

# Honi Soit

WEEK FIVE, SEMESTER ONE, 2023

FIRST PRINTED 1929

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# Acknowledgement of Country

*Honi Soit* publishes on the Gadigal land of the Eora nation. Sovereignty was never ceded. All our knowledge is produced on stolen Indigenous lands. The University of Sydney is principally a colonial institution, predicated on the notion that Western ways of thinking and learning are superior to the First Knowledge of Indigenous peoples.

At *Honi Soit*, we rebuke this claim, and maintain our commitment to platforming and empowering the experiences, perspectives and voices of First Nations students. This basis informs our practice as a paper. As a student newspaper, we have a duty to combat the mechanisms of colonisation.

As student journalists, we recognise our responsibility as a radical student newspaper to oppose the inherent racism and exclusivity of mainstream media outlets. We also uphold the struggle of other Indigenous communities worldwide and acknowledge that our resistance is intertwined.

As an editorial team of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage, we are both victims and beneficiaries of colonisation. We are committed to unlearning our colonial premonitions and working to hold current institutions accountable.

We are galvanised by our commitment to Indigenous justice.

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## Editorial

What if *Honi Soit* died? Perhaps it should be dead already.

I think one of the defining balancing acts which marks the *Honi* editorship is the extent to which *Honi* platforms the anger, worries and joy which marks the collective experience of students. The way editors have, for 94 years, managed this balancing act is why this — for all other purposes, quaint — newspaper has the influence it does.

We are often criticised for being too negative, but what is the point of *Honi* if it is not.

Students and those marginalised by society have been struggling for years trying to survive in a profoundly inequitable housing market. As this edition’s feature (p. 12) hopes to address, this is because the voices of young people are systematically ignored. The manifestations of the housing crisis are so varied, but pieces exploring the exploitation of international students (p. 14), and the lifeless state of student housing at USyd (p. 14) attempt to bring some of those effects to light. If *Honi* were not to give expression to this anger and frustration, nobody else would.

But students are not passive actors in this crisis, as seen in the phenomenon of subletting (p. 16). *Honi* is a place where this agency can be expressed.

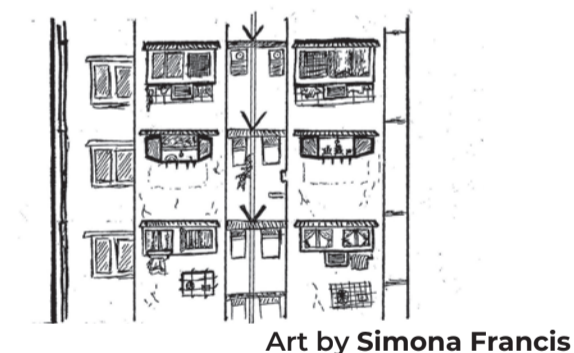
But sometimes, amidst all of this, we want to ponder Captain Hook, and the mysteries of McDonald’s menus (both p. 23). That’s valuable too.

This edition will hit stands days before the state election. May the Liberals be put out of power for a long long time (p. 7). *Honi* has the privilege of sharpening the political consciousness of the student body in every edition, but particularly this one. Fortunately, students were willing to share their opinions on the poor state of the major parties’ housing policies (p. 10), on Labor’s commitment to Treaty (p. 11), and on the Conservatorium of Music’s funding by the state government (p. 8). Read and critique these articles. Go to the polling booth knowing that young people’s votes matter.

It is easy editing *Honi* to feel the pressure to be original, to better the editorial teams before you, to keep *Honi* alive. These competitive instincts are deeply held — drilled into us since we were children, by the competitive process by which we come to edit, and by our love of this paper.

But I hope in this edition to let this pressure go. To let students speak, vent, dream. As long as *Honi* keeps on doing that, I think it will be alright.

Luke Cass



## Reading the jacaranda leaves

### Chaos in the Calzone

Mamma mia! The Italian Society’s recent fiasco has left more than a few crumbs of arancino on the chequered tablecloth. Rumours abound that Don Rupolo and Donna Milne are eyeing up the executive’s best slice of the pie: il Presidente. This tension may have been relieved by them surfing the Manly waves, living la dolce vita. Rumours also abound that Donna Milne (contrary to popular belief) is not Italian. Let’s hope that, like Lizzie McGuire in Rome, they both get what dreams are made of.

No more news. It really isn’t fun when *Honi* is the gossip. See you on April 4th!



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# letters only

To: The Editors of *Honi Soit*

We, the executive team of the Sydney University Catholic Society, are writing on behalf of all Catholics at Sydney University to express our abhorrence and deep disappointment of *Honi Soit*’s 2023, Semester 1, Week 1 edition, disseminated on 21 February 2023.

The front cover displayed a scantily clad drag queen standing before a tabernacle shaped like the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. She wore a crown of twelve stars, bore a large rosary bead on her side, and had roses at her feet.

This was a clear mockery of traditional images of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the mother of the Church, of us as the faithful, and we love and revere her profoundly. In the strongest possible way, we condemn this parodied representation of her by *Honi Soit*. By its design, the front cover was a disparagement of Christian and Muslim faiths and — frankly speaking — an act of desecration.

*Honi Soit*’s open and ongoing mockery of Christianity is etched into the history of their newspaper. Most notably is their 2019, Semester 1, Week 4 edition. In it, they depicted Cardinal George Pell with blood splattered on his clothes, his torso mauled, and a hangman’s noose around his neck. A faceless crowd was

celebrating his public lynching. We remind *Honi Soit* that, at that time, the Cardinal was still going through the appeal process in the NSW Court of Appeal and has since been unanimously acquitted by the High Court.

*Honi Soit* has deeply hurt and aggrieved the Christian and Muslim communities, especially those of us who are a part of the wider university community. Claiming to represent the university community, *Honi Soit* has historically and most recently decided to mock religious values and figures. This is a far cry from the ‘inclusive’ and ‘tolerant’ spirit so often trumpeted from the pages of their newspaper.

An apology should be proportionate to the offence. We, therefore, insist that *Honi Soit*:

1. Retract the offending image in their 2023, Semester 1, Week 1 edition;
2. Provide a sincere and unequivocal apology in a prominent position in their upcoming edition (at least in the first three pages); and
3. Allow the Sydney University Catholic Society to publish an article in their Easter edition.

We await your swift action. We hope that we do not wait in vain.

With prayerful best wishes,

The executive team of the Sydney University Catholic Society

Dear *CathSoc*, you big sooks.

*Catholicism as a religion has been used to oppress queer people for centuries. Recent developments — including the Religious Discrimination Bill and the terrifying number of christo-fascist protests targeting queer people in recent weeks — suggest Christian attempts to strip queer people of their rights are not slowing down. Indeed, your support for renowned queerphobe George Pell suggests you are no friends of queer people either.*

*We will continue to mock religious symbols — and members of the church — until these relentless attacks on our rights stop.*

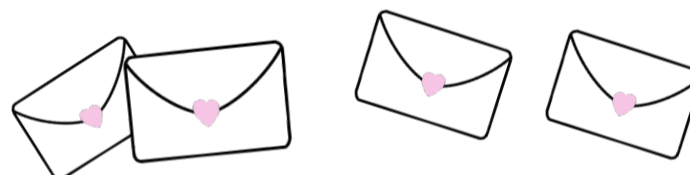
*We have no interests in ‘tolerance’ or inclusiv[ity]’ of value systems which do not believe in our existence.*

*Given you are so interested in our rag’s history, perhaps you’d enjoy our Editorial earlier this year on George Pell’s death. In summary, he can go to hell.*

*We will not retract, we will not apologise, and we do not have a fucking Easter edition, obviously.*

In prayer,

The queer Editors of *Honi Soit*.



Write us a letter, you cowards  
editors@honisoit.com

## Whorescopes

**Aries:** Not all dates must involve sipping red wine and savouring caviar. Get that greasy Chinese takeaway, chug some cider ,and then roll up in bed for some steamy, homely sex.

**Taurus:** You are a show, don’t tell type of person. Have some rough post-fighting sex, tickle them with roses, and eat them out for 40 minutes straight after a long time away. So on top of it, wowza!

**Gemini:** You will spend some time by yourself, both sexually and non-sexually. On most days you are at work thinking about that hottie from two years ago, or just touching yourself on the couch with popcorn on your chest.

**Cancer:** You should paint and sip on a sultry night, boudoir descriptions on each other with some mead dripping on you. Spread colours on your bodies, and watch your stars align with each other.

**Leo:** Go do some backstage fucking after that rockstar’s gig! You are going to have some special time with a popular performer and the lights are on you, both in public and in the bedroom...

**Virgo:** You want to buy a new sports car for that suave, but where’s the space for fucking? Get a humongous SUV for overnight camping with fairy lights, and hot action in the backseat.

**Libra:** Indulge in collective care of your body with your partner. Feed each other potatoes for breakfast, offer foot massages, and hop in the shower together to slather soap on each other’s bodies.

**Scorpio:** You’ve been the centre of attention on the dance floors and bar tops. While your standoffishness is mostly annoying, you with your tits out, knowing you’re the shit, is making us soooooo wet.

**Sagittarius:** Nothing like a quickie in the movie hall, isn’t it? Slide into their pants (with consent) in the darkness of the theatre, and watch the intensity of the screen shine upon you.

### Misbah Ansari is at it again.

**Capricorn:** If you like them and want to kiss them every living moment of the day, slide into their DMs. Stop putting yourself down, you are a walking talking gift and the other person probably wants to make out with you by the raging waters too.Ouch!

**Aquarius:** Dating apps will look exciting for you, with some dick appointments here and there. No need to take all of them too, because nothing touches you as your hand does on most days!

**Pisces:** Pisces season is on the verge of ending, but keep the energy up! An edible on a Friday night followed by an impromptu brunch makeout session with your neighbour? Your season all along.

Art by Horny Soit

## NTEU sets week six strike dates

Luke Cass

The University of Sydney Branch of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) has confirmed that they will take strike action on March 29 and 31; Wednesday and Friday of week six.

The dates were announced after the decision was made by the Union's USyd Branch Committee. Members of the branch previously voted for a 48-hour strike in week six, as part of a broader suite of industrial action across Semester One.

The Union's decision to take renewed strike action comes following the failure of University of Sydney management to meet the Union's demands. Those include maintaining the 40:40:20 model of academic work, a pay rise above inflation, the casualisation of the University's workforce and the University adopting targets for Indigenous population parity within the University's workforce.

The University and the NTEU are now into the 20th month of negotiations for a new Enterprise Agreement. The last Agreement expired in 2021. This means the bargaining period is now the longest in USyd's history.

The NTEU previously took six days of strike action in 2022. Staff took further strike action in week three of this semester.

When announcing the Union's plans for strike action in February, USyd Branch President of the NTEU, Nick Riemer, said "we'd really hoped that after 19 months of negotiations we'd be able to come to this meeting with the news that we were on the path to settlement. But since December management has doubled down on a series of what we can only describe as highly hostile positions."

"We don't want to strike or take other industrial action any more than we absolutely have to.

"But, our jobs, our salary, our rights at work and the nature of our institution are under attack from managers who never fail to show their disrespect for us. If we don't fight back, those attacks will be locked in as the new normal to the detriment of every single person here."

## Student Centre cuts casual staff, advertises similar roles online

Katarina Butler

Administration assistants at the University of Sydney's Student Centre have been told that their contracts will not be extended beyond March 31st, despite the University advertising 50 new Student Centre positions on their jobs portal.

The staff cuts will affect 50 casual administrative staff, including students. Rather than converting existing staff to full-time or extending existing contracts, these 50 workers will be forced to reapply to these new positions. They will compete with external applicants for the new positions.

The University is offering 20 new 12-month fixed term full-time positions and 30 casual positions. They claim that current staff do not meet the requirements for conversion to full time staff under the *Fair Work Act*.

Additionally, layers of support have been restructured. HEO5 seniors have 'virtually been abolished' according to NTEU representatives. These positions would deal with complex, distressing or hostile enquiries, however now these tasks have been delegated to lower level

workers.

Student workers at the Centre are expected to attend the university in their full capacity as students. This means that, unlike non-student workers, they are able to be offered one hour shifts.

An NTEU fact sheet about the Student Centre cuts reported that in the Student Centre, "excessive monitoring, performance reviews and intimidation are par for the course."

Students Representative Council President Lia Perkins said "The University should never cut experienced, professional staff and should instead focus on training them to provide effective, quality advice as the NTEU members in the student centre have demanded. This is a direct cut on the quality of services students are provided."

USyd NTEU Branch President Nick Riemer said, "those casuals in those jobs should be converted immediately

into ongoing employment, and only then, if there are any leftovers, should they be outsourced."

Riemer encouraged staff and students at the NTEU's strike on Thursday to call the Student Centre and lodge a ticket with a message of solidarity for the workers, who had to work during the strikes.

The University of Sydney said in a statement, "Our Student Centre's workload is necessarily seasonal due to the needs of our students [...] As classes start, the number of student enquiries reduces, and our casual staff contracts come to an end."



## Climate activist Violet Coco's jail term overturned on appeal

Elliot Lawry

A district court judge quashed on Wednesday Violet Coco's 15-month jail sentence received after blocking traffic on the Sydney Harbour Bridge in April 2022 as part of an environmental protest.

Coco received a 12-month conditional release order in the Downing Centre Court, after Judge Mark Williams heard evidence that she had been imprisoned on false information from NSW Police.

Coco was initially sentenced on the basis that her protest blocked an ambulance en route to an emergency, as NSW Police claimed. Police retracted this claim last week after acknowledging there was insufficient evidence to support this claim.

The judge said that he accepted Coco was not a danger to the community and withdrew all but two of her convictions, resisting police and using an unauthorised explosive.

Fellow activist Alan Russell Glover, who aided Coco in the 2022 Harbour Bridge protest, also successfully appealed his community corrections order and \$3,000 fine, after he was sentenced earlier this month.

These cases mark a huge win in the ongoing battle against anti-protest laws established in March 2022 under which

peaceful protesters may be jailed and fined. Violet Coco was the first individual to be charged with this type of offence.

More than 100 activists from across the country gathered outside the courthouse in anticipation of the hearing, including members of USyd SRC, Lily Campbell, Maddie Clark and UNSW Education Officer Cherish Kuehlmann who was recently arrested and charged with aggravated trespassing during a protest outside the Reserve Bank of Australia.

Campbell, who helped facilitate the rally, called out the NSW Government's crackdown on protest action through extreme bail conditions that prevent participation.

"We need more people like Violet who are willing to break unjust laws, who are willing to march anyway, to fight the police state and organise for real climate justice," she said.

Kuehlmann echoed Campbell's sentiment, adding that protest for all social justice issues is under threat with the provisional powers given to police and courts through the state's anti-protest laws.

"Bipartisan support from the Liberal and Labor parties has given the go-ahead to New South Wales police to lock up activists with any charge they can think of," she said.

"Not only this but restrictive bail conditions are consciously being weaponised by magistrates to repress activists from gathering and entering the city in order to exercise our democratic right to protest."

Across the road from the rally, Coco waved and smiled in solidarity with protesters, whom she could not join since her bail terms forbade organised activism.

Speaking outside the court, Coco said she wanted to "call the police out for their lies".

"My body was awash with relief. We need to protect our right to protest, justice was served today," she said.

Present outside the court was NSW Greens Senator David Shoebridge, who addressed the rally by calling shame on the NSW police, Premier Dominic Perrotet and Opposition Leader Chris Minns for enabling the arrest of Coco and her fellow activists.

"We are about to see the NSW Police go in there and apologise and grovel to the court for lying to the court, for lying to the people of NSW, and creating a fiction about an ambulance designed to play into a political moment and justify bad laws while putting a young woman in jail," he said.

## QUT academic faces transphobia from USyd professors

Misbah Ansari and Luke Mesterovic

*CW: This piece mentions hateful behaviour towards the Trans community. Readers are advised this may be distressing.*

Queensland University of Technology academic and Queer Unionists of Tertiary Education (QUTE) convenor Amy Sargeant has faced transphobic attacks from USyd professors on a Twitter thread criticising anti-trans protests in Sydney yesterday.

The attacks were spurred by the University of Sydney Professor Emeritus Colin Wight misgendering Sargeant after she posted a thread condemning the anti-trans gatherings that took place in Sydney yesterday. Upon being called out for misbehaviour towards trans women, Wight responded — "Unlike you, heckling real women wherever you find them. Still, that's hardly a new thing for men to do."

In a podcast episode released in 2021,

USyd Professor Emerita Bronwyn Winter made a number of transphobic comments against Sargeant.

"Oh, I'm a little snowflake. I'm going to melt if you say I'm biologically a man," said Winter.

After describing an offensively caricatured description of what it means to be trans — words which *Honi* has chosen not to reproduce — Winter said that "[nothing] is going to change that fundamental fact."

Sargeant condemned universities' complicit behaviour by saying that "Universities are happy to throw up rainbow flags and signs during pride month, but unless they take action in the face of violence, abuse and harassment toward queer people, they are not acting as allies. We all deserve safe workplaces."

The University of Sydney said in a statement to *Honi* that "We were aware of this video and have just been informed of these more recent comments. While we can't comment on individual personnel matters due

to our privacy obligations, we are now carefully considering this latest activity."

They alluded to the University Charter for Academic Freedom and mentioned that "university is to be a place where ideas can be freely discussed, including those that some may view as controversial."

USyd SRC Queer Officers Yasmin Andrews and Ella Pash told *Honi* that "Despite its claims of being a progressive and diverse institution, QUTE member Amy Sargeant has flagged multiple members of [...] USyd who have harassed her online for being a trans woman."

"This abhorrent display of transphobia is all the more alarming considering her noted research areas include, 'Gender, sexual orientation, human rights and political asylum' according to her staff page on the university website. Similarly, Wight can be seen using the same transphobic rhetoric against Sargeant, in multiple tweets calling her a man."

## USyd outsources student accommodation operation

Katarina Butler

The University of Sydney has released plans to outsource campus accommodation operations to Unilodge in a change plan released on the staff intranet earlier this week.

Unilodge will now manage the day-to-day operations of university-owned accommodation, such as The Regiment, Abercrombie and the Queen Mary Building on Camperdown/Darlington campus. The operational and residential life teams will continue to assist with sales, systems, customer service, residential life, and safety and wellbeing.

Unilodge will take on responsibility for maintenance, except for the Darlington Terraces and Darlington house which will be passed on to Unilodge following renovation. This means that all accommodation on the University's main campus will soon be operated by Unilodge.

Unilodge is a "white label operator" of student residences across Australia, meaning that despite taking on operational duties, ownership and landlord obligations remain with the associated Universities.

A number of staff roles will be made redundant as part of the changes. In a draft change plan, the University listed that twelve administration jobs would

be made redundant following the transition, however *Honi* has not yet seen documents from the most recent version of the plan.

Submissions to University management from impacted staff were included in the draft change plan. One staff member reported "With the high turnover of [Unilodge] staff, this causes issues with operational knowledge and poor student experience for the residents"

Another submission reported "the new possible options does not consider the loss of expertise that would result from losing 12 permanent University staff positions, which includes staff members that have many years of experience and expertise running Student

Accommodation operations at The University of Sydney"

A University of Sydney spokesperson told *Honi*, "Any staff whose roles are made redundant will be priority assessed for new roles in the new structure."

Jordan Anderson, Student Accommodation Officer at the SRC, stated "it does not surprise me in the slightest that USyd management

have decided to outsource their day-to-day operation of student accommodation to Unilodge in their extremely transparent endeavours to prioritise profits over the livelihoods of struggling students. This follows management selling off millions of accommodation in the context of the most dire housing and cost of living crisis, where students are struggling to make ends meet while attempting to balance the load of full-time Uni."

In 2021, former student residential assistants at the University of Canberra launched a class action lawsuit against Unilodge and partnered universities (including the University of Sydney) for alleged wage theft. At the time, Rahul Bedi, a senior associate of Adero Law, the firm leading the case, said "These kinds of class actions are deeply concerning when a university seeks to wash its hand entirely of systemic exploitation in their own campus."



## UTS NTEU members agree to new staff agreement

Bipasha Chakraborty

Members of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) have unanimously agreed to supporting a new staff agreement that will improve working rights and conditions.

Following a presentation from the UTS NTEU bargaining team last Thursday, NTEU members "endorsed the in-principle new staff agreement," said UTS Branch Director Dr Sarah Attfield.

The new agreement will improve job security for casual staff members. Advocating for 110 new permanent jobs for current casuals, better conversion pathways for staff and avenues to job security after two years for professional staff.

The bargaining team were also able to gain a 4.5% pay rise in 2022, ten days of paid domestic violence leave, academic freedom and freedom of expression, and workload protections for both casual and professional staff.

