd alumna Nigel Cowan, Director of Reality Health (which produces chronic pain management tools for clinicians), and one of the clinicians who have been utilising these tools, Adelaide-based physiotherapist Leander Pronk.

The key idea that Cowan stressed was that pain is a real sensation, and it is never just “in your head”; But, it is always “in your brain”.

Traditional pain management has focused on the idea of causation — pain in your back or neck is because of an injury to that area. But sometimes you may continue to experience pain even after the injury has seemingly healed, leading you to experience restricted movement due to a fear of ‘aggravating’ the site. This conceptualisation of pain is much more likely to lead patients towards unnecessary, invasive surgeries and procedures. By attempting to treat the harm instead of the hurt, such solutions may also only give mild relief.

However, what we see here is an overinflation of *hurt* (pain) to mean *harm* (damage to the body). Our central nervous system equips us with a “pain alarm” that is designed to protect us from danger (think when you avoid walking on a sprained ankle). And, just like most alarms, sometimes the signals that our bodies send us are false, causing us to experience pain when there is no danger. A great example of this is the muscle soreness you feel the morning after a particularly gruelling sprint to class — the pain is real, but that alarm doesn’t signal danger. And, when you’re running late for class the next time, you might even find it a little easier. This is the modern understanding of chronic pain.

“Virtual reality offers one way to equip yourself with the knowledge to navigate the terrain of chronic pain”

Just like muscle soreness, with chronic pain, the hurt is no longer signalling danger. That very real, very *unpleasant* pain may be an overprotective response left over from when our bodies *were* once in danger. Unfortunately, the anxiety developed trying to avoid this pain actively impedes recovery. Every time we stop ourselves from making that sprint gradually causes a loss of muscle mass, reduction in quality of life (now you’re late to class), and reinforces the faulty alarm.

Why such a long preface you may wonder?

Board Chair Atticus Fleming said “the survival is great news”.

Notably, the rediscovered group is genetically different to the last disparate populations found, following population decline due to the introduction of rats in 1918. Fleming has explained that “Lord Howe Island really is a spectacular place, it’s older than the Galápagos islands and is home to 1,600 native invertebrate species, half of which are found nowhere else in the world.

“These cockroaches are almost like our very own version of Darwin’s finches, separated on little islands over thousands or millions of years developing their own unique genetics,” he said.

The team have plans to continue researching the population to better understand their “habitat, behaviours, and genetics and learn more about how they managed to survive, through further experiments on the island,” said head of the Molecular Ecology, Evolution, and Phylogenetics (MEEP) Lab in the School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Professor Lo.

ART BY AMELIA KOEN

Congratulations. Reconceptualising the pain you experience is a precursor to successful rehabilitation. This is not to say that awareness is a cure all. It is far from it. However, chronic pain is a disorder of the Central Nervous System, meaning that it has “sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural elements” which can be treated through pharmacological *and* psychological interventions. This is where VR comes in.

Cowan discussed the extensive clinical trials occurring throughout Europe, utilising VR technology to essentially ‘re-calibrate’ body perception of the affected area, reversing maladaptive brain plasticity and thus ‘correcting’ the faulty pain alarm.

Though Australia’s technology is not quite there yet, Cowen’s company Reality Health utilises the immersive experience of VR to provide patients with a more compelling understanding of pain than the one I provided above. Sensory experiences, such as that of vertigo from looking over a cliff ledge, are used to explain pain management and the principles of neuroplasticity. He presented the immersive education provided through VR as an underutilised way to start the rehabilitation journey of those experiencing chronic pain. It is available in select practices, and they are hoping to expand in the future.

Cowan also described their utilisation of the VR embodiment phenomenon discussed in a previous article. Patients suffering from chronic pain can be immersed in a VR game that distracts their sensory system. Whilst this occurs, a table or chair is gradually shifted to increase the patients’ range of motion. When shown a video of themselves playing

Free ganja testing for ACT residents

Sam Randle hashes it out.

The University of Sydney has commenced a program of freely testing marijuana samples sent in by Australian Capital Territory (ACT) residents with results coming out in early 2023. Residents outside the ACT are not eligible to participate.

Growers can fill out a survey and request to send in their homegrown cannabis for anonymous testing at the University. Researchers will analyse the samples and generate a report for cannabinoid content (including THC and CBD) and contaminants such as pesticides or heavy metals.

The so-called CAN-ACT study is part of the University’s Lambert Initiative for Cannabinoid Therapeutics which launched in 2015 following a \$33.7 million donation.

As part of the Initiative, researchers are trying to understand community use of cannabinoid therapeutics, including homegrown cannabis. Beyond their recreational psychoactive effects, new research suggests cannabinoids might be useful in reducing anxiety and seizure risk.

Lead researcher Professor Iain McGregor explained that many growers are enjoying therapeutic benefits from their cannabis consumption and the

the game, the patient’s confidence in their bodies increases.

Leander Pronk has been using this VR tool in his physiotherapy practice for over a year, and describes how it encourages patients to engage in physical rehabilitation. The fun, interactive nature of the content allowed for white coat anxiety to be bypassed. When asked to pinpoint the difference that VR education made, Pronk noted how it had changed the delivery of information to his patients.

“It’s not just me talking to them,” he said. “VR is compelling.” Rather than the overwhelming cacophony of medical jargon that inundates those with chronic pain, VR *shows* users through interactive experiences.