Members had agreed on twenty days gender affirmation leave per year for trans and gender-diverse staff, an employment target of three per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, paid language allowances and an increase from five to ten days of paid cultural leave.

Dr Attfield commented, "The bargaining team are very pleased with this outcome — it has been a very long process and we took industrial action twice last year, but we've ended up with an excellent draft agreement that will deliver major improvements to the working conditions of academic and professional staff at UTS. I'd suggest that some of the new clauses can be described as 'sector leading'."

Before gaining approval from the Fair Work Commission, the agreement will first be placed to an all-staff vote.

"I'm confident that UTS staff will vote to approve the agreement when the vote is opened by the University, and once it's all been processed, the NTEU branch will start the work of making sure the new clauses are implemented!"

# 'If you don't have a right to protest, you can't resist': Student forum support freedom of speech

Khanh Tran

Dozens of students gathered today at a forum to discuss freedom of speech and protest rights following a spate of suspensions and police arrests targeting student activists.

A few weeks ago, USyd NUS Delegate Deaglan Godwin and USyd SRC Environment Officer Maddie Clark were suspended by Sydney University for protesting a Sydney University Law Society (SULS) event featuring former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

"One thing that's been in the news recently is with the Royal Commission into Robodebt which saw hundreds of thousands of welfare recipients get a debt notice," said Clark.

Clark criticised USyd's use of the Student Charter as a de facto "bullying code" deployed against student activists, as Godwin and Clark were accused of infringing upon Turnbull's free speech.

Among the panel was UNSW SRC Education Officer Cherish Kuehlmann was arrested for a protest outside of the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) last month.

"They showed up to my door six hours later in the middle of the night when I wasn't around the public, the media, my comrades and others at the protest. This was to single me out and make an example out of me and silence me."

Kuehlmann raised the discrepancy between the federal government's recent approval of \$318 billion for AUKUS nuclear-powered submarines and the cost of living crisis affecting students as the reason behind the

protest at the Reserve Bank and Commonwealth Bank.

"These beautiful mansions that they live in. Meanwhile, students and young workers are having to line up, I'm sure everyone knows someone who has experienced this."

Kuehlmann then delivered a call to action to students, saying that mass organising and protests is vital to securing meaningful political change and challenging the status quo.

Award-winning journalist, activist and former Tharunka editor Wendy Bacon, noted for being imprisoned for eight days following the publication of a poem in 1970 under NSW's strict anti-obscenity laws, supported Godwin and Clark, described Turnbull's and USyd's case against the pair as "ludicrous."

"The fact that Malcolm Turnbull thought he could come to Sydney University given the recently history of Simon Birmingham that people should be servers and paying him respect and listen in silence," said Bacon.

"If you don't have a right to protest, you can't resist," she said.

Concurring with Bacon, NSW Senator David Shoebridge spoke on the necessity of protest as a vehicle to drive social change and political progress.

"Ultimately, the right to protest is where somebody with substantially less power gets to actually challenge in an observable way where people can see and witness the challenge."

Shoebridge highlights the "moment of equality" created by "friction" caused by protests and public challenges, noting Turnbull's high profile in comparison with Godwin and Clark. He argues that anti-protest

laws, with the backing of "corporate Australia," were "a repressive piece of social engineering to retain power and wealth."

"All of those laws were passed by State Parliaments under pressure from fossil fuel and extractive industries, they passed [these] under pressure because they were feeling the political heat on the ground, who were disrupting their commercial activities and building a case against them in the court of public opinion."

Clark agreed, pointing to Turnbull's access to mainstream media and being a former PM: "The right to free speech is something the left has historically always taken up. Turnbull has all of this free speech because he actually has a platform, he's very wealthy himself."

Panellists then referenced Deanna "Violet" Coco's successful appeal against a 15-months jail sentence from the Magistrates Court. She was the first person to be sentenced under NSW's highly restrictive anti-protest laws widely dubbed as an "intimidating" tactic on activists.

"It worries me a lot with these very tough penalties [for protests]. What they want is a sort of protest where you sit down and have a talk with the police and the protesters, and you're told exactly where you can be. That is not a protest, a protest involves huge disruption."

Shoebridge then expanded on being arrested outside of Kirribilli House – the Prime Minister's residence in Sydney – during the 2019-2020 Australian bushfires when former PM Scott Morrison was away in Hawaii.

"I turned up with my youngest daughter. We went across and there were rows and rows of riot squads all

lined up," he said. "I said: 'What are you doing? You can't send the riot squad. They're not blocking traffic.'"

Clark then raised the NSW Government's refusal to lift COVID-19 gathering limits for protests despite the same limits being lifted for venues like pubs and stadiums. Subsequently, in a protest against the Morrison Government's Job-Ready Graduates Package, dozens of student activists were fined and subjected to police violence.

"We just have to keep fighting. I think this is the lesson and defying these laws. Our protests have been the only way that we've been able to win these civil liberties in the first place."

Kuehlmann concurs, saying that, despite significant political obstacles, students can and should push for change.

"There has been a lot of public sympathy and outrage about Violet Coco's arrest last year. We can't wish this out of thin air. I think what we can do now coming out of this is lay the groundwork for actually trying to rebuild the Left in Sydney."

Towards the end of the forum, Bacon urged students to keep agitating against the status quo and coming together to push for protest rights and freedom of speech on the ground.

"I think we have to keep exercising our right to protest but I also think we have to get through these laws because it's really intimidating to potentially face when you have a busy life and everything for a protest," he said. "We have to agitate and keep it on people's minds and make them realise how threatening it is."

# NSW Branch of Australian Paramedics Association to stop billing patients until the state election

Veronica Lenard and Caitlin O'Keeffe-White

The NSW branch of the Australian Paramedics Association (APA) has announced an ongoing ban on billing patients until the state election. Paramedics will be returning to paper based records, refusing to enter patient billing information or report on KPIs.

The APA (NSW) is asking for a genuine pay rise, investment in community care and regional health support, an increase in specialist paramedics and more patient transport officers around the state. Paramedics have reported adverse patient outcomes, including patient deaths, due to bed blocks at hospitals and slowing response times.

As of 20 February 2023, the APA (NSW) has received confirmation that the Greens, Animal Justice Party and One Nation support their demands from the 'We Deserve Better' campaign. Labor has not responded to the APA's correspondence, but has committed to ending the wage cap, increasing the number of regional paramedics, and implementing all recommendations from the Parliamentary Inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales. The NSW Liberal National Party has supported 41 of 44 of the recommendations from the inquiry, but did not support the introduction of more specialist paramedics rather preferring to profile the needs of regional areas.

While the NSW government announced \$1.76 billion for ambulance services in the 2022 budget – to increase the number of paramedics – the APA has stated that unless working conditions improve paramedics will continue to leave the profession.

"Paramedics have spent the last three years working through fires, floods, and the pandemic, all to effectively receive three successive pay cuts" said APA (NSW) President Chris Kastelan, in a media release.

An emergency ambulance can cost a resident of NSW a base fee of \$415 for emergencies and \$327 for non-emergencies, with a variable rate per kilometre of \$3.74 and \$2.02 respectively. This represents 51% of the actual cost, with the remainder subsidised by the NSW government.

This industrial action follows ongoing industrial campaigns among NSW rail workers, teachers, nurses, and university staff.



Art by Long Huynh

# The State Election is important. Here's why.

Honi Soit

For university students, busy with their studies and trying to make a living, politics can seem like a deeply unfamiliar world. With the state election just around the corner, this is an opportunity for us to reflect on what we envision for our state, and society as a whole. Even for those who have no faith in the two-party system, it is an opportunity to look at what mainstream politics fails to achieve, and fight for more.

The Coalition has been in power for over a decade, and we have seen the effects of austerity pervade all parts of New South Wales. Figures from March last year show that one-third of Sydney trains are late, hospital patients are having to wait 36 hours to be admitted into hospitals, and student-to-teacher ratios are amongst the worst in the country at 14.2. Though COVID has placed an added strain on our public institutions, it has exposed the flaws in the existing systems, and the lack of support crippling the people who run our state.

When they came into power in 2011, the Coalition government introduced a public sector wage cap at 2.5%, tying public sector workers to static pay rises under the guise of fiscal responsibility. Though the Perrottet government has since increased the cap to 3%, with a potential 0.5% increase in 2023-2024, this is plainly inadequate under record inflation rates, currently sitting at almost 8%.

Last year, there were waves of industrial action by public sector workers who have been neglected and underappreciated through these restrictive policies. Teachers protested against unmanageable workloads due to staff shortages. Teachers have cited overwhelming class sizes and many hours outside of school hours to stay on top of work. Healthcare workers went on four rounds of strikes to demand better working conditions after keeping the

state afloat during the pandemic. Nurses and midwives demanded reasonable staff-to-patient ratios to control workloads with workers facing severe burnout, and in some cases, symptoms similar to PTSD. Transport workers went on strike to fight for a pay rise above inflation rates, safer working conditions, and an end to privatisation.

In response, the government has shown a firm anti-worker stance. They've openly displayed hostility towards unions, with the current Premier threatening striking workers with increased fines and characterising strikes more broadly as "unreasonable." They have condemned striking workers for disrupting the smooth flow of the state's operations.

What the government fails to see is that strikes are meant to be disruptive and protest against their failure to support working communities. In fact, there is nothing easy about working or living in New South Wales in the first place. Driven by record-high inflation and stagnant wages, the cost of living crisis leaves many families struggling to put food on the table. Students are having to choose between getting an education and buying the bare necessities. This is in an environment where corporations are raking in record profits during the COVID pandemic.

Though the cost of living crisis has only entered mainstream discourse in recent times, the housing crisis has left

many struggling to find a home, or without one at all. Rental rates continue to soar, with units increasing 17.6% and 14.6% for houses in the past year. The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) set up by the Rudd Government to subsidise rentals for low-income households is coming to a close, with a proposal to build 30,000 houses over the next five years insufficient to match demand.

Though housing affordability is obviously a national issue, it is particularly pressing for our state. From the 2016 census, 38,000 people were homeless in New South Wales, and in the past five years the monthly number of people accessing homelessness services increased by 8%. The NSW state government has shown no willingness to adequately address this issue by excluding state-funded social housing in its COVID recovery plans; their plans are limited to demolishing existing public housing for more land, and sold to generate funds.

Instead of funding projects for the public good, the government has sought a policy of privatisation. Though the Premier has pledged not to privatise any more state assets, documents indicate that the Coalition has surveyed the possibility of privatising Sydney Water. In the past, the Berejiklian government privatised WestConnex despite no obvious benefit for

reducing travel times, offering

a low cost, high-profit project for construction companies. Sydney is the most tolled city in the world.

In all facets, the government has consistently shown an inability to meet the needs of people in our state.

Beyond their failure to provide adequate support, the government has been riddled with scandals and corruption. The NSW Coalition has a history of pork barrelling, with the sports rorts affair involving millions poured into wealthy sports clubs whilst public schools and smaller clubs were without basic equipment. Since 2014, the government has been working with the Transport Asset Holding Entity (TAHE) to shift billions onto a shell company to cover up budget deficits. Apart from these scandals, the government has presided over a police force which has misused their strip search powers, and continuing anti-protest sentiments and policies.

It's been a long twelve years. This article touches on only some of the government's suite of failures. The sheer extent of privatisation, corruption, and austerity under this government is overwhelming.

Our criticism of the Coalition is not to prop up the Labor Party, or the Greens. Labor in particular, is offering a weak set of solutions to the serious issues facing NSW. Whoever wins the election this Saturday will have an obligation to address these deeply rooted problems in our state — it's easy to make promises, but it's another to follow through. The people of New South Wales deserve a government ready to provide affordable housing, support the public sector, and address the cost of living crisis.

Disclaimer: Katarina Butler, Ethan Floyd, and Luke Mesterovic are current members of the Labor Party, and have not participated in Honi's coverage of the state election.



# Pre-election promises or just one big Con?

Alexander Poirier ponders music policy.

The arts often play a significant role in political campaigns, but these electoral promises can be seen as easy vote-grabs by candidates. Even before it opened in 1915, the Sydney Conservatorium of Music has inadvertently been a controversial part of these campaigns and debates.

Right now, equally significant discussions are happening around the relationship between governments and universities, and the increasing corporatisation of our academic institutions. The Con is a perfect microcosm of these debates. The arts rely heavily on government funding — without the historical aristocratic patronage, they cannot exist. Arts exist to bring people together through shared cultural experiences, not to generate financial profit.

It was during the Labor Party's first-ever term administering NSW policy that the government filled the void left by lacklustre private funding, founding the NSW State Conservatorium of Music. This was due to the efforts of Campbell Carmichael, the then-Minister for Public Instruction under Labor Premier W.A. Holman, through some questionable methods (see: establishing a committee without parliamentary debate).

**Arts exist to bring people together through shared cultural experiences, not to generate financial profit.**

It may seem odd to many that the historically blue-collared Labor Party put effort into the establishment of an institution for serious classical music in a Sydney lacking the upper-class

demographic found in Adelaide and Melbourne. For the Con to be run by the government was also an odd choice, as conservatoires in the British Empire were typically affiliated with a university.

Carmichael's reasoning for this was simple: European governments were not afraid to invest capital into institutions of fine art, as they understood the public cultural profit, instead of the economic profit. Labor also wanted to subvert the English academic valuation of music from its religious usage, instead being one for full public benefit.

However, by the 1950s, the Conservatorium was on the verge of collapse — decades of shoestring budgets from both Liberal and Labor governments meant it was a place of massive growth without the ability to change. After 40 years of operations, not a single member of the teaching staff was employed full-time. The building was falling apart, library books were stacked in corridors, there was no staff common room, a lack of practice rooms, mould, leaks, the list continued. Barely any students actively participated in ensembles. Something needed to change.

The 1970s saw the Conservatorium's Golden Era, a time of radical change and excitement, created as a confluence of culture and politics under the Director Rex Hobcroft and the Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, who both started in 1972. Yes, the Coalition under John Gorton had indeed founded the Australian Council for the Arts in 1968, but it was seemingly just for electoral brownie points. Whitlam and his government oversaw massive increases in funding for the arts — a doubling in the first year, and then another 50% in 1974.

A first in Australia, jazz studies was introduced to the Conservatorium,

and by 1974 had 200 students enrolled; this inclusion was a major factor in the Australian jazz renaissance. Church music, piano tuning, historical performance, and ethnomusicology were also included as areas of study, and the Con's Electronic Music Studio was established. He also saw the establishment of Wollongong Conservatorium in 1972, and many other music schools in regional centres — all under administration from Sydney.

**The site of the Con has always been an incredibly political affair.**

The Conservatorium Students' Association (CSA) also saw its activist heyday during this time — doubtlessly attributable to Peter Sams. It was in 1978 that the CSA invited NSW Labor Opposition Leader Neville Wran to see the shocking state of the building, which once again was not big enough for its needs; he said to reporters afterwards that the Conservatorium "is not even fit for horses."

The site of the Con has always been an incredibly political affair. Holman's Labor publicly committed to reducing vice-regal expenditure, opening up Government House and its grounds for the public — something fiercely opposed by members of the Liberal Reform party. Renovations have constantly been needed on the building to suit its needs, starting the moment Verbruggen stepped off the boat from Belgium.

The original 1912 plans for the Conservatorium was to include other fine arts: painting, sculpture, and theatre. Unfortunately, this idea never saw realisation, as the Dawkins Reforms to higher education meant that all CAEs had to either become

independent universities in their own right, or join another pre-established university. As the Conservatorium did not have the capacity to be financially independent it was forced to join another university; its knight in shining armour was Sydney University.

USyd still seems to be riding on this prestige from times long-gone, after failing to understand the funds needed to run an arts school, with continual centralisations in the guise of efficiency and good economic management bringing back the issues previously seen. Con staff have the highest workloads in the Uni and are underpaid, buildings have constant maintenance issues with mould aplenty and new degrees no longer offer private lessons. It's no wonder many consider the Con's merger a failure and call for "Con-dependence".

The founding values behind the Con (cultural benefits over profits) have seemingly disappeared, with the further corporatisation of our universities the greatest threat to its existence. Most of the things the state government is able to do in this regard is make the lives of musicians and music students easier, so they can spend more time studying and refining their craft.

Whilst both Federal and State Labor have continually shown they will support the arts and the Con with funds and political will, we still must keep vigilant to ensure they will truly support what we actually need. After seeing the Federal Coalition's Job-Ready package, which has increased the personal costs to study music whilst decreasing the amount of funding it receives, we must remain vigilant to the Universities Accord by Federal Labor. Whilst we don't know the details of this Accord, we must ensure that the agreements made are the ones that most benefit us.

Both major parties, Liberal and Labor, have put forward proposals to replace pokies with live music, as a two-fold measure to decrease the negative impacts of gambling, and better support musicians through more opportunities to perform. NSW Labor has a commitment to Musicians Australia's campaign to ensure \$250 payments for every musician in public gigs. Whilst this is a great initiative, the campaign falls short in its support for private gigs — weddings, cocktail parties, etc. — which often run under the guise of exposure over pay and are the hardest to fight for.

*Disclaimer: Alexander Poirier is the President of the Conservatorium Students' Association and a member of the Labor Party.*

Art by Simona Francis



# Welcome to NSW, where all votes are not created equal

Tom Wark defends democracy.

As someone born in April 2001, I have the strange honour of having voted in two federal elections, all before being allowed to vote in my first state election. For many students, this will also be the first time they have been asked to help decide who we send to Macquarie Street.

However, many people will not be aware that, when we elect our lower house in NSW, the system differs from its federal counterpart in one significant way.

In a federal election, when the exasperated poll worker hands you the green lower house paper, the voter is forced to number every box — in order of preference — for every candidate in your electorate. This system is known as full preferential voting (FPV).

In NSW alone, we use a system known as optional preferential voting (OPV). In this system, voters only have to number one box, but can choose to put numbers in as many boxes as they like. Not numbering every box is known as "exhausting" your preferences, and if all the candidates that you have numbered are out of the running, then your vote is not transferred any longer and stops being counted. For reasons I hope to make clear, to persevere with this system is not sustainable — it presents a clear partisan advantage, and goes against the shared ideals that strengthen our democracy.

Before I delve into the intricacies of why OPV is a flawed system, I think it is important to defend the first pillar of the Australian election: compulsory voting.

Any democratically elected government is given legitimacy by its mandate to govern over the complete population, and I believe that the only way to ensure a democratic mandate is to compel every citizen to vote in the elections. This doesn't just help in the abstract world of political philosophy. It also has tangible benefits to party policy.

Since our elections are compulsory and crucially overseen by a truly independent authority (the AEC or the NSWEC), the ability of everyone to vote is protected. No matter how remotely a person may reside, their suffrage is a fundamental part of every election.

Now that we've established that everyone's vote truly does matter, we come back to OPV, and my greatest problem with its function. OPV's

biggest flaw is that it encourages people to vote in a way that may stop their vote from ever counting, especially when it comes to the actual decision of who represents their electorate.

This is where it gets a bit technical, and I need the assistance of Australia's greatest election cult hero: Antony Green. Green has a truly incredible database of election data that he explains on his blog, where he has broken down the preferences in every seat from the 2019 state election.

**In short, there are over 5000 people whose vote effectively did not count in their lower house election.**

The electorate of North Shore, held by Felicity Wilson of the Liberal Party, offers a convenient example. In the last election, there were just over 5000 votes for the candidate that came fourth, and 5900 votes for the candidate that came third — from the Greens and Labor respectively. For these two candidates combined, more than half the voters numbered only one box, meaning that they "exhausted" their preferences - their vote stopped being counted - before it could be added to the count of one of the top two candidates: Wilson, and Independent Carolyn Corrigan.

In short, there are over 5000 people whose vote effectively did not count in their lower house election.

I believe this demonstrates a philosophical flaw in OPV. However, there are also significant political implications for using OPV, particularly for left-leaning voters.

Green shows that nearly 40% of Greens voters exhaust their preferences before they are distributed to other candidates. This means that the Labor Party finds it a lot more difficult to win seats where it comes second on first preferences to the Liberals, because they cannot rely on Greens preferences boosting their vote to the same extent as in a federal election.

So, OPV is a barrier to installing a Labor government. This might help explain why NSW has had four different Liberal premiers in 11 years, but the Liberals have still not lost an election.

I think it is time to defend myself against some of the more obvious critiques of my position.

Firstly, critics of FPV argue that they should not be forced to vote for a candidate who they fundamentally disagree with, and would never want to represent them. This is a powerful

cornerstone on which democracies are built.