Even though it’s not helpful with all forms of chronic pain, from his experiences so far it shows great promise as an adjunct treatment. He described the reassurance that some hurt won’t cause harm as being the most important educational message provided by the VR experience, as this can often be enough to “encourage patients to try even just light chores around the house” — helping to gradually increase mobility and quality of life. Of course, it is largely helpful in conjunction with physical activity and other personalised treatments.

Regardless of limits to its application, Pronk is a dedicated advocate of chronic pain education in Australia. If there’s one thing that I want to stress in this article, it is that chronic pain is both a common and a complex condition. So, as much as you’re certainly not alone, your experiences are entirely individual, and virtual reality offers one way to equip yourself with the knowledge to navigate the terrain of chronic pain.

research will help users better understand what they are taking.

“Growers who are achieving profound therapeutic effects with cannabis are naturally curious about what their cannabis contains. The CAN-ACT study was inspired by an ACT resident who was growing cannabis to help treat his wife’s advanced cancer,” he said in a statement to the University.

Since the decriminalisation of cannabis in the ACT in 2020, residents have been able to use cannabis for recreational and medicinal purposes. Individuals over 18 years old are permitted to possess 50g of dried cannabis (or 150g if wet) and two plants, with no more than four plants per household.

The local community has experienced several benefits including a 90 per cent reduction in cannabis-related offences.

While the ACT remains the only state to have passed decriminalisation legislation, the Greens are expected to release a draft bill later this year for federal legislation.

Results from CAN-ACT study may help contribute to revisions to the draft by providing an empirical analysis on cannabis use and chemical composition in the ACT.

Bring Julian home, an open letter

To the Australian public and Prime Minister

Regarding the trial and extradition of Julian Assange,

Signed by the young journalists of Australia.

Will Solomon

The Australian journalist Julian Assange is being held in the United Kingdom's high-security Belmarsh Prison. His health is rapidly deteriorating. Assange has been in detention since 2019, having spent the seven years prior in London's Ecuadorian Embassy where he sought political asylum. He awaits extradition to the United States on 17 charges under the *Espionage Act 1917* (USA) relating to his position as Editor-in-chief at *WikiLeaks*.

In this letter, we will make the case that the Australian Government is obliged to intervene in the extradition process to have the charges against Assange dropped and to have him brought safely home. We ask that you read this letter in full and with an open mind. We hope it motivates you, in a time marked by waning journalistic standards and commitment to truth, to join those voicing the need for intervention.

It is an irrefutable and troubling fact that during the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars the United States and its allies, including Australia, were responsible for the negligent and at times intentional killing of thousands of civilians, and that during and after those conflicts it was the policy of Western intelligence agencies, chiefly the Anglophone intelligence network, to suppress knowledge of these murders.

It is irrefutable, for instance, that on 15 March 2006 US forces in Ishaqi, Iraq committed the extrajudicial execution of a household of 11 civilians, five of whom were children, by restraining them with handcuffs and executing each with a bullet to the head. It is irrefutable, also, that on 4 March 2007 a group of US Marines in Shinwar, Afghanistan indiscriminately shot and killed 19 unarmed civilians, wounding a further 50, while retreating from the aftermath of a suicide attack. It is irrefutable that on 12 July 2007 a US Apache helicopter flying a sortie over Baghdad, Iraq killed two *Reuters* journalists and 16 other civilians, a crewmember laughing "Oh yeah, look

at those dead bastards" as they did so.

These claims can be described as 'irrefutable' because a brave and uncompromising cohort of whistleblowers and journalists were willing to secure and disseminate what are known as the 'Iraq War logs', 'Afghan War Diary', and 'Cablegate' files: a series of documents that were held by US intelligence agencies and kept from public disclosure. The examples above are only a selection of the revelations that characterise these leaks — they were published, in part, over the course of 2010 by *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Al Jazeera*, *Der Spiegel*, and *WikiLeaks*. These publications were provided the material by *WikiLeaks*, who in turn received it chiefly from the whistleblower Chelsea Manning, a former intelligence officer of the United States Army. Most of the contents of these three leaks, some tens of thousands of documents, remain unpublished owing to the way the United States Government responded to initial publications.

Reckoning with these crimes as Australians is confronting: innocent people, a startling number of whom were children, were murdered. While the civilian death tolls of both wars — ~180,000 in Iraq and ~45,000 in Afghanistan — are the egregious and senseless result of the interventions in their entirety, it is abhorrent that evidence exists of specific instances of murder, committed by identifiable combatants, and that this evidence spurred no criminal investigations or charges.

These murders occurred in wars prefaced on ending human rights abuses and bringing about democracy; the unfortunate irony in this fact seems to have been lost. Not only was the decision of intelligence agencies to censor access to this information dishonest, it was utterly undemocratic. The Australian public had then, and maintains now, the right to know when crimes are committed on our behalf and in our names. So too does the American public, and other nations represented in the coalition forces, and the world at large. Freedom of information is a prerequisite to functioning democracy. A state that is no longer accountable to its public but instead to an intelligence network should no longer describe itself as democratic.

The justification given by intelligence agencies for the suppression of this material is simple: public access to it amounted to a national security risk, be that the security of the United States or its allies. The logic of such an argument is left wanting — the risk to a state's security in having its crimes exposed is unclear. Even if we accept this assertion, why, in a country that has

proven itself capable of prosecuting while simultaneously limiting access to sensitive information, were no charges ever brought against those responsible for the crimes these documents evidence? The sanctity of 'national security', a term with indefinite scope, proves itself a useful guise for omitting responsibility. The harm suffered by the United States and its allies was, plainly, to their legitimacy as democratic global actors.

How, then, can we, the Australian public, remain idle when an Australian faces the prospect of life in the torturous and dehumanising confines of an American high-security prison — the same carceral system that drove Chelsea Manning to attempt to end her life in similar circumstances?

While those responsible for the murders documented in these leaks have never been held to account, Assange, on the other hand, faces 170 years in prison across seventeen charges. Not only is the principled case for Assange's release clear, but the legal foundations these seventeen charges rest on are dubious.

To date, there exists no precedent in which the *Espionage Act 1917* (USA) has been used to convict a person for disclosing secure information that was not an employee of the United States Government. While federal employment is not a requirement under the Act, where similar charges have existed no conviction has ever been reached. It was the stance of the Obama administration that pressing charges against Assange under the Act would set a dangerous precedent that would infringe the rights of journalists — the charges were later unsealed by the Department of Justice under Donald Trump as the statutes of limitations neared their end.

The scope of who has been charged under the Act is also odd: Chelsea Manning, then a US Federal Government employee, was court-martialed and convicted under the Act in 2011 for her involvement but had her sentence commuted by the Obama administration. What's more, publications like *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Al Jazeera*, and *Der Spiegel* are equally incriminated for acquiring and publishing the leaked material. By the standard of involvement set by the charges levelled at Assange, half a dozen parties should share culpability but he alone faces punishment.

In the past, whistleblowers and journalists were assured immunity. The publication of documents pertaining to the public interest held in secrecy by government agencies is a historical function of investigative journalism — there is nothing new about the kind of work Assange performed. He held a mirror up to agencies behaving with impunity and now faces the wrath of an embarrassed and empowered security apparatus.

If the information Assange disseminated was fundamentally within the public interest; if it was the stance of the Obama administration that convicting Assange would set a dangerous legal precedent allowing



Art by
Yasodara Puhule-Gamayalage

for the targeted persecution of investigative journalists; if the standard of culpability held by Assange is shared by the editors-in-chief of a number of news outlets that were never charged; if Chelsea Manning had her sentence commuted for her role whistleblowing; if the Whitehouse is now occupied by a Democratic President who served as Vice-President in that very Obama administration; if that President maintains the right to intervene and have Assange's charges dropped; and if that President shares amicable relations with our Prime Minister, why hasn't the PM picked up the phone?

It is feasible that the Australian Government could secure Assange's release and return to his home country. It is necessary. To say "it's none of our business" is to ignore that Australian soldiers fought in those wars, that Assange is an Australian, and that defending the rights of journalists, Australian or not, should always be the business of supporters of democracy.

Please Prime Minister Albanese, make the call. Bring Julian home.

Will Solomon

Signed, the editors of

Honi Soit, the University of Sydney;

Carmeli Argana, Christian Holman, Amelia Koen, Sam Randle, Fabian Robertson, Thomas Sargeant, Ellie Stephenson, Khanh Tran, Zara Zadro.

Farrago, the University of Melbourne;

Nishtha Banavalikar, Jasmine Pierce, Charlotte Waters

Vertigo, the University of Technology Sydney;

Clara Atkin, Joseph Hathaway-Wilson, Ashley Sullivan, Joey Chalita, Jess Prowse, Sophia Ramos, Alexander Kingsford, Andy Lee.

Semper Floreat, University of Queensland;

Jack Mackenzie, Isabella Towers, Alexandra Tolley, Cloey Capewell, Eric Yun, Hamish Barnett, Grace Cameron.

Declaration of Final Results

2022 Annual Elections

Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney



I congratulate all candidates who ran in the elections for their performance and engagement in student democracy. I hereby declare the following candidates elected:

President

Lia Perkins ELECTED UNCONTESTED

Honi Soit

SHAKE for Honi ELECTED UNCONTESTED

Delegates to the National Union of Students

Order Of Election	Ticket Name	Candidate Name	Quota Elected At	Votes At Election (Before Distribution)
1	Left Action for NUS	Maddie Clark	213.675000	488.000000
2	Switch for NUS	Jasmine Donnelly	213.675000	261.000000
3	Grassroots for NUS	Deaglan Godwin	213.675000	258.000000
4	Left Action for NUS	Simon Upitis	213.370882	273.250512
5	Amplify for NUS	Henri Collyer	178.448929	196.880953
6	Lift for NUS	Aileen Tan	157.945197	183.291109
7	Students FIRST	Keiron Marc Lee	157.945197	163.772845

Representatives to Council

Quota = 42. Effective quota at end of election = 40.