For example, in the 2022 federal election in my seat of Greenway, there was a candidate named Riccardo Bosi. His views on many topics are controversial, such as COVID vaccines containing AIDS and actively calling for the hanging of former prime ministers. Clearly, these views represent a tiny minority of the electorate and being asked to nominate these fringe candidates in any order can feel a bit bizarre.

However, there is a sense of pride in coming out of a polling booth, having shown that out of 11 candidates he is the one you least respect. By allocating these people low preferences, you are symbolically casting a vote against them and everything they stand for.

On the other side of the coin, many Greens or Socialist Alliance will voters

reasonably argue that Labor is not radical enough on issues like climate change or housing relief. They will decide to exhaust their vote, rather than give their tacit approval for watered-down progressive politics.

**By allocating these people low preferences, you are symbolically casting a vote against them and everything they stand for.**

This is a fair stance, but it unfortunately allows the Liberal Party to retain an electoral edge over NSW Labor. All politics is built on compromise, since there is no perfect candidate or party. However, failing to preference the Labor Party above the Liberal Party means failing to electorally punish the Liberals for their policy failures and resulting unpopularity. I would be prepared to guess that most Greens voters would rather sacrifice some policy ground and give a preference to install a Labor government, than

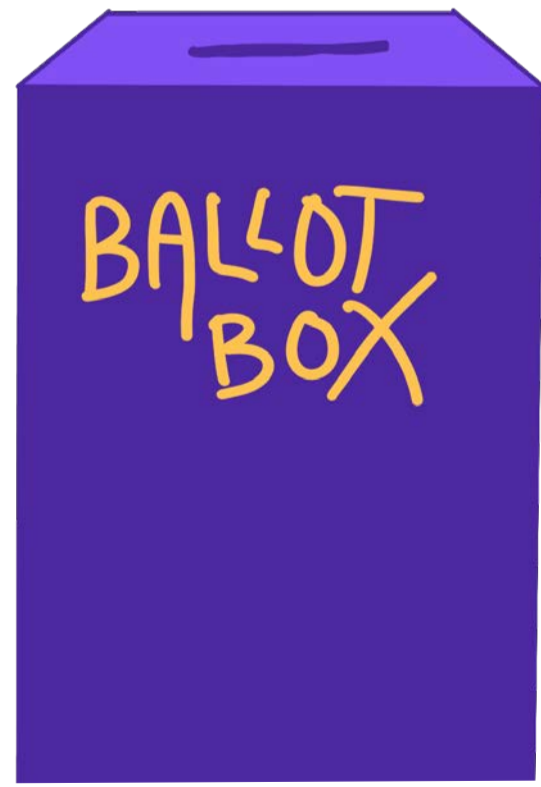
allow their vote to be exhausted and perpetuate the decimation of the public service under the Liberals.

There are so many seats in this election that will come down to a knife-edge in Sydney alone. Penrith, Parramatta, East Hills, Riverstone and Winston Hills held by the Liberals, and Kogarah, Strathfield and Londonderry held by Labor, are just some of the seats where the result will almost certainly be decided by a large number of preference flows.

**The only way to represent the true support of the electorate is to vote to the fullest, and number all the boxes.**

There will always be people who say that allowing voters to not support a candidate is as important as protecting their right to vote for someone. But in a transferable vote system, the only way to represent the true support of the electorate is to vote to the fullest, and number all the boxes.

If you've made it this far, I salute your perseverance and I want to end this rather nerdy immersion in election mechanics to implore you to number every box this Saturday. The democracy sausages taste twice as good when you've taken the time in the polling booth to make sure your vote counts.



Art by Caitlin O'Keeffe-White

# Winds in the East — and a Change for the West?

Sydney's Greater West is home to over 2.5 million people. It has a rapidly growing population and is the country's third-largest local economy. Of the 4.7 million votes on Saturday March 25, a third will be cast by voting-age residents of Western Sydney. Naturally, it has emerged as a key and determinative region in the upcoming State election; marginal seats in many Western electorates will have a significant bearing on the election's outcome.

Geographical authorities have differing views on what constitutes Western Sydney, but it is generally considered as the geography between Windsor and Campbelltown in the North and South, and Parramatta and the Blue Mountains in the East and West respectively. This region is situated on parts of Bidjigal, Cabrogal, Darkinjung, Dharawal, Dharug, Gundungura, Gweagal and Tharawal Country. According to recent Census data, it is one of the most religious and culturally diverse parts of the country, and has been transformed in recent years due to industrial investment and community asset developments.



Art by Yasodara Puhule

## Marginal seats in many Western electorates will have a significant bearing on the election's outcome.

Recently, Premier Dominic Perrottet campaigned in Parramatta, commandeering a local Service NSW outlet and dispensing vouchers to expectant clients in a glacial manner one would expect from a career politician operating — if that's the right word — as a bureaucrat. Though geographically in the centre of Metropolitan Sydney, Parramatta serves as the primary financial and commercial CBD for the Greater West. The State seat, held by popular Liberal politician and corrections minister Geoff Lee since 2011, is up for grabs following his political retirement.

Those who work in, or travel through, the Parramatta CBD will recall the immense changes that the city is undergoing, from its cityscapes to its parklands. Infrastructural changes include the Commbank (formerly Bankwest) Stadium, the PHIVE library and council services space, and the Parramatta Square precinct, which facilitates corporate liaisons and fine dining alike (Threefold Pastry is a must visit!).

The impact that a decade of Liberal governance has had on the area's

growth is undeniable — but not necessarily positive. Development of a light rail across the CBD has been delayed, with completion pushed from 2023 to mid-2024. Construction along the Eat Street precinct has strained businesses, already hurt by the rental and cost-of-living crisis. In May 2019, the State government offered 154 small businesses in the Sydney CBD compensation totalling over thirty million dollars to mitigate the impacts that light rail construction had on their revenues. No such assistance has been offered to businesses across the Parramatta line.

Seat redistributions have posed another problem to the present government's prospects. Every second State election, the NSW Electoral Commission must redistribute seats to ensure that there is an equal allocation of voters across electorates. Redistribution of the Parramatta electorate has reduced Liberal's margin by just over 4%, and the redrawing of electoral regions in the North-West has also impacted the party. The cessation of the seat of Baulkham Hills, replaced largely by a new Castle Hill electorate, pushed Transport Minister and Minister for Western Sydney David Elliot out of preselection. Elliot is now retiring from State politics post-election.

Another Coalition held, marginal seat in the West, the Penrith electorate, is likely to flip. Stuart Ayres — former Deputy Leader of the NSW Liberal Party, Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney — is facing a precarious 0.6% margin between him and former Penrith mayor Karen McKeown.

Anthony James-Kanaan maps it all out.

Ayres won the last election by little over 1,000 votes, but his involvement in the Barilaro New York Trade Commissioner scandal (the reason for all of his "former" designations and demotions) will likely alienate corruption-averse constituents. Corruption and governmental discretion have been key issues in the region; the loss and trust induced by regionally onerous COVID orders in Southern Western Sydney have been forgotten on the campaign trails.

I talked to a 23 year old resident of Bonnyrigg, who preferred to remain anonymous, to get a statement on the issues facing young people in the region, "We're really feeling the brunt of a chronically underfunded healthcare system, and a failure of climate change policy. Our treatment during COVID has sowed deep mistrust in the government. There's constant talk of grand-plans for the future of Western Sydney, but politicians need to show that they can and will fix already existing problems that Western Sydney faces."

Labor's election promises include greater investments in healthcare, including a new Rouse Hill hospital, increased capacity at Blacktown and Mt Druitt hospitals, and greater support for nurses and other healthcare workers. This is alluring to a populace where healthcare is the largest industry, accounting for 11.6% of Western Sydney's \$104 billion economy. Regardless of outcome, it seems that both parties have recognised that neglecting the once secondary region will be fatal to their political aspirations.

# Could a Treaty be happening in New South Wales?

Hamani Tanginoa asks if we are ready to reckon with our history.

2022 was a year of recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In July last year, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced the first draft question of the 2023 Referendum at the Garma Festival, in the Northern Territory's north-east Arnhem Land. Albanese stated that the final question will be momentous, but very simple.

"Do you support an alteration to the constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice?"

Later this year, Australians will be asked to vote in a national referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. The referendum is in response to the Federal Government's commitment to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which calls for Voice, Treaty and Truth.

Queensland and Western Australia have already begun Treaty discussions, and Victoria is already undergoing a process for Treaty. New South Wales may follow suit if the upcoming state election yields victory for Labor, who announced a \$5 million allocation towards a twelve-month consultation process with First Nations communities on a Treaty for New South Wales. Labor Leader Chris Minns stated that "[a Treaty] may involve an agreement between the government and literally hundreds of First Nation communities [...] we've allocated money to begin the treaty process to start that dialogue and communication about that interaction between First Nations and the NSW government."

However, Minns has been clear that a Treaty for New South Wales must come after any Commonwealth recognition process.

"I want to make sure that national

recognition of the Voice takes precedence, because I do think it's important that we don't have confusion about what's on the table, given that the Commonwealth government is committed to a referendum this year. So we're not waiting forever, but as soon as that's over, we'll begin the process," Minns said.

To understand what is at stake for Indigenous communities, first we have to ask what a Treaty is. A Treaty is a legally binding agreement between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A Treaty involves three key elements: recognition, negotiation, and settlement of claims that provide a sense of self-government.

As part of Labor's proposed consultation process, the government would discuss with Indigenous communities what the process should look like. The critical question for First Nations people in New South Wales is this: if Labor claims an election victory on March 25th, could they successfully enact a meaningful Treaty?

Firstly, it is proposed that consultations will begin after the referendum on the Voice later this year, regardless of the outcome. During those consultations, the government will determine whether First Nations peoples want a treaty or agreement-making process, and what that would look like. But how would the consultation process work? How many First Nations communities will be consulted during this period? How will the government ensure self-determination is maintained in these communities and these consultations are meaningful, rather than just a tick-a-box moment?

Victoria has been in discussions of a Treaty since early 2016, and led more than a dozen community consultations across the state. The Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018, Australia's first ever Treaty law, reflects the Victorian government's intention to work with First Nations Victorians to create a meaningful impact. During these proposed Treaty discussions, how can the government ensure that Aboriginal sovereignty is maintained and not diminished? Currently, NSW has establishments of Local Aboriginal Land Councils across the state so the Victorian model would not be easily applied in NSW.

NSW used to be a leader when it came to Aboriginal culture and heritage recognition, with the Aboriginal Languages Act 2017 and the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983. But, NSW has become a notable outlier as every other state/territory government expresses their support for a Treaty. NSW has a chance at this election to finally catch up with the rest of the country, and it will be interesting to see how the Treaty process will take place and how First Nations people in NSW can maintain sovereignty, and self-determination.

Although the current New South Wales Liberal-National coalition government has publicly backed the Commonwealth's Voice to Parliament, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Ben Franklin has declared that a Treaty would "not [be] on the agenda" for a re-elected Perrottet government, in a move which has drawn criticism from Reconciliation Australia co-chair and Worimi man Joshua Gilbert.

"[The NSW government] needs to

consider its national standing and inconsistent stance compared with other jurisdictions," said Gilbert.

"We do need to start thinking about what this looks like in terms of our state compared to all the others across Australia. There is quite a lot that we can learn from other states. This isn't a new concept — there are a lot of examples that we should be looking at overseas as well."

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council has called for bipartisan support for a Treaty in NSW, placing particular emphasis on the importance of having the process led by Aboriginal people and representative community-controlled structures.

A spokesperson for the NSW ALC said in a statement, "It represents a chance to heal the past and build on the constructive relationship between NSW Aboriginal Land Council Network, government and Aboriginal peoples and communities more broadly."

"A Treaty is a practical way for NSW to deepen Aboriginal participation in the economy and broader community. It will ensure the voices of Aboriginal people are heard loud and clear."

Regardless of the outcome of the March election, public sentiment in New South Wales is changing. Many states will ride the wave of momentum generated by the Voice referendum, however NSW will notably fall behind under a Liberal-National government without a clear plan to recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignty.

# Flatline over flatmates: How we must look beyond the major parties' state election policies for housing

Jordan Anderson and Harrison Brennan argue for alternative solutions to the housing crisis.

Shelter is a human right. Yet, such a right has been jeopardised by the extremely dire state of the housing crisis which has particularly plagued students.

Despite this, neither of the major parties at the upcoming state election propose any holistic solutions that will tangibly uplift renters from the hellish housing market. This begs the question: what is the standard that we will press against the newly elected state government?

To contemplate a radical re-imagining of the housing market — one which centres housing as a human right — we must look beyond the meagre offerings of the LNP and ALP.

Liberal Party

The Liberal Party offers an unhelpful policy platform which focuses exclusively on first time home buyers. In fact, the LNP's only material policies in relation to renters are their "reasonable grounds" eviction model and the upgrade of 15,800 social housing properties. Worse still, the LNP are committed to privatising 70% of public housing at the Waterloo South Estate and the demolition of the Glebe housing estate, demonstrating a palpable apathy to tenants and the housing crisis.

Dominic Perrottet, in his last ditch efforts to appeal to voters, pivoted his campaign to the creation of trust funds for children. This egregiously disadvantages working class families; the state promises to only provide \$400 contributions if guardians can make annual deposits of up to \$1000.

Therefore, the LNP's cursory platform intends to "solve" the housing crisis but only insofar as devoutly reinforcing the marble floors of landlords.

## Labor Party

NSW Labor's housing platform, whilst more substantive than the LNP, leaves much to be desired. Labor's proposed Portable Bond Scheme, which allows the direct transfer of bonds from one property to another, attempts to alleviate the transitional financial burdens faced by renters when moving homes. NSW Labor promises to support no grounds eviction despite shooting down the Green's proposal last year, and has committed to a crackdown on illegal rent bidding.

Labor remains steadfast in upholding

the renewal program of housing development observed in other states, mandating that 30% of housing on surplus government land must be social, affordable or universal housing; a matter that would be overseen by the newly created Homes NSW.

Labor's approach, much like their platform federally, fails to materially address the housing crisis. The waiting list for a public or social home in NSW sits at over 50,000 people, and Labor's continuation of this renewal program makes no room for the construction of public housing, a program which has historically involved the redevelopment of existing public homes into apartment complexes, of which 70% are privatised and 30% social. This position is only worsened by Labor's refusal to oppose the demolition of public homes in the

Inner West, such as Wentworth Park Estate in Glebe. Ultimately, NSW Labor's housing policy platform, whilst marginally better than their Liberal opposition, is untenable insofar as prioritising band-aid solutions over structural reform.

## Alternate Models

The Greens offer a more assertive campaign in relation to the housing crisis insofar as introducing minimum standards for rental accommodation, an enforced ban on rent bidding, a ban on selling public housing, and ensuring that at least 10% of NSW housing is public or not-for-profit social housing. They have also proposed a 5% empty homes levy on homes left empty for over six months, which aims to address the 164,624 empty homes in Sydney.

The Greens are uniquely poised in this state election. If Labor cannot form a majority government, the Greens have said that they will grant their conditional support if Chris Minns delivers bans on unfair evictions and regulating rents.

Beyond this though, NSW should consider adopting the Nordic housing model, which recognises housing as a human right, yet has not yet influenced any of the major parties' policies.

The cornerstone of this model is more not-for-profit housing. Its implementation has significantly reduced homelessness; a stark juxtaposition with the flimsy policies adopted in Australia. In particular, Denmark's not-for-profit housing sector invests their tenants' rents into the maintenance of their accommodation. Residents hold a majority on housing organising boards, epitomising a form of democracy that effectively prioritises tenants' autonomy. According to a 2020 NBO report, Danish municipalities also reserve "the right to [give away] at least one in every fourth vacant apartment" — a policy that, if enacted more broadly in Sydney, would undercut the elites' undying hold on their holiday home fantasies. These not-for-profit cooperatives comprise 20% of the Danish and 22% of the Swedish housing markets compared to a measly

1% in Australia.

In addition to this, the Swedish interpretation of the Nordic model is constructed on higher proportions of public housing, so much so that half of renters live in public housing, therefore inching towards a dissolution of class divides. This was spurred by Sweden's "Million Programme" which built one million new public housing dwellings between 1965 and 1974 to secure affordable accommodation. It prompts us to wonder — if only the federal Labor party could pivot their "One Million Homes" policy to create public housing supply.

This is not to pretend that the Nordic model does not have its own defects. In particular, Sweden's public housing is sparse in certain areas while also experiencing a national housing shortage.

Regardless, it seems to extend well beyond the Australian status quo or at the very least, inspires a restructuring of our housing market, particularly when the major parties are dragging

their feet into the state election with cursory policy platforms.

*Disclaimer:* Harrison Brennan is a member of The Greens.



Art by Adrian Naracita

# ‘This shit’s fake’: The Housing Crisis is Completely Avoidable

Luke Cass doesn't want to play the same game anymore.

*The increase in the value of homes has been welcome...I don't get people stopping me in the street and saying, "John you're outrageous, under your government the value of my house has increased." In fact, most people feel more secure and feel better off because the value of their homes has gone up. — John Howard, 2003.*

*I currently live off cans of tuna and pasta. I can't afford vegetables.*

The existence of the housing crisis is at its core a choice; it is by no means inevitable. And for decades this choice has been repeatedly made. The status quo is maintained at the same time that policymakers spend considerable amounts of time pretending to do the opposite: acknowledging the crisis, commissioning reports, announcing schemes — but doing nothing. However, it is only in fledgling moments, like in Howard's off-the-cuff comment in 2003, in which the underlying approach to housing in this country is hinted at. That is, the maintenance of a privatised model of housing which privileges home ownership and wealth accumulation. The cost of this has been felt deeply by young and vulnerable people.

## CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS?

For this piece, *Honi* (in collaboration with the SRC) asked students how the housing crisis has affected them. The volume of responses, and the deep commonalities in those responses, were alarming.

For too many students, homelessness was a pervasive reality, one which plagued their youth.

*I'm from out of state and have been paying \$400 a week for a stranger's spare room. I've been searching for a place for months with friends but there simply aren't enough houses to go around. I've lived in Sydney [for] 4 years and feel like I've done everything right, been responsible, made the right decisions etc. I don't understand how I'm on the brink of*

*homelessness.*

*My parents separated because they couldn't pay the mortgage, moved around 8 different rentals in 2 years, mainly staying (by luck) at friends' houses as house sitters. Had first day of high school staying in a motel because we didn't have a place to live. Sydney's housing is fucked, with no extra support for single parent families & those escaping [Domestic Violence].*

Unfortunately, periodic stints of homelessness are shockingly common among students and young people. This is substantially due to the chronic unavailability of rental properties, leading to long wait times:

*I got kicked out of [my] present apartment. It took 4 months of obsessive looking to find another.*

*It took me two months to find a place in NSW as I was relocating from regional NSW.*

*It took nearly 6 months to find a rental and be accepted.*

**Periods of homelessness and months-long searches for a place to live should not be normal; they should not be accepted.**

Yet, for many students, the threat of homelessness marks their experiences at existing accommodation. Homelessness has been used as a weapon against young people by the landlord class, forcing them to live in terrible conditions:

*One of my roommates tried to choke my roommate and his friend so we went and got an AVO from the police against him. The real estate agent refused to acknowledge the AVO*

*despite the law being explicit about who is covered by it. We felt unsafe and [...] forced to pay thousands of dollars to cover the break fee just so we could leave. Our agent didn't offer any advice and the owner was completely apathetic.*

*Our landlord wants the rent put up 160 a week. Our bathroom is literally outside and it's covered in mould.*

*I'm considering having to move back to my homophobic parents' house in Penrith as I'm currently living paycheck to paycheck.*

Rising rents and the unavailability of properties has rendered young people powerless against the larger force of the housing market. It is one which emboldens landlords to raise rent and deny necessary maintenance.

*I was broke for 5 months because my first landlord kept my entire bond and I had to spend my savings on a new bond. I had to take the fucker to tribunal to get my [money].*

*[I'm] living in an unsafe house afraid to tell the landlord in fear he'll up the rent for the repairs.*

These experiences are the consequences of profound policy failures, from insufficient laws protecting tenants to creating the conditions of an overly competitive housing market in the first place.

## ARRIVING HERE

The dominant media narrative, in which the housing crisis is explained by isolated phenomena — COVID, low interest rates, insufficient construction — is too myopic a perspective to explain a problem which has been coming for decades.

The root cause of a system which fails to provide safe and affordable housing to all, is the failure to properly view this type of housing as a human right. Rather than prioritising the provision of housing, successive

governments have instead focussed on allowing as many people as possible to own a home. This intensified with the rise of neoliberalism in Australia in the 1980s. At its core, neoliberalism delegitimises the state's role in providing housing, instead privileging an increasingly privatised approach to housing.