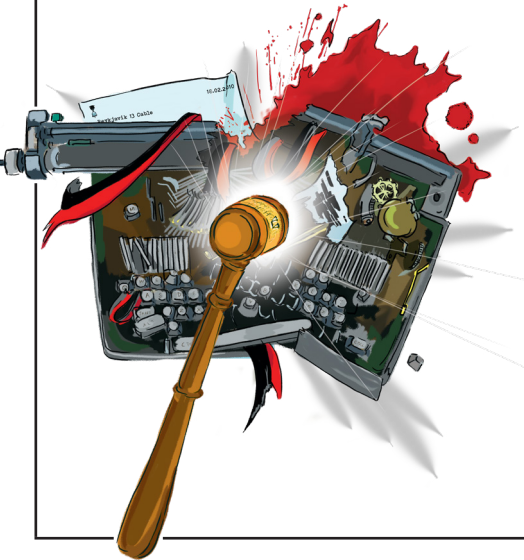
Elected At Count:	Ticket Name	Candidate Name	Vote At End Of Count
Primary	Left Action 4 Climate Justice	Simon Upitis	213.00
Primary	Left Action Against Racism	Jasmine Al-Rawi	114.00
Primary	Student Left Alliance	Angus Dermody	106.00
Primary	LIFT for ENVIRONMENT	Thomas Thorpe	71.00
Primary	Left Action 4 Staff Strikes	Deaglan Godwin	68.00
Primary	Engineers for SRC	Emily Mackay	64.00
Primary	Penta for Uni Life	Bowen Gao	51.00
Primary	SWITCH FOR SRC	Lauren Lancaster	45.00
Primary	Artistry for SRC	Alexander Poirier	43.00
Primary	Penta for Network	Lily Wei	42.00
Count 10	Left Action 4 Climate Justice	Yasmine Johnson	171.20
Count 10	Left Action Against Racism	Owen Marsden-Readford	70.11
Count 10	Student Left Alliance	James Sheriff	63.79
Count 13	Left Action 4 Climate Justice	Maddie Clark	128.44
Count 14	Left Action 4 Climate Justice	Julius Whitforth	87.44
Count 15	Left Action 4 Climate Justice	Akee Elliott	44.92
Count 60	SWITCH FOR EQUITY	Eliza Genevieve Crossley	42.29
Count 63	GRASSROOTS FOR SRC	Lia Perkins	42.23
Count 70	Grassroots for Climate Action	Tiger Perkins	43.05
Count 73	SWITCH AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA	Jordan Anderson	42.11
Count 75	GYMBROS for SRC	Satvik Sharma	42.53
Count 75	GRASSROOTS AGAINST CUTS	Harrison Brennan	42.16
Count 80	Amplify for STEM	Jack Scanlan	42.82
Count 87	GRASSROOTS FOR FEMINISM	Zoe Coles	42.46
Count 89	Grassroots for Free Education	Ishbel Dunsmore	41.44
Count 89	Amplify for Campus	Jasmine Donnelly	41.22
Count 89	Your Mom for SRC	Belinda Thomas	41.15
Count 89	Independents for Change	Michael Grenier	41.04
Count 89	STAND UP FOR STUDENT WELFARE	Daniel O'Shea	38.45
Count 89	Colleges for SRC	Bryson Constable	38.18
Count 89	Left Action Against Racism	Peter Gu	37.93
Count 89	LIFT for WOMEN	Qiana Harvey	35.42
Count 89	Student Left Alliance	Honey Christensen	35.25
Count 89	Engineers for Mental Health	Victor Zhang	34.23
Count 89	GRASSROOTS FOR DECOLONISATION	Rand Khatib	34.13
Count 89	LIFT for ENVIRONMENT	Cooper Gannon	33.98
Count 89	Engineers for SRC	Matylda Hayne	31.70
Count 89	Left Action 4 Staff Strikes	Ella Haid	31.24
Count 89	Penta of Mingle	Clare Liu	30.36
Count 89	Amplify for Student Welfare	Annabelle Jones	30.34
Count 89	I N T E R P O L for STEM	Emma Garrett	30.12

Sincerely,

Riki Scanlan

2022 SRC Electoral Officer

10 October 2022



President

Lauren Lancaster.

The most important thing to remember this week is WE STRIKE AGAIN THURSDAY + FRIDAY, 13 & 14 OCTOBER!

I don't feel that I need to rehash why the strikes continue, because at this stage if you are 1. Reading my report or 2. Thinking about strikes, you probably have a position on them already. I'll see you on the pickets early on Thursday, or at worst, DO NOT GO TO CLASS, irl or on Zoom! The SRC will be closing in solidarity on both days. Thanks for your understanding as we stand with NTEU staff!

This week was busy! We had council on Wednesday where we heard from a number of First Nations students on the University's proposed changes to the documentation accepted as Confirmation of Aboriginality or Torres Strait Islander identity. I worked with some of these students on a motion expressing discontent with the changes as they stand, and calling for more consultation in open fora by the

University. We look forward to hearing from them and working collaboratively to ensure student concerns are addressed and resolved in a constructive, sensitive manner. Thank you to Ben McGrory and others for bringing this to the Council's attention.

Council was positive and productive beyond the above motion too. A few highlights were the Iraanian feminist solidararity motion and picture, which gained traction across our socials, and a motion in support of the federal Legalise Cannabis bill! All the new councilors elected in the recent elections should get excited for RepsElect, our meeting to elect the 2023 Officebearers which is happening next week.

Following my application to University Executive a number of weeks ago, I have been advised that the following projects are being recommended for approval and endorsement at UE Education Committee:

1. SRC server upgrade and IT improvements
2. Permanent increase to the Honi Soit editor stipend (as enjoyed by this years' editors)
3. A \$5000 translation allowance for SRC documents
4. An extra Caseworker for the team
5. Publications wages and the addition of a social media intern stipend

I want to be clear these have not yet been formally endorsed by the Committee. However, it is my opinion we can be cautiously optimistic and I will update the Council when we are notified of the official outcome.

I have been working with UKMSL, Pubs and Admin on the back-end surveys and initial design decisions for the website. It should be largely ready for data input by mid-November and launch

by December for the new Council and OBs to use. Last but not least, the Casework service is experiencing unprecedented loads and I have been working with the Exec and Casework Manager to make arrangements for the Service during their leave later in the Semester. This load increase is unlikely to be an issue that abates, so I will also be working with the President-elect for 2023 to plan a comprehensive handover such that we can do some more long-term planning to ensure the health of the service.

Lia and I are starting to piece together the SSAF application for 2023. It's a big job but we are hoping to apply for a number of new projects in addition to the base extensions and regular projects the SRC has to offer.

See you on campus, or the pickets later in the week!

Solidarity, Lauren

Contract Cheating & the Consequences



What is contract cheating?

The University defines contract cheating as getting someone to complete part or all of your assessment (hand in or exam). This includes:

- buying an assignment from a tutoring company
- having a friend complete some of your assessment
- having someone coach you through an assessment
- using a model answer from a tutoring website or social media (e.g., facebook or wechat)
- uploading or downloading lecture notes, assignments or exams to an information sharing site, e.g., CourseHero, Github, CHEGG, or
- getting someone to do your exam.

Is it serious?

The University considers contract cheating very seriously. It puts your integrity and the integrity of your course at risk. It also leaves you vulnerable to blackmail in the future, where we have seen some students being threatened with being exposed to the University, family, or future employers, if they did not pay an ongoing "fee". The likely penalty for contract cheating is a suspension from the Uni for a semester or two.

How can you get help for your assessments?

If you need help with your assessments the best place to start is with your tutor. Ask them to clarify information you do not fully understand. If you are not satisfied with the help you are getting

from your tutor, talk to your lecturer or subject coordinator about getting extra help. Tell them the websites or tutoring supports that you would like to use and ask them if it is ok. If you are in any facebook or wechat groups for your subjects, do not use any answers to assessment questions that are published, nor should you share any answers or course notes. Be aware that most of those groups have members who are contract cheaters who are there to try to make money. It is extremely likely that anytime you use sites like CHEGG, Github or CourseHero that you will be accused of contract cheating, so it is best to completely avoid these sites. If you are working with another student on an assignment only talk generally about the concepts, rather than specifically discussing the structure or content of your assignment. Do not make notes while you talk. Do not give them a copy of your assignment or take a copy of theirs.

What if you are accused of academic dishonesty?

SRC Caseworkers can help you to respond to allegations of academic dishonesty or academic misconduct. Start by reading our leaflet to get a better understanding of your situation, then book an appointment by calling the office on 9660 5222. The SRC is independent of the University and caseworkers will give you confidential advice.

Ask Abe

SRC caseworker help Q&A

Missed Exam?



Hey Abe,

I'm super stressed because I muddled up the times of my exams and have missed one. I was very well prepared and did quite well in the assessments. How can I get a chance to do the exam?

Thanks,
Muddled

Hey Muddled,

I am sorry to hear about your mix up. It is completely understandable that you would make a mistake while you are stressed and busy. However, the University does not consider this to

be a sufficient explanation of why you missed the exam. If prior to the exam you were very unwell (including mentally unwell due to stress or anxiety) you would see a GP on the day of your exam and get a PPC to show that you were "very severely" affected by your illness, or "completely unable to study". You could then apply for special consideration, within 3 working days of the exam, which may allow you to complete the replacement exam. Alternatively, you could try contacting your subject coordinator to see if they are willing to make some sort of informal alternative for you. This is not usually possible, but it is certainly worth asking.

Thanks,
Abe

General Secretaries

Alana Ramshaw and Grace Lagan.

Dear diary, it's been a while!

Staff and students are striking on Thursday and Friday! You know the drill by now. Join the pickets! Do not attend classes (even the ones on zoom)!

Since our last report, Alana attended a number of protests including the September 24 Climate strike. The USyd contingent, small but mighty, made it into the front foyer of the Labor office but not much further. "Sad" - Alana; "Sad but for different reasons" - Grace.

I (Alana) also attended the Abolish the Monarchy Day of Protest, the latter chaired by the inimitable Lizzi Jarrett. A rally against Black deaths in custody has been called for the 22nd of October at midday at Town Hall. If you're reading this, show up.

Rad Ed is almost at its end! Last week the wonderful Ishbel ran a session on the BLF and the Green Bans — thank you to her and everyone who attended. Keep an eye out on socials for our end of series

closing party (raffle prizes to be handed out!)

We've been having chats with convenors about preselections for next year and coordinating plans for the final stretch of their terms. We've begun creating and compiling handover resources for the poor sods who will succeed us in December. Whoever they are, they'll never do it like us. We are also looking forward to helping out with FoodHub for the rest of the sem.

Stay safe in this temperamental weather!

Love, for the penultimate time,

Your General Secretaries (and Amadeus co-review writers)

Vice President

Emily Storey.

Hello hello! This week we said goodbye to Mik as she moves on the greener pastures in Melbourne. I want to thank Mik for her work on ed con and other projects throughout the year, and im keen to see what I can do as a solo VP for the rest of my term!