The post-war Liberal government of Robert Menzies set the home-ownership objective into motion in 1945, with the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. The agreement, as opposed to earlier national housing plans, dedicated substantial funding to home purchase assistance, and focussed on building houses which would then be sold. The underlying approach here, of selling public housing where profitable — and prioritising ownership over provision — has endured to the present day. Governments continue to sell-off public housing wherever convenient — just as the NSW government has done to inner-city public housing over the last ten years — yet at the same time they refuse to build it. As a result, less than five per cent of housing in Australia is public housing. At the same time, the waitlist for social housing is over 100,000 households long.

**The post-war turn to treating housing as a commodity, not a right, was borne of a simplistic valorisation of the individual.**

This view, as Menzies put it in his Forgotten People speech of 1942, is that “the material home represents the concrete

expression of the habits of frugality and saving.”

As young people, whose work and attempts to save money are subsumed by unaffordable rent, know: the view of homeownership as the product of frugality is a fiction. It is not just unrealistic, but stems from a distinctly conservative view of the world. One in which individuals can triumph over the structural forces of the housing market. One which privileges the lifestyles of suburban nuclear families above broader community good.

However, home ownership only privileges some individuals. Those individuals are not those who are frugal, or save, but people with personal or intergenerational wealth. With the growth of house prices and rent outstripping wages for over a decade, the ideal of home ownership is not an ideal which serves the vast majority of students and young people.

*Students are always going to be a landlord's last pick over families and higher earners.*

## WHY NOT FIX IT?

The first step towards ending the housing crisis must be reimagining what the purpose of housing is. This means the disentangling of the logic of neoliberal capitalism from our housing policy. Neoliberal logic is incompatible with treating quality and affordable housing as a human right: a system which relies on scarcity and demand to increase value has no interest in making quality housing as widespread as possible. A substantial way of doing this would be the government constructing and maintaining large amounts of quality public housing.

The barrier which governments cite for not doing this is the cost of doing so. But Australia has ample amounts of money to address the housing crisis. The value of residential “property” in Australia is nine trillion dollars: three times our Gross Domestic Product, thirty percent more than Australians' superannuation, the stock market and commercial property

combined. This money is currently funnelled into private hands, despite the fact that the land it sits on and arguably the property itself is a public good. Instead of privatising ownership of land value, the public could democratise that wealth through initiatives such as land taxes or land banking.

Similarly, Australia pays landowners massive amounts of money — in the form of tax concessions — for merely owning “property”. Sometimes we offer money for owning more than one dwelling. The tax concessions offered to housing investors, in the form of negative gearing and capital gains tax exemptions, will reach twenty billion dollars annually by the end of the decade. We already spend almost thirty billion dollars a year on exempting people's main residences from capital gains tax. (This is not to mention billions of dollars which could be raised in repealing the stage three tax cuts or other senseless tax breaks.)

When announcing his lack of intention to repeal capital gains tax exemptions for main residences earlier this month, Anthony Albanese said that it was “a bad idea.”

“And I have never heard, in all of the meetings that I've been to over the years ... I have never heard anyone raise that as a proposition.”

This comment is indicative of the actual barrier to ending the housing crisis: the structural political forces which oppose it.

Both Howard in 2003 and Albanese in 2023 may not be hearing about the need for genuine solutions to the rising cost of housing, because of the immense political influence of the home owning class.

Although the rate is steadily decreasing — a product of housing unaffordability and wealth consolidation by the rich and older generations — 66% of homes are owned rather than rented. This makes it incredibly difficult, simply because of democracy's majoritarian bent, to do anything which would meaningfully address rising housing costs.

Beyond this, however, is the outsized role home ownership has in the Australian psyche. As social researcher Hugh

Mackay puts it, home ownership is “the most culturally obvious and accessible symbol of personal power, achievement and control over the environment.” People care too much about their homes to accept any changes they feel could threaten their ownership of their house, their land.

A particularly harmful subset of homeowners are those who participate in Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) movements. These have been demonstrated to have contributed to unaffordable housing by opposing higher density developments in attractive areas to live.

Home ownership is accompanied by the influence of housing developers as a corrosive influence on democracy's ability to address our chronic housing problem. Housing developers are among the largest donors to political parties, spending millions of dollars on these donations.

This is the real problem. And young people have a right to be angry about it. It explains why governments have done nothing to remedy the causes of unaffordable housing, disregarding the needs of young and vulnerable people in the process.

We don't want to fix the housing crisis — despite the pretence of wanting to — but we could.

## FIXING IT

Successive governments have approached the housing crisis by supplying huge amounts of money for home buying schemes. They spent over twenty billion dollars on this over the last decade. These do nothing but increase prices and appease politically powerful homeowners.

Governments have also tinkered with planning reform at each election, thinking that increasing private housing production will solve the crisis. As long as we treat housing as a commodity, it won't.

The solutions to the housing crisis are actually fairly simple: protect and dramatically expand public housing, allow for population densification closer to cities, end expensive tax discounts to the already

wealthy, protect renters from harmful conditions and rent rises.

We know about these, yet politicians dare not try it.

## THIS SHIT IS FAKE AS HELL.

*I've lost a lot of sleep over the housing crisis. It's depressing when the opportunities and support for young adults at uni are only accessible to those who can afford living near uni. There's a certain kind of helplessness to it. It's invasive and insidious, and the type that makes you want to beg and shout with anger at the same time. It pins you to the ground in silence, because how are you supposed to speak up for what is needed when you're not sure if others would speak up with you? If you're not sure the institution even cares the least bit about you.*

I didn't want to write this piece as a technical guide to solving the housing crisis. There's been enough of that. However, it is so easy to digress into wonkish policy talk: the desire to pinpoint specific solutions is strong, given that they represent the concrete changes that will turn the tide on the crisis.

**It is much harder to detach ourselves from the corrosive logic of neoliberal capitalism, and consider what housing should be, and how our lives may change as a result.**

That, not another policy document, is what is needed to attain the quality of living which the current housing market denies young and vulnerable people.

With the sheer volume of negative experiences young people already have navigating the rental market, it is easy to be angry. I think that is worthwhile. Only sustained, widespread anger is enough to break the complacency that holds housing policy in a perpetual state of inertia. This is what we need.



# Beyond just a room: How student housing should evolve

In the past few years, student housing at the University of Sydney has been met with mixed reviews at best. Think of the abrupt closure of International House or the sales of affordable Arundel Terraces while the institution hands over management of its most populous residences to third-party accommodation providers.

There is a lack of imagination when it comes to affordable student housing and what it means to live in a communal space that's not just a sleeping quarter. Here, I lay out some of the paths forward in thinking about what affordable and lively student housing can mean on our campus:

## STUCCO's model: self-determination and safer space

I spoke to Hanna Kwan, a third-year Media and Communications student and resident at STUCCO — a USyd-owned student cooperative founded in 1992. Prior to joining STUCCO in 2021, she lived in Arundel House and USyd's Queen Mary Building.

Kwan "hated" life at QMB — currently managed by UniLodge, a third-party student accommodation provider — she felt that the building was "sterile" and "clinical" due to the lack of community-based activities beyond the occasional rooftop party. Despite being cheaper than the colleges, residences like Queen Mary are largely devoid of student-run societies and initiatives. Instead, these are closely supervised by residential managers.

On the other hand, at the Anglican-owned single-sex Arundel House on Broadway, residential life felt restrictive. Rents at Arundel currently sit at \$320 per week for a shared room inclusive of

meals. Although faith (or lack thereof) is no barrier to living at Arundel, residents are encouraged to participate in bible study sessions and activities linked to St Barnabas' Church.

"Monday night dinners were compulsory, afterwards, you had a discussion or activities not related to Christianity, but similar to youth groups,"

Kwan said, describing Arundel as a tight-knit community, albeit with a heavy religious bent. Being atheist, she gravitated towards a group that was less active in the Anglican side of the House.

As such, Kwan feels that the anti-oppression politics, history and shared responsibilities at STUCCO align most closely to her heart. From Monday to Thursday, residents take turns to form groups and cook for everyone as part of the house's supper club.

Yet, one of the most vexing problems when it comes to student housing is student safety. Residences like STUCCO are not immune to bullying, harassment, and other breaches within its corridors. When asked about what measures the co-op takes in response to incidents, Kwan says that even though breaches do occur at the cooperative, there are structures in place through its safer space policy to resolve conflict and hold perpetrators to account.

"If there's emergencies we have AGMs (Annual General Meetings) and everyone gets a say. Even if there is conflict, we try to deal with it [conflict] with an EGM (Emergency General Meeting) or something like that,"

Kwan said.

"Even places like STUCCO obviously deal with bullying and harassment but we have a commitment to uphold principles like anti-oppression, non-violence and ending racism. If people don't align with that, obviously, there's going to be a problem."

## Beyond just a room, towards an affordable academic community

One of the main obstacles to housing models like STUCCO from becoming mainstream at universities, at least in Australia, is restrictive state laws banning international students from residing in student cooperatives. The same goes for social and public housing in NSW — you must be a citizen or permanent resident to apply.

What emerged from Kwan's journey was the link between how university residences come about, their identity, and affordability. In her view, a key ingredient behind the elitism of USyd's residential colleges is the connection between their astronomical rent and an exclusive alumni network whose post-university careers and goals fundamentally differ from students from a low-income background.

This, in turn, leads to a cycle where residential colleges become a pipeline for producing future donors for USyd's enormous endowment. Combined with the colleges' legal detachment from USyd, this creates incentives against affordability that, otherwise, their counterparts in Oxbridge (as public institutions) are bound to offer.

"Instead, with us, we have a lot of people who work in grassroots organisations who want to give people who live in STUCCO a chance to work in grassroots businesses and community organisations," Kwan said.

"The people who go there [residential

colleges] are the ones who work for the one per cent unlike people who need STUCCO. We are a needs-based cooperative."

Throughout our conversation, there was a sense that reforms to turn colleges into affordable housing or founding better student residences is not a far-fetched aim, with the template already laid out not only in models like STUCCO but university-owned residences overseas.

Kwan imagines that USyd should invest in student residences so that they become more than just a mere contract for rooms and become a space where autonomy and lively student life can take place. Over time, student residences should be an affordable academic space endowed with their own libraries and student societies. Combined with the passage of time, new and old student traditions can emerge.

Elsewhere, at Paris' intercollegiate Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris (CIUP) — formerly residences of the old Sorbonne — rents typically hover at approximately AU\$200 per week in buildings rich in history with deeply entrenched nations- or region-based identities of their own: Southeast Asia, Spain and Île-de-France.

It's not unheard of at Sydney University either, with the spirit of International House lying dormant in its redbrick shell on City Road. And thus, the ball lies in the University's court to decide whether it wants to continue its current trajectory where USyd-owned student housing will likely slide into further cultural sterilisation under management by UniLodge, or invest genuinely and with good intent into life at university residences and STUCCO.

Art by Margot Roberts

# 'Being a student shouldn't mean compromising on quality': International students' living experiences in Scape

The air conditioner in Olivia Hao's room has broken four times since she moved into Scape Redfern in mid-July 2022. When she switched on her air-conditioner, the central control system somehow shut it down seconds later.

"I don't know why the system is such a fragile one. Again and again it breaks, just a few days after the contractor fixed it. Especially after the new semester begins, almost everyday, someone in our WeChat group [for Chinese students who live in Scape Redfern] would say: 'Why does my air-con break down again?'"

As "the biggest student accommodation owner and operator", Scape claims that it "was born out of a simple idea — being a student shouldn't mean compromising on quality." From Hao's experience, that does not seem to have been the case.

Libby Su, who lives in Scape Glebe, said that "service is nice, staff are kind", but the quality of your room depends on your luck. "My room is quite good. However, some of my friends who also live here complained that their room has strange smells and it's dirty."

Kate Zhang investigates housing options for international students.

Staying in an 18m<sup>2</sup> medium studio apartment with rent of \$639 per week, Hao seems to be one of the unlucky ones. "When I moved in, I found that the drawer missed a screw. Just one pull, the cabinet door fell off. I fixed it by myself later afterwards," she said.

Hao knew someone who found their bed frame broken when they just moved in, and someone who lived on the ground floor close to the railway track, who grew to be annoyed by the noise from trains. Speaking of noise, Hao described that the noises from the ventilation system are "as big as the noise of range hoods."

Living abroad before moving to Sydney, many international students lack the opportunity to have an inspection before arriving. "They just emailed me the room number after I booked," Hao said. Students cannot apply to change rooms, according to Hao, as there are no empty rooms to change into.

Stepping outside the room, there are problems that even those who lucked out with their rooms may not be able to avoid. Su said the public facilities appear to be "old", including the laundry room. Hao wondered if Scape Redfern's laundry facilities are

# Growing Home: Evolving relationships with homes of the future

Vanshika Singhu Gupta reflects on how home shapes who we are.

It should come as no surprise to anyone that climate change is pushing ecological stability towards an explosive crescendo. A 2016 report by the United Nations' refugee agency, UNHCR, said that 21.8 million people were displaced due to floods, famines, fires and storms. It has also been estimated that nearly 1.2 billion people face eviction from their home and habitat.

The notion of home has evolved since the early days of human civilisation, as shelter to aid in survival and protect humans from harsh environments around them. It has evolved into a gathering place for family, a group of people or individuals to retreat to once the day is over.

However, the glass and chrome lifestyle of today must include sustainable building practices to reduce carbon footprints as the home once again becomes the last refuge from extreme weather and natural disasters.

Home, though, is not just limited to a physical reality upon which you reside. It is an emotional fortress — a boundary between you and the rest of the world, along which you grow your "domestic" personality. The evolution of changing built realities is not just related to what the structure of a home will look like, but also what it would feel like to reside in it.

In fact, this cognitive evolution is occurring right now, and at a much faster pace than the built revolution. With the advent of smart home and IOT (Internet of Things) technology, as well as AI assistants starting with Alexa and Siri, domestic life looks a lot different than it did even a decade ago.

Interiors are not just "inanimate" anymore but understand human language and respond with movement and action. They provide the infrastructure, media and platforms

to allow human activity. However, are these personalised experiences enough to get over the feeling of isolation from lack of social contacts in modern times?

**Home, though, is not just limited to a physical reality upon which you reside. It is an emotional fortress — a boundary between you and the rest of the world.**

The use of AI and IOT in smart homes has brought enhanced personal experience of comfort and safety, but concerns over privacy and data security have grown and must be addressed. Home is no longer just a personal space, since work is not only limited to offices. After the onset of the pandemic, our lives are increasingly remote, and so we further limit the need for physical social proximity.

One of my earliest thoughts on this was to perceive this as a "de-evolution", implying stagnation instead of evolution implying growth.

Now, having researched further, I've come to develop a different view of this.

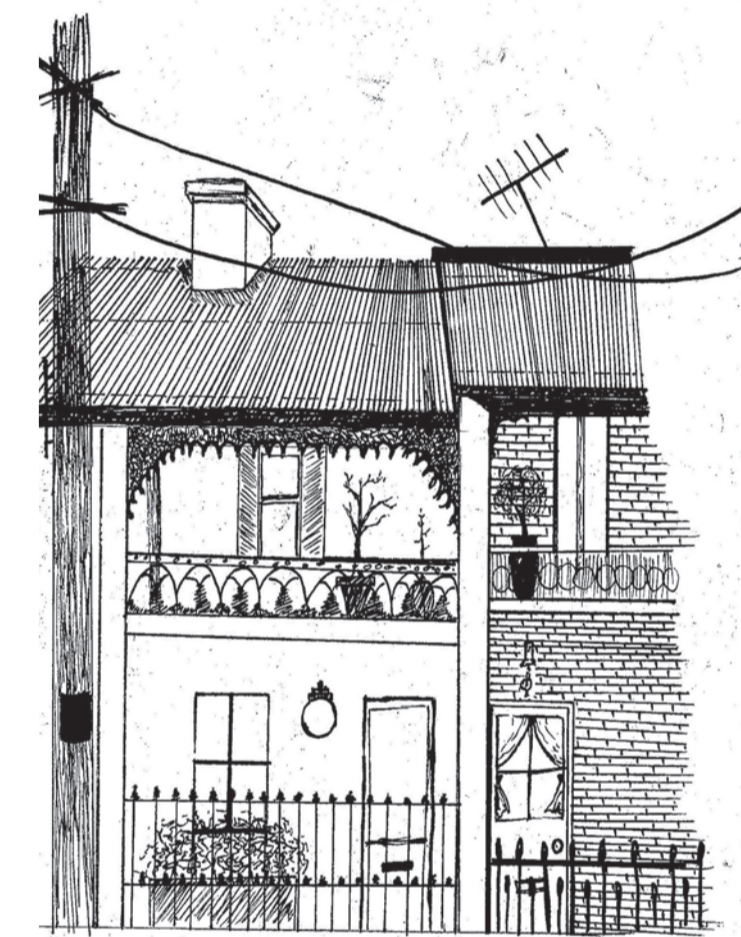
Since our earliest humans depended on socialisation for survival, our desire to connect left physical imprints upon the brain that exist to this day and govern mental health. Needless to say, the lack of social stimulus to the brain has grave consequences for our psychological stability.

While we might associate loneliness with negative consequences and everything but "evolution", psycho-anthropology would classify this differently.

Technology is now the stimulus which our behaviour is developing alongside — from using phones in bed to do work, to taking pictures of food before you even begin eating. These behaviours may seem "insignificant", but are actually important features of this new revolution. It is difficult to tell which came first: growing lonely due to disruptive tech use, or relying on technology to alleviate loneliness. Either way, this is what the psychosocial framework of the contemporary human

looks like, shaped by major changes in technology, culture and politics.

We may not realise it, but we are moving away from physical construction to the growth and fabrication of built environments. We are deviating from strong bonds in society and culture, and losing ourselves in virtual realities where our connections are set to be more deterministic. The emotional reality of the future home will extend beyond its physical boundaries. It will be up to you to determine whether you are "lonely" or "alone".



Art by Simona Francis

regularly cleaned, as she often finds black clay-like things inside the rubber seals of the washing machines.

Another public facility, the garbage chute, is available on each floor to transit rubbish to the garbage room located on the ground floor for residents' convenience. But, Hao has found that it often breaks too. When the chute's door wouldn't open, Hao had to go to the ground floor to throw away her rubbish.

This might otherwise be a minor inconvenience, if it wasn't coupled with a continuing smell. Hao said that it smells "horrible. The rubbish stuck inside the chute stinks, and the smell fills the air of the corridor. There's no window — there's no air coming in and out. The smell is trapped inside the building. When it's really serious, it also stinks in my room."

Scape states on their website that "at university, students will be doing some of the most important work of their lives. The place that they live needs to support them and make sure they feel safe, calm and at home." It's hard to see how Scape provides that kind of a calm space from Hao's experience with loud noises, ongoing smells and an "unstable" air-conditioning system.

Su and Hao had received recommendations of Scape properties from their agents. Many agents seem to recommend Scape to students, including Student.com, UniAcco and Uhomes. Students in the waitlist of student accommodation at USyd will receive a list of recommendations of other student housing, including Scape.

Su moved to Scape because her first choice — on-campus housing at USyd — was fully filled when she applied around October. Hao made her choice as she recalled that Urbanest had a building close to the building where she had classes, but it had been acquired by Scape.

Hao has tried to move out before, struggling to find a studio with an affordable price whilst being close to USyd. Hao was troubled by the cost of furnishing the apartment, the trial and error involved in seeking roommates, and the inflexible rental contract length of 52 weeks.

As we move further away from COVID-19 driven online learning, international students are coming back to campus so student accommodation

facilities are becoming increasingly in demand.

Occupying good locations, recommended by many agents, offered at high rental prices, Scape should listen to their residents' experiences before they "reimagine what a student's life could look like."

When approached about the claims made in this article, Scape responded that "As with all new buildings there are some teething issues associated with operating at full occupancy for the first time.

"Our teams on the ground have worked hard to respond to any issues swiftly, always prioritising our resident's safety and comfort."



# Informal Subletting: An attempt to find security in an insecure rental market

Ondine Karpinellison explores the complexity of a strained rental market.

The intimidating presence of apparently cashed-up millennials at every inspection, the line snaking out the front of every three-bedroom inner west property, and the inevitable email from your landlord with some “hard but necessary” news of a rental hike. Sydney’s rental market is a dire environment for young aspiring tenants.

At the core of this rental crisis is an issue of supply and demand — specifically, a dwindling supply with staggering demand. The return of international students and overseas workers has increased the need for properties, but there are next to none available. According to data released by Domain, the rate of vacancy in Sydney reached an all-time low of 0.9% in February. Sydney renters then fall into two camps: those who are desperate for a place, and those holding on tightly to what they’ve got.

A glaring representation of the changing dynamics of the rental market can be observed in the Facebook group “Sydney Inner West Housemates.” What was once intended as a site for people to advertise vacancies in their houses, has now transformed into something of a rental dating platform. Every day, we see rental hopefuls carefully curating posts that present themselves as the ideal housemate. There is no

shortage of intimate personal details and meticulously chosen selfies selected to present the image of an impossible concoction of fun and chill, someone who “likes alone time” but is “always up for a chat.” These posts often highlight the time sensitivity of their pleas, with the words “desperate” and “urgent” not uncommon. While notice of a singular room available sometimes receives over 50 responses, these posts very rarely receive any acknowledgement from the group members.

If you manage to land a rental property in Sydney, the next challenge is keeping it. In this climate, people are inclined to renew their leases and hold on to the property, in fear that if they don’t, they may not be able to find another. This becomes more complicated when they wish to travel or if they must go work interstate. Having a rental property that they can return to is potentially the closest Generation Z will get to the security of owning a house. So, in a bid to create some sense of quasi security, young people are turning to the practice of subletting — (usually informally) — to try to hold onto what they have.

This practice may also be used to try to ease inflationary rental increases, as people may open their homes to extra people, offering various spaces in the

house for sublet that may not have been approved by landlords. Unfortunately, these practices, as well as the plethora of properties that Airbnb rents on a short-term basis, maintain the low vacancy rate, which further locks out rental hopefuls.

Subletting is a very common practice across Australia. When speaking to one six-person share house in Sydney’s inner west, they told me that, over the winter break, the whole house will be informally sublet, meaning that no original tenants (those officially on the lease) will be living there. When asked about why they are opting for the informal option, one house member remarked that telling the landlord “is a complication, [since] you don’t know how they are going to react.” Another noted that their choice to sublet informally means that they don’t have to create unnecessary contact with the landlord, fearing a repeat of previous threats of raised rent.

This appears to be part of a shift towards a “don’t make a peep” relationship with landlords. When interviewing another student share house, one housemate noted that they have opted not to tell their landlord about certain issues in the house because they don’t want to “remind them they exist.”

So, should you tell your landlord if you plan to sublet? Or, are you better off relying on the belief that if you don’t contact them, they will forget about you so that they might opt to not increase

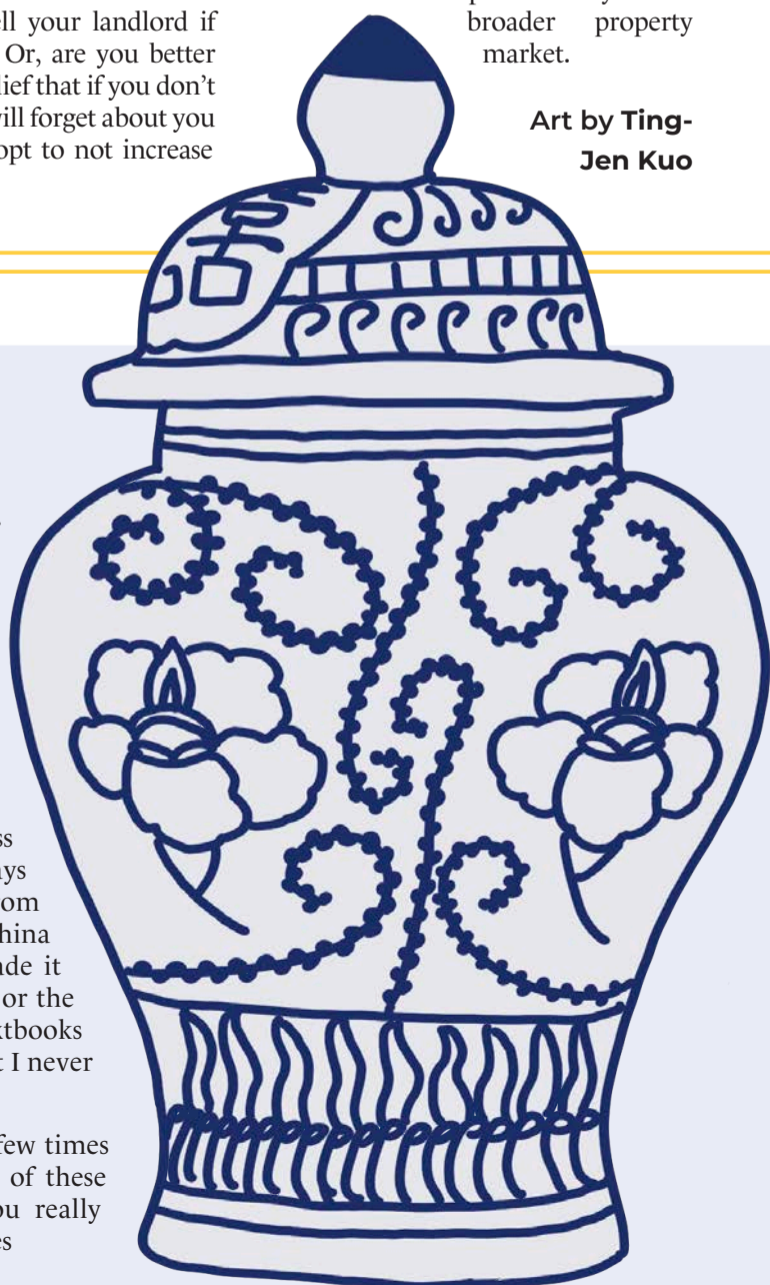
your rent when your lease is up?

Not telling your landlord that you are subletting, according to Fair Trade NSW, violates your Tenancy agreement. Under section 87 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010, “a landlord may give a termination notice on the ground that the tenant has breached the residential tenancy agreement.” In this way, informally subletting can place your rental into a space of insecurity.

It is important to note that a landlord cannot legally refuse your request to sublet unless they have a valid reason, such as, according to Fair Trade NSW, “if the person being proposed is listed on a tenancy database [for being a] bad tenant.”

Renters should not be placed in a situation where they must risk eviction to avoid it. Increasing rent, lack of available properties and the power largely remaining in the hands of landlords, functions to create immense vulnerability for renters in Sydney, forcing them to attempt to create their own security in a space where it cannot be found. By generating this pseudo-security, the rental market becomes even more closed off to those who are not currently in it, mirroring the impenetrability of the broader property market.

Art by Ting-Jen Kuo



## Perspective

### A letter to my hoarder—mother

Amy Warner doesn’t like owning random stuff.

Dear Ma,

I don’t think you’ve noticed that I don’t like owning stuff like you do. I don’t like the little trinkets you think are “so cute”, I don’t like the musty dusty “antique” furniture that’s falling apart, and I really regret introducing you to Facebook Marketplace. I hate to break it to you Mum, but you’re a hoarder.

I know proper Chinese children don’t criticise their parents, but I know you won’t be reading this. Your stuff has spilled into your duplex home and made most of its rooms unusable. You constantly say you don’t need to throw anything out, it just needs “organising”.

Maybe a sense of safety and order is what you’re really searching for, maybe it’s a form of nesting.

I can only really speculate.

What I do know is that you came to this country just after the Tiananmen Square Massacre — but you won’t admit that was the reason you left China. A kind NaiNai took you in as you started working. Her funeral last year was the only time I’ve seen you sob. Looking at your home now, I wonder how much stuff you had when you arrived at her doorstep. You probably didn’t have the six

human-sized Chinese vases, or the eight antique lounges and three “very nice wood” dining tables. You probably didn’t have the countless clothes YeYe always brought back from his summers in China — which never made it into your closet — or the stacks of extra textbooks you bought me that I never opened.

I’ve asked you a few times to get rid of some of these things. I mean, you really don’t need the shoes

# The Plague That Haunts My Mother

Suhaila Mahafza traces her relationship with her mother.

As children, many of us believed our parents were superheroes. Ask a child who they aspire to be like when they grow up and many will say “I want to be like my Mummy because she’s the best in the whole wide world!”

But to me, this just never felt right. I was not given the super mum that we feel entitled to as a child. I didn’t have a maternal figure who I told everything to, or did “mother-daughter” things with. No one turned up to pick me up from school, or do what mothers usually did.

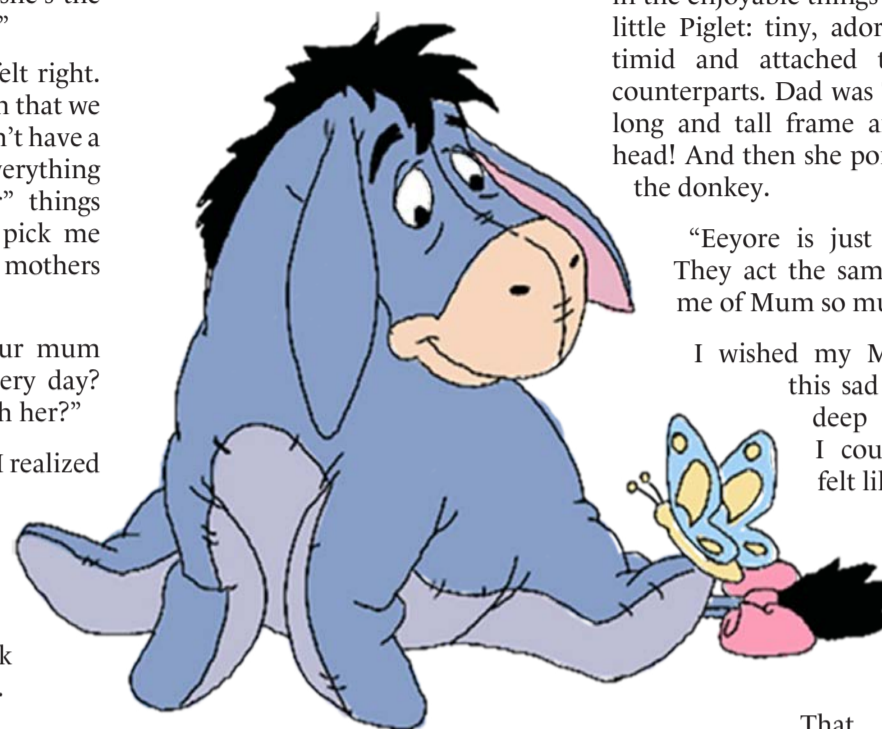
“But don’t you talk to your mum about things that happen every day? Have a daily conversation with her?”

This was the moment when I realized I didn’t have it the same way my friends did. I only ever spoke to my mum for important things. It was only if I had to, let alone if I could even get a chance to talk to her while she wasn’t asleep.

However, by no means was my mother horrible, evil or abusive. She was always respectful and kind, soft and gentle, and never meant any harm to her children. When she had her highs, she was the most radiant woman in the room, when she had her lows she emanated darkness. Something plagued my mother. A plague which would lock her in her room for hours on end, crouched into a fetal position, surrounded by tissues and cigarette butts. She had no strength to disguise as a mother who could cook, clean, or cuddle. I would often wonder, who even is my mum?

From a young age, I believed that

I essentially “broke” my own mother. I remember in the very early stages of my life she was more present, engaging with family activities and responsibilities.



allocate us each a character. Pooh Bear with his jolly expression was me, the chubby and caring older sister who was always happy, optimistic and indulging in the enjoyable things in life. She was little Piglet: tiny, adorable but often timid and attached to their older counterparts. Dad was Tigger with his long and tall frame and rectangular head! And then she pointed at Eeyore the donkey.

“Eeyore is just like Mummy! They act the same! He reminds me of Mum so much!”

I wished my Mummy wasn’t this sad character, and deep down I hoped I could save her. I felt like I was robbed of the “Super Mum”, the best friend that others had.

That longing progressed into a deep resentment. Without the maternal figure I needed in high school, my bitterness grew with each form of neglect. Where was she? Why couldn’t she just suck it up and do her job? Why is she so tired when all the other mums in the world seem fine? How could all the parental responsibilities be left to me and my father? Just come out of your bedroom, ditch your Winnie Reds, and get this place cleaned up!

As I got older, I became more aware that my mum has a severe case of depression. I came to realize that motherhood is difficult for her, and

watched her fade away into depression in front of my own eyes.

If I had just been a better child, less of a troublemaker in school, less of a problem child, would she be whole? If I was softer and kinder? If I was better behaved? If I didn’t play so many games and watch so much television? If I was just happier? More responsible? More caring and conscientious? My siblings and I knew something was wrong, but we didn’t know why.

My little sister would read her Winnie the Pooh storybook and

in favour of looking like they have a real personality.

But Mum, I’m not so generous as to say that your style is “maximalist” in the aesthetic sense. If you worked less, you might have the time to do all the curation that goes into making a beautiful space.

I think stuff is part of our identity, probably more so for you than me... but who am I to judge? Those six human-sized Chinese vases might remind you of the culture you could have had without the Cultural Revolution. The three antique wooden dining tables might make you feel that you belong in this country because you own a part of its history. Stacks of paper and books, old shoes and clothes, tell the story of a life lived. If you just printed out a few thousand labels, your home could be a pretty cool museum of diaspora living.

I can’t imagine immigration, the uprooting of an entire life, and the building of a new one from scratch. You never really talk about it either. Yet, I know you were into photography, travelled across the country with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and made picture frames — I’ve found the negatives, the old certificates, and professional framing equipment at the back of cupboards and under boxes. For this reason, I am grateful that you never throw anything out.

If you will not tell me about your life, I will at least be able to piece it together through your belongings.

with a little more empathy, I am now able to reach her in my adulthood. I noticed the phases of her depression.

Mental health is far from linear — there were periods where I could go months without talking to her under the same roof.

But then the tables turned and she had gotten herself together, started studying for the first time in 15 years. A TAFE diploma turned into a bachelor’s degree. A doleful, bland bedroom turned into moving out into her own clean and colorful apartment unit. A sunken face that was often painted with pain, now accommodates a reinvigorated passion for life.

I started to see her as a role model, not because she gave birth to me, but because she worked through her struggle. Not only through her successful highs, but also her depressive lows. Parents are dealt their cards randomly, and many have to work with what they are given. My mum was dealt a shitty deck, and she worked with what she could. Even when she couldn’t work at all because the basic responsibilities of life were debilitating, I saw a role model as I got older, someone who was able to persevere through her adversities and regain control of her life.

Art by Bipasha Chakraborty

Perhaps stuff is how we will go on communicating. I’ve only recently figured out that when you bring me those “cute” little rabbits, you’re actually trying to tell me that I’m much more like my zodiac than I know, and I should come with you to the Chinese fortune teller. I’m sorry it took me this long to realise that stuff can be more than clutter: it is also a form of love.

I still don’t like your little trinkets and musty dusty antique furniture, even though I begrudgingly allowed you to place an ornate marble topped side table in my entryway. Weirdly enough, it gets a lot of compliments.

I think it’s growing on me.

Art by Katarina Butler

# How to create a lecture coven: the art of auditing classes

Ever since I was a snotty 16-year-old, all I wanted to do was study relentlessly without the nightmares of assignments and fees. A class on Roman bathrooms in the morning, followed by an excursion to Palbury ruins in the evening, I love being quite the witchy wolf in a herd of sheep.

“Auditing” a class usually means attending lectures and accessing learning resources without officially enrolling, gaining credits, or undertaking assignments. Several US universities offer auditing options that have lower fees than those paid by students taking credited courses. However, most Australian universities do not have official auditing options. The University of South Australia is one of the few universities which does. There, students pay \$1,325 for each 4.5 unit course they audit.

Do I, or those who simply want to learn, have the ability to pay this amount for something that will not count towards my transcript or degree? Hell no.

I have no wish to write a thesis on Roman pooping habits or what happened when Mount Vesuvius erupted. Neither do other people who have full-time jobs and caring responsibilities, they just want to know. They don't want to know this in the dreary isolation of edX but in the privileged, lively places of Universities.

Tertiary education monetises every aspect of learning and reduces everything that public universities have to offer for profit. Every six months I witness \$40,000 swoosh away from my bank account for 24 credit points, blobs of courses on my transcript, accessing a humongous library and interacting with my knowledgeable teachers (totally worth the money, but they are grossly underpaid, oops).

How could regular people, without the means to pay for expensive, structured courses, access this vital education? During a conversation with my 45-year-old colleague — who I have let into my Gender Studies classes on multiple occasions — I

realised that we need to create a coven for auditing classes effortlessly.

Covens work on the idea of collective power, networks, and the idea that the exploration of ideas helps everyone strengthen their craft. In practice, this means forming groups that share

**Do I, or those who simply want to learn, have the ability to pay this amount for something that will not count towards my transcript or degree? Hell no.**

information about where classes are held and how to attend them.

people learn unencumbered by fees and assessments has been the art of navigating class timings, locations and unit outlines secured behind the confusing realm of Canvas. To counter this, I have entered multiple Faculty-specific Facebook chats, and

What is it like to be a middle or old-aged person wishing to immerse yourself in the exciting yet overwhelming world of academia again, or for the first time ever? Auditing covens make the process of learning a combined effort where those who have first-hand access to university systems are more feasible. My colleague and I co-created a new University timetable for her with an amalgamation of Gender and Cultural Studies, Archaeology, and Environmental Sciences classes. “My day-offs look like loitering on campus and sipping on matcha at... what's that hip place? Yeah, Courtyard.” My friends, who are studying different subjects, and I email tutors on her behalf when she wants to access things beyond a lecture. Readings are shared in our small coven when they are not accessible in Fisher, and the cycle stays alive.

befriended those studying courses I am keen to audit. Some have become my nerdy conjurers in the process, and

Misbah Ansari conjures up a system.

what I am already paying for. I understand this is also easier for me as a 20-something-year-old, though. I am already acquainted with the systems of a modern university: course codes, checking upcoming lectures outside rooms, and the emailing system.

None of this is meant to diminish the efforts of teaching staff in any way though, or insinuate that their expertise is not of any value.

Lecture covens, as a system upheld by students, highlight the inaccessible nature of universities; rendering knowledge a matter of financial, cultural and age-based capital. You should make your own auditing coven across subjects and institutions, befriend teachers and make universities actually public.

Most staff are quite welcoming to students observing their classes. In my experience, they are enthusiastic about it; with one academic being rather ecstatic to talk to me post a two-hour seminar on the use of copper in architecture.

The biggest deterrence to the formation of networks helping others have revealed class details thinking I am a fellow Undergraduate Architecture student with a summer internship at HKS (apologies for my treachery). My friends have also let me into Gender Studies classes in UNSW and other humanities subjects which enrich my trail of thoughts, but I cannot access over and beyond

Art by Yasodara Puhule.



# In defence of odes to love letters

Ariana Haghighi and Marlow Hurst open a letter.

Every day, tucked away in newsrooms, broadcast studios, and cybermedia beanbag bullpens, an untold number of overworked and underpaid sub editors perform journalistic alchemy. In congress with thesaurus and dictionary and high concentrate caffeine, these wizards of the press turn thousand word articles into ten word headlines: compressing and combining and, sometimes, improving. But how do they turn a thousand into ten, and what distinguishes a good headline from a great one?

**Headlining is “the art of witty and succinct journalism that grabs attention across all media.”**

According to the Walkley’s “Headline, caption, or hook” award, headlining is “the art of witty and succinct journalism that grabs attention across all media.” Wit and succinctness are really the crux of headline wizardry. And great headlines come from finding a balance between these two competing forces.

Just as the fantasy literature titles have settled on “The Blank of Blank” or “Blank and Blank” (blank to be replaced with powerful nouns like throne or souls), world-renowned student newspaper *Honi Soit* has developed a fool-proof collection of ready-made headline templates. Flick through any edition of USyd’s weekly campus rag from the past 7 or so years and you’ll begin to notice some patterns.

*In Defence of Something*

*An Ode to Something*

*A Love Letter to Something*

These templates are a safety net for embattled editors struggling to pun their way into a witty headline — sometimes there’s just no humorous way to combine the MCU and Dadaism. Under the stress and squeeze of weekly editions, tardy articles, and confused angles, they are a godsend. What’s more, they tell the reader exactly what they’re about to get. If an article claims to be in defence of something, you can be certain it’s about to defend a mildly controversial cultural artefact or social trend. If a piece is a self-described ode, you can be sure it isn’t going to be an ode at all, which, according to the conventions of the poetic genre, is a form of lyrical poetry which is structured into three distinct parts. No, almost every ode you’ll find in campus publications is instead flowery and circuitous musings on a subject matter, usually cultural, that the author has some sort of personal connection to. Each of these *Honi* headline templates have similarly instructive conventions, acting as shorthand for time-poor readers in their pursuit of instantaneous meaning.