In other news, I hope you've had

a lovely midsem break – I know I did! I decided to close Foodhub over the break so I'd have time to make the volunteer roster, and sit down with the OG planning team to discuss the future of this initiative. Now that we've secured additional funding from the USU, we are expanding to stock sanitary items and

and sexual health products like condoms in the Hub. We are also planning to expand the space, order uniform t-shirts for volunteers, and have added new signs and advertising around campus.

Please come visit us anytime on tuesdays and thursdays 10am-2pm (although note that we will be closed

during the staff strike). So far we've helped 1550 people at Foodhub, and I cant wait to see that number continue to grow this sem.

Sexual Harassment

Rose Donnelly, Jayfel Tulabing Lee, Xiaojie Zhao and Yuan Ren did not submit a report.

International Students

Ashrika Paruthi, Alice (BoAo) Guo, Jenna (Xujie) Wu and Cony (MeiLin) Jin did not submit a report.

Social Justice Officers

Simon Upitis, Martin O'Flynn and Yang Tu did not submit a report.

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- having a friend complete some of your assessment
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For more information & links see:
sydney.edu.au/students/exams/timetables



Are you feeling lonely, depressed or anxious?

Talk to a counsellor about strategies to cope. Book an in person or online appointment with the Uni's Counselling Service, or join an online forum at eHeadspace.

Ask an SRC caseworker for more details.

For more information & links see:
srcusyd.net.au/src-help/academic-issues/plagiarism



Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney
e: help@src.usyd.edu.au | w: srcusyd.net.au



usydsrc



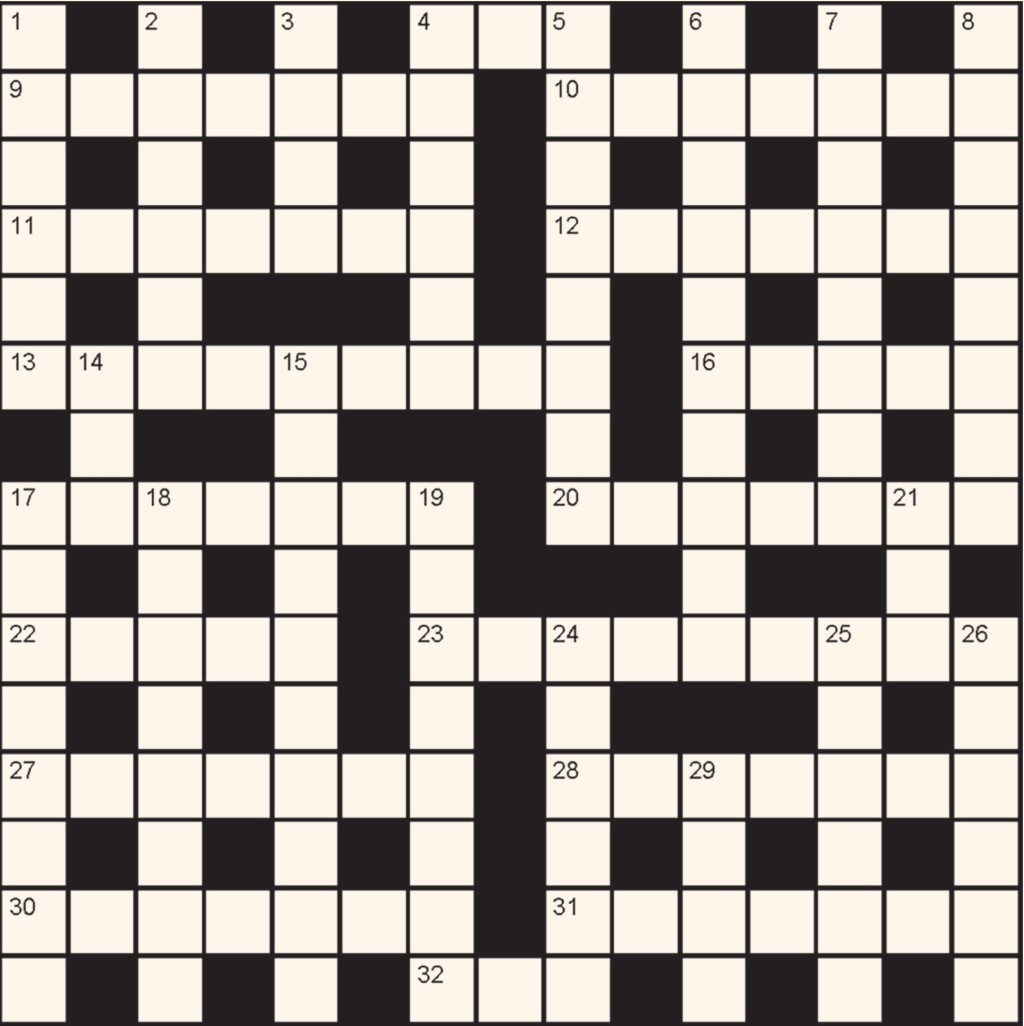
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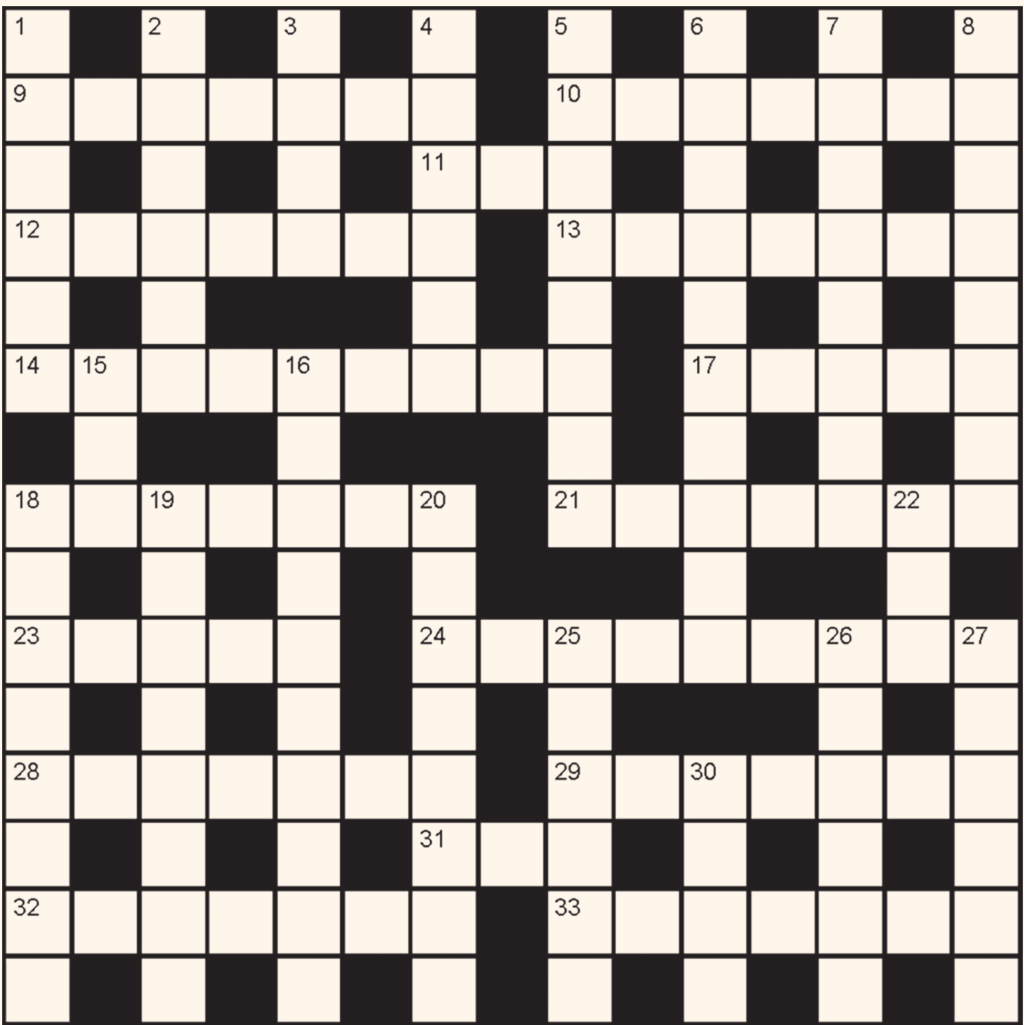
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Quick Crossword