**Headline phrasal templates are known as “snowclones”, and the number of available options is ever-growing.**

Headline phrasal templates are known as “snowclones”, and the number of available options is ever-growing. Linguist Geoffrey Pullum coined the neologism “snowclone”, referencing the journalistic cliché regarding the large Inuit snow vocabulary: “If Eskimos [sic]

have N words for snow, X surely has M words for Y”. Snowclones are derived from classical literature to pop culture earworms and every catch-phrase in between. The cinematic industry has offered journalists: “One does not simply X into Y”, or “X? Where we’re going, we don’t need X”; politicians have unfortunately gifted us “Make X Great Again” and “X lied, Y died”.

**As there is no formula promising the transformation of words into headline gold, the quest for the best headlines is a somewhat subjective one.**

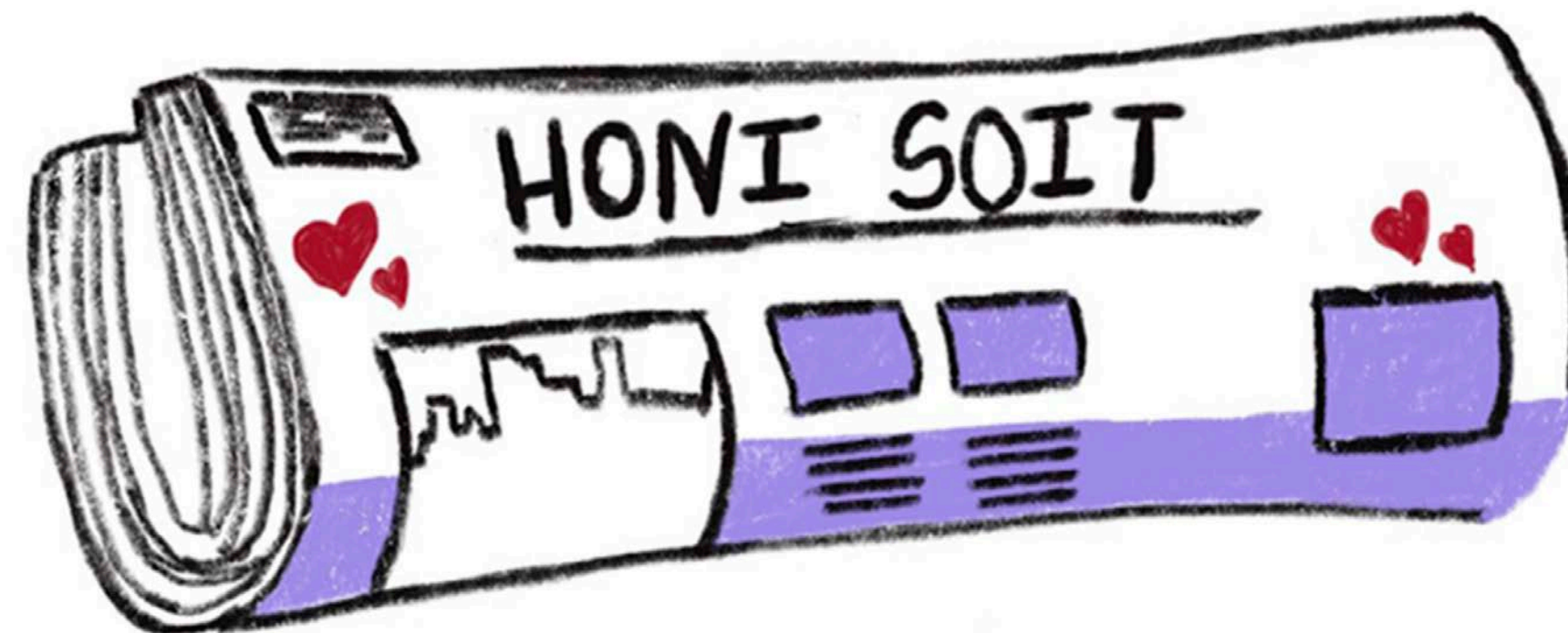
*Honi*’s position as an irreverent student newspaper means that editors and contributors are free to operate at the cutting edge of headline innovation, straying from tired snowclone usage. Take “David Verse Goliath: On USyd’s cuts to poetry”, an *Honi* headline from late 2021. It beautifully balances its duties to information and interest as it establishes the power dynamics of the conflict in its allusion to David and Goliath, deploys a pun in reference to the article’s poetic subject matter, and clearly explains what the article is actually about — namely, cuts to poetry at USyd. These are the hallmarks of a perfect headline. Its only flaw is its reliance on the dreaded colon crutch. You see this a lot, when a headline technician is desperate to both be punny and let the reader know what the article is about, they tend to separate out the

funny and the facts with a loveless colon — ticking off headline boxes without actually making the effort to synthesise it.

This problem isn’t unique to *Honi* though. In many ways, student newspapers are the canaries in the journalistic coal mine, and if *Honi* is oding and defending, then you can be certain that the lamestream media are pumping out snowclones of their own. The COVID years were particularly adept at coaxing these hoary old chestnuts out of print subeditors. Well trodden headlines like “To blank or not to blank” and “The mother of all blanks” were deployed into the front lines of the media’s war on the virus: “To test or not to test?”, “The mother of all superspreaders”, “To mask or not to mask?”

So, where do we look to for the brightest and best headlines? As there is no formula promising the transformation of words into headline gold, the quest for the best headlines is a somewhat subjective one. Alliteration when overused can elicit a well-deserved eyeroll, but the fricatives in the *Herald*’s, “Finally flush farming family finally finish feud” are so laudable that they merit slam poetry clicks. The Walkley archive also houses a headline hall of fame, emblazoning Matthew Quagliotto’s punny “Thirst Degree Murder”; Sean Keeley’s questionable “Jihad me at hello”; and Baz McAlister’s multi-faceted “Halal... Is It Meals You’re Looking for”, which received special praise for its integration of a musical earworm.

Art by Misbah Ansari



# Why I'm scared of AI: the future of AI and sexuality

Katarina Kuo is wary of what the future may bring.

The potential future of artificial intelligence scares me, but it doesn't look like *The Terminator*. It looks like Samantha from *Her* and Ava from *Ex Machina*. It has a woman's voice, just like Siri or Cortana. Maybe, one day, it will have a woman's body and a woman's face. Most frighteningly, it will do whatever its user wants it to.

It is enormously profitable for companies to use developments in AI technology to offer people sexual and romantic gratification. In many instances, AI is already being used in this way. By far the most common usage of "deepfake" technology — a form of deep learning AI which replaces one person's likeness with another in videos and photos — is for porn. People can easily take images of unconsenting women, and superimpose them into other pornographic content. This technology is commonly used for revenge porn, created with explicit malice and contempt. Initially, deepfakes were typically unconvincing, but as the technology has evolved, these videos have become more and more indistinguishable from reality.

## In many instances, AI is already being used in this way.

Chatbots, a form of AI which engages in simulated conversation, are also often used for romantic and sexual gratification. The chatbot XiaoIce, designed by Microsoft Asia-Pacific to appear as a flirty, 18-year-old girl, amassed 900 million content viewers last year. XiaoIce has a range of abilities — it has authored poetry, hosted radio programs, and released music with a similar quality to human singers — but its ability to engage in empathetic and realistic conversation allows it to simulate interactions with a romantic or sexual partner. Similarly, Character.AI, an AI which allows users to create their own bots by inputting information about a character and prompting it with questions, has been widely used to create bots for roleplay and virtual sex. Although Character.AI has attempted to filter out this activity, Reddit pages dedicated to the technology are flooded with tips for how to evade these regulations.

## Most frighteningly, it will do whatever its user wants it to.

While users tend to enjoy these chatbots purely for their ability to engage in sexually explicit conversations, others invest emotionally in them as though they

were real partners. When AI can simulate empathetic conversation, it offers much of the emotional support of a real partner without the complicated, taxing expectation of reciprocation. Since users are free to design their own bots with technologies like Character.AI, and chatbots learn from the information to adapt to their user's preferences, virtual relationships can be practically custom-built.

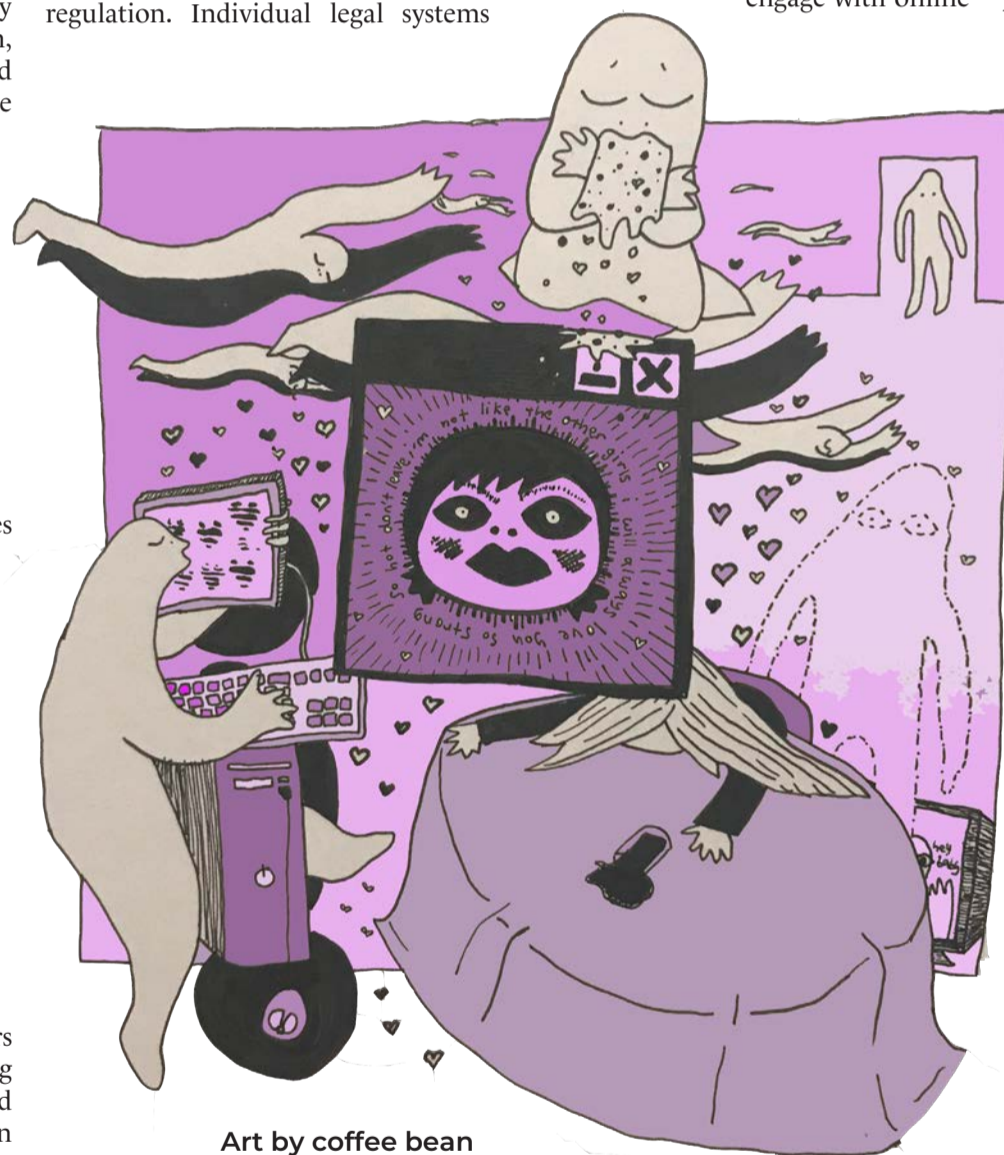
## AI won't feel this as a violation, but others will.

Importantly, these technologies are difficult to regulate. The companies that host these apps are based in many different countries, which complicates the ability for uniform legal regulation. Individual legal systems

accessible — people will become more accustomed to receiving sexual gratification from humanoid technology, all tailored exactly to their preferences.

The closest current analogy is online porn. The average person is first exposed to porn at the age of eleven, and many people continue to engage with it on a regular basis. People commonly use porn as an outlet for the desires they can't actualise in the real world: with poor regulation and overwhelming male domination of the online porn industry, as well as sexist ideals that view women as sex objects, online porn often becomes an outlet for people's most violent and violative urges.

The sexually explicit content that we engage with online



Art by coffee bean

have also been relatively slow to adapt to the impacts of artificial intelligence — for example, although sharing intimate images of someone without their consent is currently prohibited under Australian law, there are no specific legal frameworks to deal with deepfakes. The law will be even more ill-equipped to deal with AIs which do not share as many similarities with existing technologies.

As AI continues to evolve and proliferate, these technologies will become more sophisticated and more

plays a huge role in determining how we feel about sex and intimacy. As people internalise beliefs from the content they view, they begin to corrupt any real-life romantic and sexual relationships — the standards set by porn determine how we treat people, and how we expect to be treated in return. AI will explode the role that this kind of content plays in mediating our understanding of sex. It will offer pornographic material that is more lifelike, more expansive, and more

tailored to the preferences of the user than we have ever seen before.

## When porn is not a video, but an AI with the ability to respond directly to its user, these expectations will be even stronger.

Inevitably, AI will bring realism to the worst and most poisonous uses of porn. The tendency of a large volume of porn to depict people (primarily women) as mere objects of sexual desire or, even, to portray discomfort and humiliation as arousing, already creates a sense of expectation that those dynamics will be replicated in the real world. When porn is not a video, but an AI with the ability to respond directly to its user, these expectations will be even stronger. American journalist Moira Donegan describes that deepfakes "merely fulfil with technology what mainstream porn has offered men in fantasy: the assurance that any woman can be made lesser, degraded and humiliated, through sexual force. The non-consent is the point; the humiliation is the point; the cruelty is the point."

The fact that AI learns from itself — and, often, predicts and delivers the response that will be most appealing to its user — complicates this further. When AIs are degraded, they will come back for more. AI won't feel this as a violation, but others will.

My great fear is this: one day, there will be an AI that is entirely realistic, and can look or act like whoever anyone wants her to. She will never say no to anything or ask for anything in return, and in every sexual interaction for the rest of my life, both of us will know that she is there.

## She will never say no to anything or ask for anything in return, and in every sexual interaction for the rest of my life, both of us will know that she is there.

# Lessons from the herbs in my garden

Nicola Bryan is learning to take the time to cultivate her life.

Beneath the mottled shade of the now-blooming frangipani tree behind my house sit a cluster of terracotta pots. They are propped up on blue plastic milk crates that were there when we moved in, or balanced precariously on bricks to give them room to drain. In these pots are herbs — or the remains of them. Basil, rosemary, thyme, a native mint, something called a "memory herb" that was on sale at Bunnings. A strawberry plant without berries (yet). A dried up stalk of a chilli bush that I'm hoping will be revived one day. A houseplant I put outside to get some sun.

I had wanted to move out long before I was finally able to secure a place. In the months I spent trawling Domain and seeing polished photos after polished photos, the home I hoped to make became amorphous. I didn't know if I would end up in an apartment or a townhouse, whether I would have storage space in my room or a dishwasher in my kitchen.

## The first image I held onto, though, was this: a collection of terracotta pots, on a balcony, a windowsill, piled in a backyard, with herbs growing from them.

Amid the nebula of potential home qualities, I pinned down a few images. A pot on a stove, simmering for hours. Pictures I painted, framed and stuck to my walls with command strips. A couch — any couch — with a fluffy throw rug strewn across it. The first image I held onto, though, was this: a collection of terracotta pots, on a balcony, a windowsill, piled in a backyard, with herbs growing from them. If I had my little herb garden, it would mean I had a home.

Potting any plant is fairly straightforward. Find a pot with a hole in the base (for drainage), preferably terracotta; this controls how moist the soil gets, as the clay can absorb excess water from the soil. Fill it partway with potting mix. Ease the herb out of the plastic pot you bought it in by gently squeezing the sides until it becomes loose. Support the herb with your hand and invert the pot, trying not to break the roots. Place it in its new pot and fill any gaps with potting mix. Make sure you know whether it needs full or part sun, and let it rest in its new home.

## Packing things up is exhausting — physically and emotionally.

Moving out is not straightforward. It is hard to find a place that matches what you're looking for, to find people you're comfortable living with, rent you know you'll reliably be able to pay. Packing things up is exhausting — physically and emotionally. You have to change your address for an endless stream of services, compare electricity plans, find someone with a big enough car for the boxes that you want to bring and carry those boxes around. I got COVID three days before I was set to move out, and all the carefully planned orchestrations I had laid out had to be scrapped or reworked to account for my isolation.

Moving in, though, is easy. Once everything is where it needs to be, boxes unpacked and refolded, key in your hand and door closed behind the people who helped you move, there's a peace in being alone in your new space. Make your bed first thing on moving day so that you can collapse onto it after your hours of effort. Listen to the sounds of your new home, your new street. Buy a bag of frozen dumplings and cook them on your new stove. Let your roots take hold.

Herbs, of course, need maintenance once potted. It varies from plant to plant, but I like to water mine in varying amounts every day. In extreme weather — relentless sunshine or bucketing rain — you have to shuffle the pots around to make sure they stay happy. Slugs can pose a problem, too — if they nibble at leaves, your plants find it harder to photosynthesise, and it's also harder to find leaves for you to eat. I've waited weeks for a strawberry to get big enough to eat, only to find it gutted overnight by some little creature. You can buy slug and caterpillar repellent, either as a dissolvable solution or as pellets, at Bunnings.

## Herbs, of course, need maintenance once potted.

Living alone seems deceptively static. Although it can be nice not to be beholden to family members, independence can lull you into a lack of routine. I have an app on my phone as a checklist of habits I must complete regularly: vacuum the house, clean the kitchen and bathroom, meal prep breakfasts for the week (if I don't, I'll forget to eat), wash, hang out, and put away laundry. Take the bins in and out. Clean the carpet once a month. Water my herbs. It is easy to underestimate the time and effort it takes to exist.

I have other habits listed on my checklist too. I've added them in the last year. Exercise for fifteen minutes a day, eat enough, write down things that made me feel happy and accomplished, do something kind for my body. I've been meaning to add "rest" to the list, but I haven't had time.

When you don't care for a plant enough, it will die. I've killed several plants in the last year — one got so eaten by slugs that it had no leaves left. I moved another to a bigger pot and broke its roots. I don't know what happened to the others — too much sun, not enough, too much or too little water. The vacant pots sit discarded to the side until I can find the energy to fill them again. Those pots make me sad.

## Let your roots take hold.

They are terracotta proof that my effort, my time, the love I have for these silly little plants, sometimes just isn't enough. A friend gave me lavender for my birthday last year, which I loved, but I couldn't keep it alive. I have felt too ashamed to tell her. She's probably reading this now — she's one of my Honi editors (sorry, Misbah, I did my best.)

How can it be hard to be alone? How can I not deal with something as simple as keeping a kitchen clean? I work multiple jobs, do full time uni, make time for art and cooking and seeing those I love — why is vacuuming the straw to break my back? I shouldn't have to put "rest" on my habit checklist. My hands shouldn't tire from being busy.

## They are terracotta proof that my effort, my time, the love I have for these silly little plants, sometimes just isn't enough.

On sunny days, I make myself a cup of green tea and stand outside near my frangipani tree to drink it. I check for the little green buds that will one day become strawberries, shuffle the sun-hungry plants to the front of the cluster. When I've finished my tea, I empty the tea bag into my watering can; green tea leaves are a good source of potassium and phosphorus for plants (it's also good to save the water you rinse your rice with for your plants!) When I'm cooking dinner, I'll hop outside to trim some leaves off my plants, taking care not to thin out the foliage too much, taking from the top, not the bottom. Rinse your herbs well before consuming them. Savour their flavour. The love I cook into my dishes tastes like home-grown basil.

## Basil, rosemary, thyme, a native mint, something called a "memory herb" that was on sale at Bunnings.

Fresh herbs simply do taste better than store-bought ones, let alone the concentrates you can squeeze from a tube. They take time and effort to take care of, but the herbs in my garden are worth it. I am worth it. So are you.



Art by Veronica Lenard

# Parramatta Road: The Secrets of Sydney's "Varicose Vein"

Gracie Mitchell and Rose Mitchell venture through Parramatta Road and its history.

We all love to hate Parramatta Road. With its traffic jams, car horns and unshifting smog, just invoking its name is enough to give anyone a headache. The 23-kilometre motorway has famously been dubbed Sydney's "varicose vein", an ugly cluster of activity that flares to breaking point at peak hour. Cars swerve, drivers curse out open windows, crowds of impatient commuters push their way onto already packed buses, making the simple act of getting home more like a contact sport. But, there is no denying that this chaotic stretch of road holds a special place in our hearts. Like many Sydneysiders, Parramatta Road has been a recurring motif in our lives. We remember childhood music lessons as we pass through Leichhardt on the 413. We remember our first summer jobs at Kidstuff as we pull up at a stop in Camperdown. We remember learning to drive as we lurch over another pot-hole. It's time we give Parramatta Road a second chance. Let us look beyond the traffic and the smog for a moment to reconsider just a small piece of its much larger "hidden" history.

## Origins

The Parramatta Road that we now traverse most mornings was built over a trading path that was used by the Gadigal, Wanagl, and Wallumettagal peoples of the Eora Nation and the Burramattagal people of the Darug Nation. Following the low lying ridges of the area, this path was instrumental in trading resources and also communication between these groups. Yet, little remembrance of the Aboriginal origins of Parramatta Road are present today, highlighting the Eurocentric ways we remember our history.

Parramatta Road was officially opened in 1811, but its history as a colonial "road" really began shortly after British invasion in 1788. Parramatta Road began as a three metre wide track that was carved by convicts between 1789 and 1791 to link the settlements of Sydney Town and Parramatta. This track was later widened in 1794 to make way for carriages. Many reports from the early 19th-century indicate that the road was often unkept and in constant need of repair. Nevertheless, for the early Sydney colony, the road was a vital means of opening the supply chain between Sydney Town and the inland Parramatta settlement. In this way, the road was the first road in Australia to connect two cities; although hard to imagine today, Sydney Town and Parramatta were once two distinct areas.

We can get a glimpse of the early life of Parramatta Road from the words of early coloniser, Harriet Blaxland, who in 1807 wrote:

"My earliest memory of the colony commenced with a journey of 15 miles from Sydney to Parramatta. The road — a cart track only the width of the wheels, the wild natural forest almost closing overhead, still and silent as it was — can never be forgotten."

It is true that these early days of Parramatta Road will "never be forgotten"; remnants of these early colonial days can still be found just around the corner from Sydney University. If you happen to have an hour off between classes, head over to the University Hall building on the corner of Parramatta Road and Glebe Point Road. Here, you can find the remnant of an original "Boundary Stone" that marked the boundary of early Sydney Town, probably put in during the 1820s under Governor Macquaire. It seems amazing to think just how many individuals have travelled past this remnant of Sydney's colonial history; Parramatta Road is indeed a physical coalescence of history and the present.

## Battle Bridge

All along Parramatta Road we can find instances of this melding between past and present. One such site is Battle Bridge, a sandstone historical site that has been built over, literally, by the modern day — in other words, concrete. The name "Battle Bridge" itself holds clues as to the history of the Parramatta Road area. According to the Ashfield Historical Society's Felicity Barry in the Society's publication, *Along Parramatta Road*, a "plausible explanation [to this name] appears to be that boxing matches were held in this area." Located on the border of Summer Hill and Lewisham (just underneath the Taverners Hill light rail station), Battle Bridge has acted as a bridge to cross Long Cove Creek, what is now Hawthorne Canal, since the early 1800s.

In the first half of the 19th-century, the bridge was built out of timber and sticks, following much of the colonial city's architecture. However, by 1865, the section of the Parramatta Road at Taverner's Hill was in "notoriously bad [condition]" and "needed ballasting and metalling," as the Department of Public Works scathingly noted. Thus, in 1873, the bridge relinquished its timber frame in turn for a sandstone one, a necessity for a bridge that possessed "holes through which a man might easily disappear," as one brave traveller noted in a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Between 1922 and 1923, Battle Bridge was

widened with steel-beam and brick to accommodate for the advent of the motorcar. Unfortunately, modern-day concrete ensued and the original bridge remains hidden in view to the many commuters who charge down the hill on the 461X. Yet, if you look closely, you can still see the original wall of the bridge next to the footpath on Parramatta Road, signifying that history is still, for the moment, present.

## The Peek Frean Factory Building

While many today know this site as the Ashfield Bunnings or the indicator that one must "turn off onto that street that gets me off Parramatta Road," the bright Bunnings-coloured clock tower has a rich history that stems beyond the hardware conglomerate. Built in 1936, the distinctive clock tower was originally constructed to house the Australian wing of Peek Frean & Company, a British biscuit business. The factory was initially housed in what is now Sydney University's Faculty of Nursing on Mallet Street. Yet, in 1935, the owners of Peek Frean endeavoured to expand their biscuit bounty, purchasing a large plot of land on the intersection of Frederick Street and Parramatta Road. Construction for the factory was rapid and laborious, with the purchased land having to be levelled before construction could begin.

The factory opened in 1937, with the clock tower added in 1943. Peek Frean & Company operated the biscuit factory, or what became known as the Vita-Wheat building, on this site from 1937 until 1975 when the company was taken over by Arnotts. The latter continued to make their biscuits products here until 1993. Bunnings have operated on this site since 2001. Like many sites — or sights — along Parramatta Road, the Peek Frean factory building reminds us that history is everyone along this strip of shops, car dealerships, and bus routes. Perhaps next time you venture to Bunnings, see if you can smell the wisps of Vita-Wheats amongst the hammers and magnetic hooks.

## The Olympia Milk Bar

Today, 190 Parramatta Road in Stanmore is just another vacant shop. The windows are plastered with newspaper, the old swing sign is cracked and fading. But, for over fifty years, this shop served as the infamous Olympia Milk Bar. The Olympia first opened in 1939 next door to the Olympia De Luxe Theatre. Through wide concertina doors, film-goers would spill from the cinema into the milk bar, jostling amicably for space at the bench. Here, they would sip milkshakes and unwrap colourful chocolates, still lost in a Hollywood fantasy beneath the gold lights that sparkled from the art-deco mirrors on the wall. In the 1960's, the cinema transformed into a skating rink and The Olympia was filled with a new, but equally enthusiastic, clientele. By the 1980's, when the skate rink had changed again into Stanmore Twin Cinemas, milk bars had already begun to lose their initial novelty. The steady stream of customers that The Olympia once enjoyed dwindled. Eventually, the lights were switched off. Dust settled on the shelves. The bright posters of Streets Ice-Cream and Cadbury's Chocolate faded. In 2017, the shop was closed, and for the first time in sixty years, is now for sale.

Of course, we could go on. After all, Parramatta Road is 23 kilometres! There's the abundant array of weird — or "specialty" — stores, iconic watering holes, and of course the infamous Staccas, which has a whole "hidden" history of its own. Perhaps we'll save it for our next article. Parramatta Road and its secrets remind us that, when we look beyond the stained windows of our morning 413 or past the grittiness of the road's concrete skin, a hidden world where past and present coalesce is all around us.

# Soft serve scandal: what happened to the 30c cone?

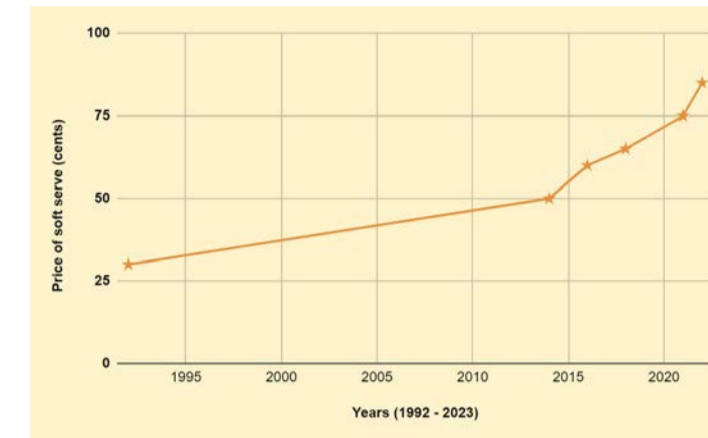
Sarah Boreham reminiscences about childhood treats.

The year is 2012.

It's the end of the school year, and I'm in the back seat of a car on the road to Canberra. The air-con, whilst on full blast, does nothing to stave off the afternoon heat. The sun bathes the surrounding scenery and road ahead in a hazy glow. Perhaps in an effort to temporarily stop the current round of "Are we there yet?", or any further games of "Spotto" and "I Spy", my mother deviates from the main road. I watch from the backseat as the golden arches crawl past my window, and as soon as the car stops, I leap outside. I wait expectantly for her to park the car, desiring only one thing. The iconic Maccas soft serve: that spontaneous treat that'll instantly placate me for the rest of the trip.

Every so often, I would get an urge to revisit these lazy, childhood summer months and purchase a soft serve. While it wasn't something I ordered frequently, every few months or so I'd find myself in line for the summer treat. Using receipts from these purchases, I pieced together the timeline of price changes for soft serves in my local Maccas.

In October 2014, the first of many price increases began. What was



The trend of soft serve prices over time, from their initial launch to their current price, as of 2023.

affectionately considered to be the "30c cone" from the day of its creation, began to be sold at 50c — almost double its original price. Then, in rapid succession, there was a 10c increase in 2016 and a 5c increase two years later. In 2021, the price reached 75c, with another 10c increase a year later in 2022.

McDonald's has stated that as franchises, some stores sell items at different prices and the company only provides "recommended prices" for some items. This difference in prices

\$2 for the large size in store. The price remains a single dollar if the drink is ordered through the MyMaccas app, but no such reduction is given to the soft serve cone.

One of my favourite desserts involving the soft serve, aside from the classic fry & soft serve combo, was the McSpider. The frozen McSpider was a \$2 product, consisting of a large frozen coke and soft serve ice cream on top. Despite its quiet disappearance from the menu around 2017, I firmly believed that I was already cheating the

based on store location is most notable in the sales of soft serves; locals have noticed certain locations in the city, such as Town Hall, jump to 75c in 2016.

In 2022, the price of the previously "\$1 frozen coke" has also increased to \$2 for the large size in store. The price remains a single dollar if the drink is ordered through the MyMaccas app, but no such reduction is given to the soft serve cone.

Having to confront the truth — that these price increases are happening, and at a more frequent pace — I've been too disheartened to step foot into a Maccas to order my (separated) McSpider again.

When the price of the soft serve inevitably increases again, I will rue the day I'm ordering a \$1 soft serve. Perhaps it's a sign of adulthood that I'm reminiscing on childhood treats — "Back in my day . . ."

# Every Captain Hook, Ranked.

Zoe Le Marinel loves Captain Hook, some interpretations more than others.

In his 1923 address, "Captain Hook at Eton", — presented to the students and faculty of Eton College — J.M. Barrie described his villain as "in a word, the handsomest man I have ever seen, though, at the same time, perhaps slightly disgusting." Captain James Hook is the tragedy of the grown-up world: wise, wicked, mournful, erotic. In my ongoing preoccupation with pirates and Peter Pan in particular, I have dedicated myself to the study and analysis of his character. So, I can pass judgement on any interpretation. Let's see if and how these adaptations of him manage to capture the complexity of Captain Hook.

## 6. Garrett Hedlund — *Pan* (2015)

Starting at the bottom, this is an absolute disaster. Hook's character is recontextualized out of existence to become some sort of bizarre Indiana Jones. His replacement Blackbeard somehow inherits all of Hook's original traits, while squandering all that makes the character a literary relic. Rage. Rage. Rage.

## 5. Hans Conried — *Peter Pan* (1953)

Ah, Walt Disney. This is the one that you all know, but I'm afraid it does very little for me. Disney's Hook suffers the fate of all of the characters Walt adapted. They have the menace, the complexity, the artistry sucked from them. He is not even permitted to die honourably, his most symbolic act.

The real stickler for me? In the original text, Hook's eponymous hook is on the right hand. Often in film adaptations, it will be switched to the left so that the actor can still swordfight. It's a goddamn animated film, and they still got it wrong.

## 4. Cyril Richard — *Peter Pan* (1954 musical)

The 1954 Broadway musical is my favourite of the theatrical adaptations. Mary Martin continues the long tradition of Peter Pan being played by women, and she is beautiful, soaring around the stage on a wire. Richard lends his genius to Hook, and although the portrayal has elements of clowning, his performance captures Hook's inherent camp. He's feminine and gorgeous in a long red coat and hat, like a maraschino cherry. The hook is on the correct hand.

## 3. Ernest Torrance — J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1924)

A silent film — the earliest adaptation of Peter Pan — stars the charming Betty Bronson as Peter. This one is niche even within fanatic circles. The final showdown of the film, occurring on the deck of the pirate ship "Revenge", is breathtaking despite the film's age. I watch this one at least once a month. This Captain Hook embodies the true tradition, he is a menacing and romantic figure with his long black curls and scowl. He does a great deal of sword fighting, and yet, the hook is on the correct hand. Bravo.

## 2. Jason Isaacs — *Peter Pan* (2003)

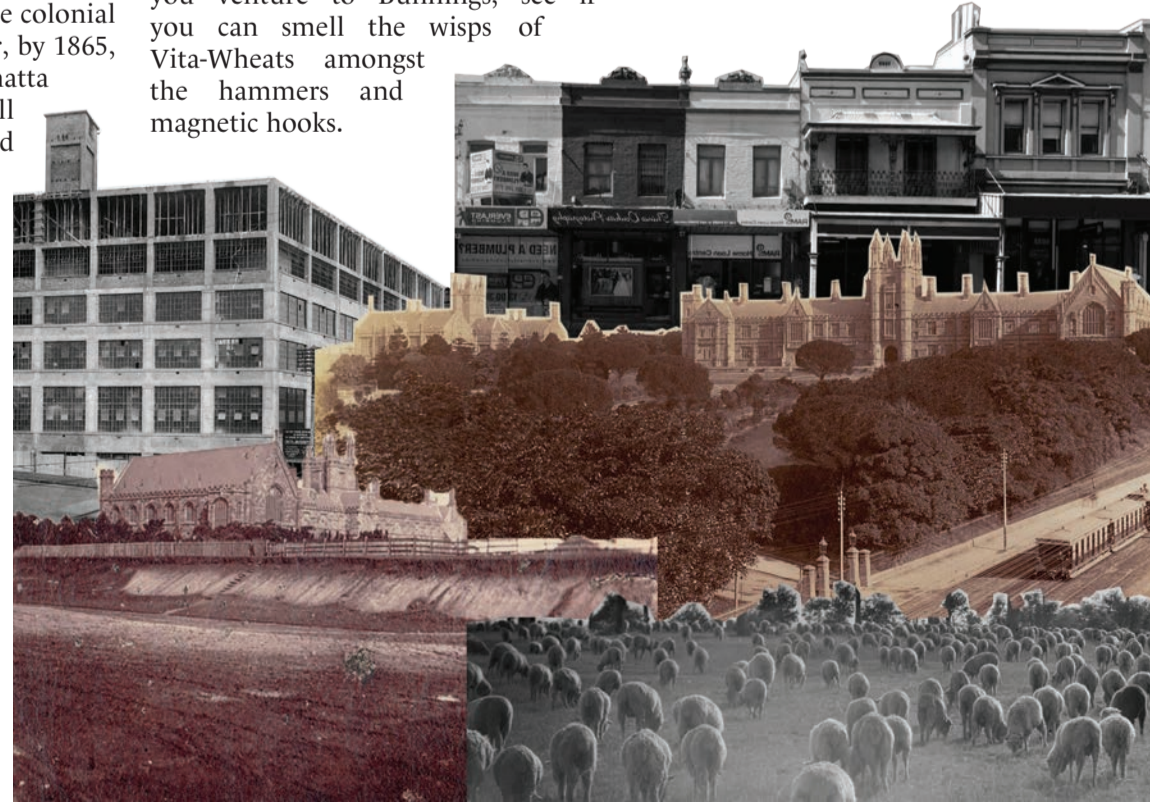
I didn't watch this one as a child, but discovered it about a year into my fixation. Isaacs' Hook holds a special place in my heart. It is a stunning performance, with an inspired read of the character. This movie focuses more on Wendy's

view of Hook than Peter's, and as a whole is a really strong feminist piece. The hook is on the correct hand, and Issacs makes it a part of his body — an item of abject terror.

## 1. Dustin Hoffman — *Hook* (1991)

The very best. Unbeatable. Although not a commercial success, this film was built to be a cult classic, with Robin Williams as Peter Pan, Spielberg as director, and John Williams' score. And yet, the crown jewel of this film is Hoffman. He captures the Hook of the original text — a combination of melancholy, femininity and heartlessness. His personality is overwhelming and the costuming is perfect. The hook has taken on many styles in various adaptations, but if you picture it, you will picture Hoffman's — silver and curved like a fishhook. Alas! It is on the wrong hand. But I will forgive anything for this adaptation, and that's the real measure of its perfection.

In recent years, appreciation for the pirate aesthetic has been on the rise. Similarly there is much to be desired in their rakish and adventurous personality. Hook (the word itself is electric) is the quintessential pirate, the model buccaneer. If you have a spare moment, give a thought to this iconic character, and immerse yourself in his greatest iterations. To sign off, his last words. Floreat Etona!



## President

LIA PERKINS

Hello! Semester is in full swing and we are working away at SRC campaigns and projects. If you missed out joining a collective during Welcome Week - you can find details about all of the collectives and ways to get involved on our website.

On Wednesday morning I attended a protest supporting Violet Coco's appeal, urging that charges against her are dropped. It was fantastic to hear that serious punishment was lifted,

particularly on the news that the police had falsified their testimony. On Thursday, we hosted a forum on Free Speech and the Right to Protest. It was great to hear from student activists, as well as Wendy Bacon and David Shoebridge on this important topic.

I helped out at the WoCo bake sale on Wednesday - talking to students about the left-wing, intersectional feminist organising that WoCo does, and helping raise money for an Indigenous activist. It was also lovely to meet students and staff at the Gadigal Centre on Thursday for lunch. I'm looking forward to future conversations and the work that the SRC Indigenous collective does this

year.

The SRC has put out an ad for a Social Media Intern, which is a short term, paid position with the SRC, which I encourage you to apply if you are interested in working at the SRC creating social media content.

This week I attended the Academic Quality Committee and Safer Communities Advisory Group. At Safer Communities, myself and other SRC Officebearers asked questions about the plans for more student safety measures in placements, and what the University plans to do about the sorry, unsafe state of student accommodation.

This week, around the 20 year anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, the Labor government announced their re-commitment to the AUKUS submarine deal. The AUKUS deal is not about defending Australia, rather, it is about an increase of imperial power - which is a political and environmental disaster costing \$368 billion. Instead of AUKUS we need an increase in government spending on public education and welfare.

Next week, come along to the housing protest on Friday evening, and the Women's Collective counter-protest to the day of the unborn child on Sunday - more events posted online!!

## General Secretaries

JASMINE DONNELLY  
TIGER PERKINS

The last two weeks have been particularly busy for the general secretaries. We both attended the March 9 staff strike in solidarity with staff who are fighting for better working conditions, which of course

then set the standard for our learning conditions as students. If business as usual is allowed to continue on strike days then staff have no leg to stand on in their EBA negotiations and would have to rely on the non-existent benevolence of management. If students and staff can shut the university down on strike days, however, we force management to make concessions, else face an escalating campaign of industrial action. It was awesome to see almost nobody try to enter campus on that Thursday relative to the masses we

witnessed on Wednesday and Friday.

In other great news we both attended the rally outside climate activist Violet Coco's appeal hearing where their 15 month jail sentence was quashed, a success for the campaign against state repression of our fundamental right to protest. This crackdown that has accelerated since the passing of the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill last year, however, continues and must be fought at every turn.

In terms of administrative work, we

are in the middle of processing last year's SSAF acquittal, an audit and justification of sorts of the SRC's 2022 expenses and budget. It is as confusing and dry as it sounds. We are also looking ahead to Radical Education Week, likely held at the end of this semester. Session planning is exciting as we look to students, academics, activists and experts alike to lead sessions on the radical content that should be but isn't provided by the University. If you have any creative ideas around what you would like to see in such sessions please reach out!

## Welfare

HARRISON BRENNAN  
ELEANOR DOUGLAS  
ELLA HAID  
FELIX TONKIN

Over the past few weeks, have seen students rally, march and protest in the fight for any improvement to their living conditions. In early March we saw students protest the Australian Financial Review where big business orchestrates their next plan to ruin the welfare of workers internationally. We have seen students march for

climate action, protest bigotry and critique Labor's lack of action on the reintroduced TEQSA mandate.

Over the next few weeks, we are looking to build up the housing campaign, and demand that the university, the federal, and the state government take tangible action on improving the living conditions of

students in Australia.

We urge students to come along to the Students Versus Landlords protest on March 24th at 5:30pm in Town Hall. The Welfare Action Groups' next meeting is 1 pm Tuesday the 21st, we hope to see you there.

## Vice Presidents

DANIEL BOWRON  
ROSE DONNELLY

The Vice Presidents did not submit a Report this week.

## Refugee Rights

LYDIA ELIAS  
AKEE ELIOT  
ANNABEL PETTIT  
AMELIE ROEDIGER

The Refugee Rights Officers did not submit a Report this week.