Cryptic Crossword



Puzzles by Some Hack, featuring cryptic clues by ‘The Great and the Greek’

Answers

honisoit.com/puzzle-answers



Across

4. Take on Me and Living Daylights Band (3)
9. Abandoner of School (7)
10. Not Analogue (7)
11. Dead end (7)
12. Genre of music played in the background (7)
13. Bob Dylan Song about boxer (9)
16. Confused word that rhymes with paddle (5)
17. 1954 Classic Japanese film about a sanctimonious administrator ‘Sansho The ...’ (7)
20. Thus (7)
22. Word meaning both Bus and train (5)
23. Arrive on time for work/ Provisional (9)
27. To gradually become less strong (3,4)
28. Villain in Braveheart (6,1)
30. Type of Donkey (is an anagram of Orange) (7)
31. A string instrument (7)
32. According to Cardi B You need a bucket and this for her WAP (3)

Down

1. A bit strange. (6)
2. Police Officer (6)
3. Performs (4)
4. God who gave their name to Capital (6)
5. Parallel (8)
6. Useful cake making tool (10)
7. one who comes (8)
8. Ones Face on Mardi Gras (8)
14. Phoenix location (3)
15. Cork Maid (10)
17. It is behind you (8)
18. Posh utterance of belief (1,4,3)
19. Butler’s bag (8)
21. Great mate (3)
24. ‘Maintain pace’ (4,2)
25. State Founded in 1948 (6)
26. WC (6)
29. Informal word for Beat up (4)

Quiz

1. The literary characters Jo, Amy, Meg and Beth are related to each other in what way.
2. Which word can precede “Planet” and “Voyage” to create the titles of classic science fiction films?
3. To which ‘Ms.’ did rap duo Outkast apologise to in a 2003 song?
4. Used to turn boggarts into something silly, This Harry Potter spell is one of the few derived from the English language.
5. What superlative was given to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the First?
6. Give an answer that can come next in the Sequence.