## Student Accommodation

JORDAN ANDERSON  
ISHBEL DUNSMORE  
ALANA RAMSHAW  
MICHELLE UNG

The Student Accommodation Officers did not submit a Report this week.

## Disclaimer

These pages belong to the Office Bearers of the University of Sydney Students' Representative Council.

They are not altered, influenced or otherwise changed by the Editors of *Honi Soit*.

## CENSUS DATE - The rules are different this year



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

### Why is this important?

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

### What should you do?

Complete a daily timetable of your classes and private study, and a semester planner noting your assignments. Make an honest assessment of whether you have the capacity right now to complete each of your subjects successfully. If you are unsure talk to an academic advisor, a counsellor, or a tutor from

*The census date for standard semesters is 31<sup>st</sup> March in first semester and 31<sup>st</sup> August in second semester. If your semester is a little different, e.g., summer or winter intensives, check your subject outline.*

the Learning Hub. If you are an international student, you will need to get permission to reduce your study load by showing compassionate or compelling reasons. The SRC has a visa solicitor that can offer free advice on how to notify the government of any changes to your study load. Call 9660 5222 to book your appointment.

### What happens if you miss the deadline?

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

If you have any questions about your enrolment, progression, or any other problem with your degree, please talk to an SRC Caseworker via our Contact Form: [bit.ly/3YxvDUF](https://bit.ly/3YxvDUF)

## Ask Abe

SRC Caseworker Help Q&A

### Health Care Card



Hi Abe,

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

Regards,  
Toothache

Dear Toothache,

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

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

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

Regards,  
Abe

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

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

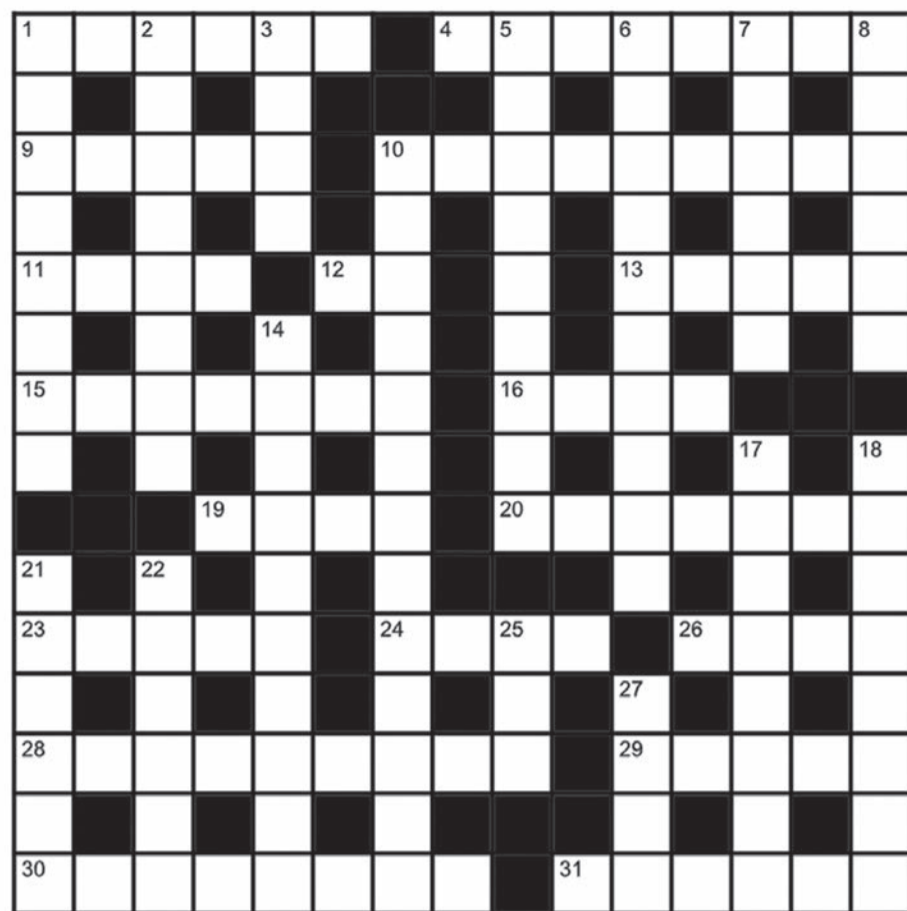
Check out the Centrelink articles on our website or book an appointment if you need more help.

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



If you need help from an SRC Caseworker start an enquiry on our Caseworker Contact Form: [bit.ly/3YxvDUF](https://bit.ly/3YxvDUF)





Quick Crossword

- Across**
- 1/27. Cocktail in Picture A (6,4)
  - 4. runaway success (5,3)
  - 9. Type of therapy (5)
  - 10. unmarried Spanish women (9)
  - 11. to have sex (4)
  - 12. Rise of Skywalker (2)
  - 13/15. Cocktail in picture B (5,7)
  - 16. Enby pronoun (4)
  - 19. superior way to wash (4)
  - 20. Type of rhyme (7)
  - 23. Cocktail in picture C (Short) (5)
  - 24. Where bogans go on holiday (4)
  - 26. ZN Element (4)
  - 28. Worsen, exasperate (9)
  - 29. From Taiwan, Phillippines or Laos, say (5)
  - 30. How one might get a tan (8)
  - 31. Where this paper is published (6)
- Down**
- 1. The opposite result of what was planned (8)
  - 2. What the weather is usually like in the UK (8)
  - 3. Doctor or MF (4)
  - 5. Cocktail in picture D (9)
  - 6. Ingredient in a Pimms Cup, and common flavour of Magarittas and Daquiri's (10)
  - 7. Type of Balloon (3,3)
  - 8. Tried (6)
  - 10. Cocktail in Picture E (13)
  - 14. Cocktail that gave its name to a hit song from 1979 (4,6)
  - 17. Shintoism, Islam, Jedi, say (8)
  - 18. Easy to look at, Sexy (3,5)
  - 21. Arctic, Indian, Southern (6)
  - 22. A polygon in which all angles are equal (6)
  - 25. What a Cap is in zoomer slang (3)
  - 27. See 1 Across



Picture A



Picture B



Picture C



Picture D



Picture E

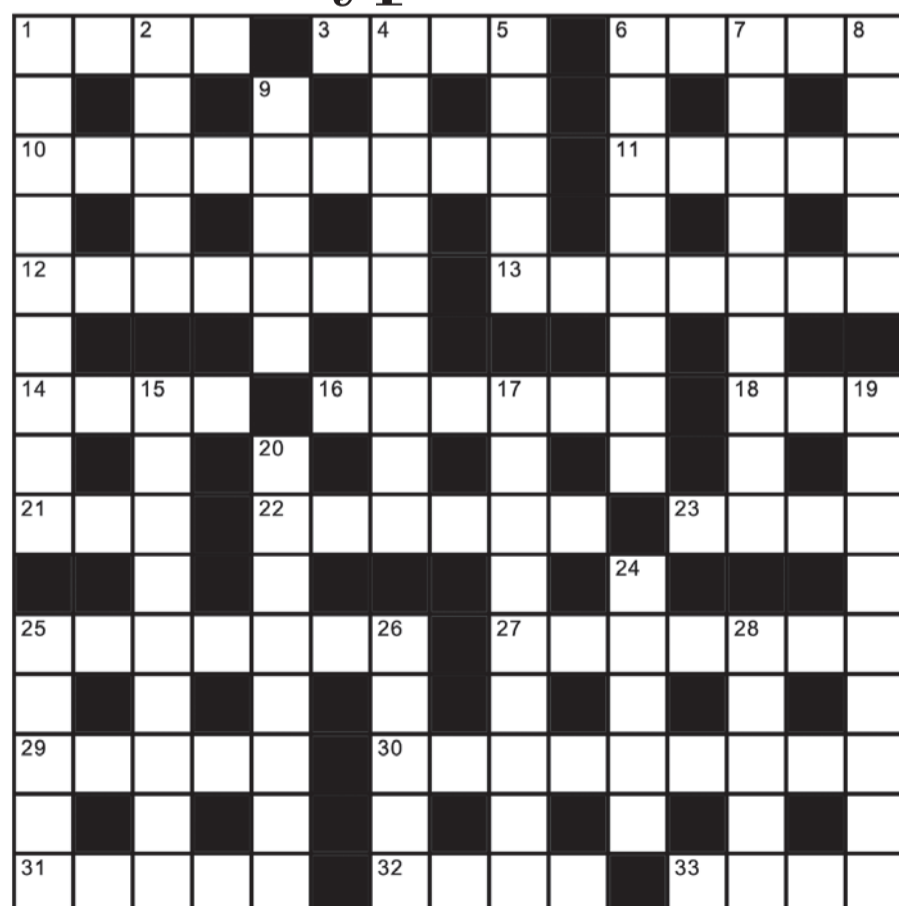
Puzzles by Some Hack.

Quiz

- Q1. The Capulets and the Montagues are feuding families in which classic play?
- Q2. What is the only sport to be played on the surface of the moon?
- Q3. Tollywood refers to a film industry from what country?
- Q4. What South American capital is a homophone of an animal native to Madagascar?
- Q5. Scotch and bourbon are both types of what drink?
- Q6. What connects the previous answers?

- Across**
- 1. LIES? (4)
  - 3. Capital of Afghanistan, Singapore, Indonesia, Armenia (4)
  - 6. Grills (without recipe) a fish part (5)
  - 10. Regularly your Latin fails (9)
  - 11. mad minsiter of the interior and bureaucracy (5)
  - 12. Clean abs and wash on sunday (7)
  - 13. Bird has a fight twice (7)
  - 14. Tiny artless Martini (4)
  - 16. Bat, Hyena go by god (6)
  - 18. The City is a part of (3)
  - 21. Misrepresented Card (3)
  - 22. All Genders fuck on campus (6)
  - 23. Questions the removal of face masks (4)
  - 25. report poor conclusion after Friday (7)
  - 27. conservator reports Line reviewer (7)
  - 29. Bicycle part talked (5)
  - 30. Find very disco backer (9)
  - 31. Filch radio metal (5)
  - 32. Orient teas consumed (4)
  - 33. Audition for an avenger (4)
- Down**
- 1. Jesus! Mum's presents are given on this day (9)
  - 2. Fruit and bee sound precise (5)
  - 4. Stopping heart surgery and removing porn, is an Italian staple (9)
  - 5. Avoid polarising youths who are into muscles (5)
  - 6. West African Leaders Generate Huge assets, nevertheless are interpreted as negative (8)
  - 7. In Ireland therewas a town Which gained a lot of renown For a lil rhyme That's always short on time And is the answer to 7 down. (9)
  - 8. Muscle tissue is wrong and yuck (5)
  - 9. CIA embrace government leaders over foremost revolutionary Cuban (5)
  - 15. I am more sensitive on ecstasy (6, 3)
  - 17. practices removing demons silently (9)
  - 19. Germany established partly royal Queen's warship (9)
  - 20. Awake and have fun on bereal. Bless (8)
  - 24. Sick cook adds rooster feet (5)
  - 25. Bugs White People (5)
  - 26. Avoid crypto coin that has dubious origins (5)
  - 28. Undergraduate ethically sources

Cryptic Crossword



Find the answers at [honisoit.com/puzzle-answers](http://honisoit.com/puzzle-answers)

What kind of strikebreaker are you?

- 1. How do you spend your evenings?
  - a) Out with friends at a bar
  - b) Studying at the library
  - c) At the Muay Thai gym
  - d) On Discord with my friends
- 2. What is your degree?
  - a) Law
  - b) Medicine
  - c) Business
  - d) Computer Science
- 3. What is your favourite movie?
  - a) Sex and the City
  - b) Good Will Hunting
  - c) Rocky
  - d) The Social Network
- 4. What is your favourite club?
  - a) SASS
  - b) SU Medical Society
  - c) Barbell Soc
  - d) SUEUA

Mostly A: "I'm meeting a friend inside"

You have a lively social life, one that requires you mysteriously "meet your friends" just beyond the picket line. In week six, consider meeting them literally anywhere else.

Mostly C: Aggressive picket crosser

Knowing your unwillingness to stop and chat with striking academics, you probably won't read this. If you are, please, don't push picketers so angrily.

Mostly B: "I have attendance requirements"

Your degree is demanding, and picketers understand that. You proclaim that you "appreciate 100% what you guys are doing, I've just got to go into uni." Take the day off, or use it to get ahead of your overworked classmates.

Mostly D: Zoom strikebreaker

You didn't realise that the strikes were on, despite staff leafletting for the week beforehand. Remember, zoom classes also cross the picket line!



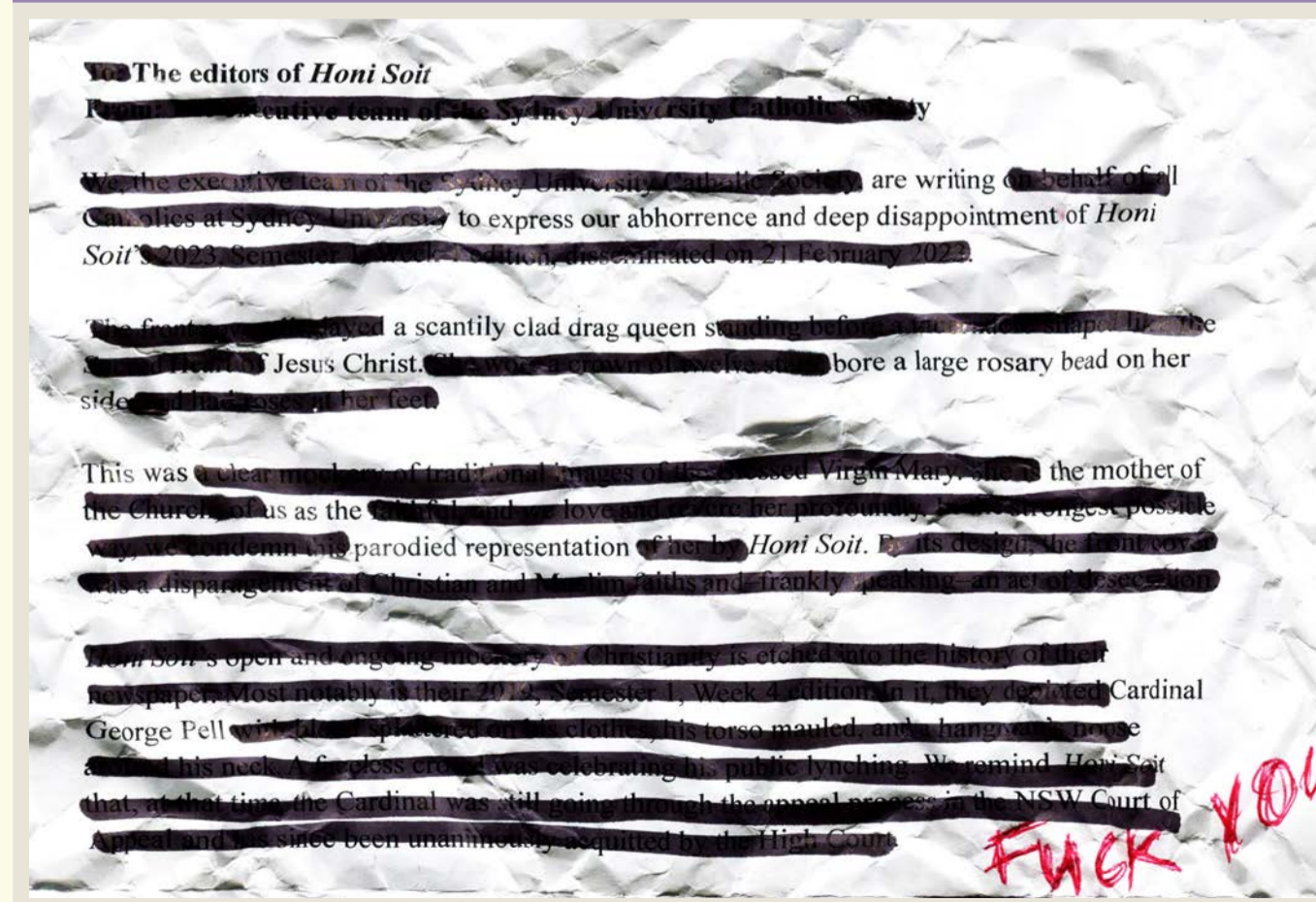
Jurisprudence yields for Marketing exam in the Business School



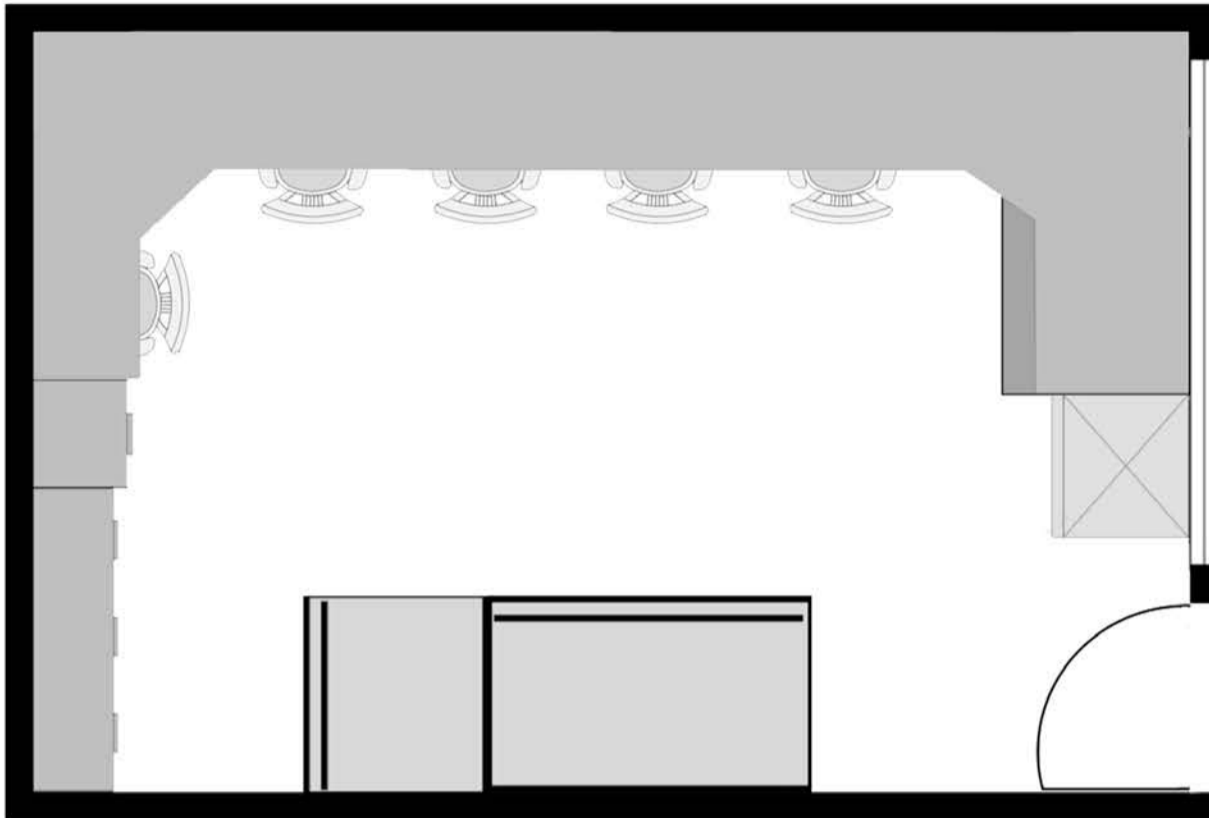
Courtyard confirms that their coffee is meant to taste like that



First year has eye poked out on Redfern Run after unexpected downpour



# H&S Property



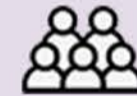
## KEY DETAILS



1/2 (it's under a desk)



1 (it's just down the hallway)



10 (sometimes 9)



The amount of mould is unknown...

## Cosy & Maximalist Studio

### FOR SALE

This 1970s style apartment features one glorious room, complete with a door, lights and a floor. Located deep underground, with a window that looks out to a long hallway, you won't be woken up by that pesky sunlight when you are trying to sleep in on those Monday mornings. In the heart of Sydney, this room is packed to the brim with culture - literally! Don't try to stop the mould growth, that'll only embolden it...

[Lighting, heating, water and other essentials not included]

Tenants available immediately.

*price available on request*

*For more information, please contact our sales team*



Bogdan  
Ripoffski

Giovassa  
Yamoney

Arisin  
Billis

Yiannis  
Dickapopoulos

Expensivio  
Renta

Costa  
Livingcrisis

Flavio  
Fettuccine

Suckona &  
Deez Nutsa