Across

9. Still image depicts furniture with gold finish. (7)
10. Men, Octopodes, Prehistoric Lizards chiefly divides Europe from Asia (7)
11. Denzel Washington’s Character Leads Equaliser, is Second billed in Glory and comes in just before the end in Philadelphia (3)
12. Body part then made of clay (7)
13. Sober punch-up? Cop a pound to froth at the mouth! (7)
14. Saint dies deranged but purified. (9)
17. See 4 Down
18. Cool mob kicks around in Asian capital. (7)
21. Neoliberal school was cool in the past (7)
23. Mythic simp in libertine city. (5)
24. Cockney says Head in bruh in Scotland (9)
28. Stumble over split olive in Libyan town. (7)
29. Girl assembled Ellen and Co (7)
31. Pedo will not be hushed in feudal Japanese period. (3)
32. Opposed to Oriental Django (7)
33. Reminiscences about Greek character features Graceland. (7)

Down

1. At Pre Wedding Party in Greece (6)
2. Fairy finds Disrober Online (6)
3. Walter White makes them! (4)
- 4/17. Noir abusees mangled in South American city. (6,5)
5. Whacky disco pie in parts (8)
6. You tonal imbecile! Concealed notes will find you in a precarious position. (3, 2, 1, 4)
7. King Enters “Ban Era” dismantling home of the Prime Minister (8)
8. “Shot at Cafe”: media covered disastrous state of emergency headlines. (8)
15. Trouble a party (3)
16. Tussle between Mets and Boston results in tragic monuments. (10)
18. Where superheroes accessorise? (4,4)
19. Driest LA salad also the biggest (8)
20. Corrupt politician messed up by specialist abiding the law (8)
22. Soldier and General begin job (3)
25. Invite one inside and return profits (6)
26. We here it again and again and again from free chorus (6)
27. Genuine hotel on establishment (6)
30. Loud Animal in South American capital (4)

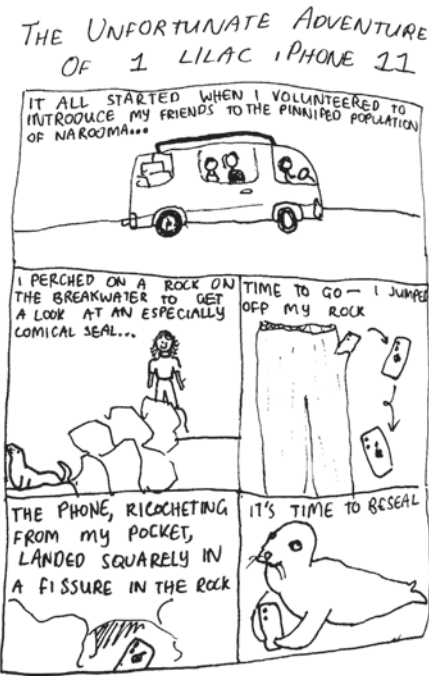
LEAKED INSIDE: Law Ball meatballs...“It Was Poo”

Incoherent.
Always.

The End Times



Wed October 12 Vol. 420 + 22 Cheaper and more available than toilet paper! The only newspaper. Proudly Murdoch. Pro-News. Anti-Truth. People’s Republic of USyd. \$6.90



Doomed	Destined
Yelling	Having a sook
Driving on campus	Gunt
Forest Lodge	Chippendale
Posting	Emailing friends
New Law	The quad
Horsey SSAF	Things she said
Nag’s Head	The Rose
Men with interests	Stingin Roger

IN THIS ISSUE:

The menu I was given didn’t have prices: my experience of sexism
- Belinda Hutchison

Why do people always use me?
- White Horse

Where were you on the night of the Coogee Bay Hotel incident?
- Justice Morling

Oh shit, people actually do read the fine print
- No Free Drinks At Honi Office

On finding human connection through USyd Rants
- Strike Bray-Carr

REDEEM AT HONI OFFICE
FOR POO VS MEATBALL
TASTE TEST (FREE)

GOD TO PUNISH THOSE GIVING IN TO SIN OF HOMOSEXUALITY WITH EDITING HONI SOIT, BEING SRC QUEER OFFICER

In a recent press release from the Heavenly Office of Jesus and God, it was announced that all those who give in to sins of sexual deviance, specifically those relating to acts of homosexual practices, will be punished by either being

elected as an editor of Sydney University student paper *Honi Soit* or as one of the SRC’s Queer Officers.

In a quote attributable to God, the press release stated this was to show those that disobey the “true costs” of their

acts.

“These people should know the cultural impact they’re having. The insufferability of student press can be directly linked to these ugly, annoying and stupid and ugly bisexual fuckwits.”

PUB LOCAL ANGRY THAT PEOPLE ARE ALSO AT THE PUB

Local Inner West alcoholics Have recently taken a stand against people who attend the pub (mass noun).

Reg Mann, a local at the Hag’s Nead, informed *The End Times* that many pub-goers are outraged at the development.

“Well, I guess it’s not really a development, because it’s been happening for a while.” he said. “But seriously. What gives them the right?”

‘IT WAS PUBES’: STUDENT BITES INTO CARLSLAW KITCHEN YEEROS

First-year student Kate Bush made the mistake all too common for the unsuspecting campus newbie: eating at Carlslaw Kitchen (horrible and shit place).

The cabbage in the chip wrap is known to be soggy but this was TITF.

“I bit into what I thought was

purple cabbage and thought it tasted a bit piss-like. I just wish I knew whose pubes they were... I hope it was the hot one.”

PUBES ON CAMPUS: STORIES FROM THE TRENCHES

CENTRIST LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO CLEAN UP GRAFFITI TUNNEL

ROBOTS BITE BACK AGAINST AMAZON LABOUR UNION, FORM WORKERS COALTION

BIPHOBIA REAL, DIRECTED AT BISEXUAL WOMEN WHO RUINED COWBOY PARTIES



Please don't
look away
this time.