

Honi Soit

WEEK THIRTEEN, SEMESTER TWO, 2023

FIRST PRINTED 1929

Is cringe culture useful?

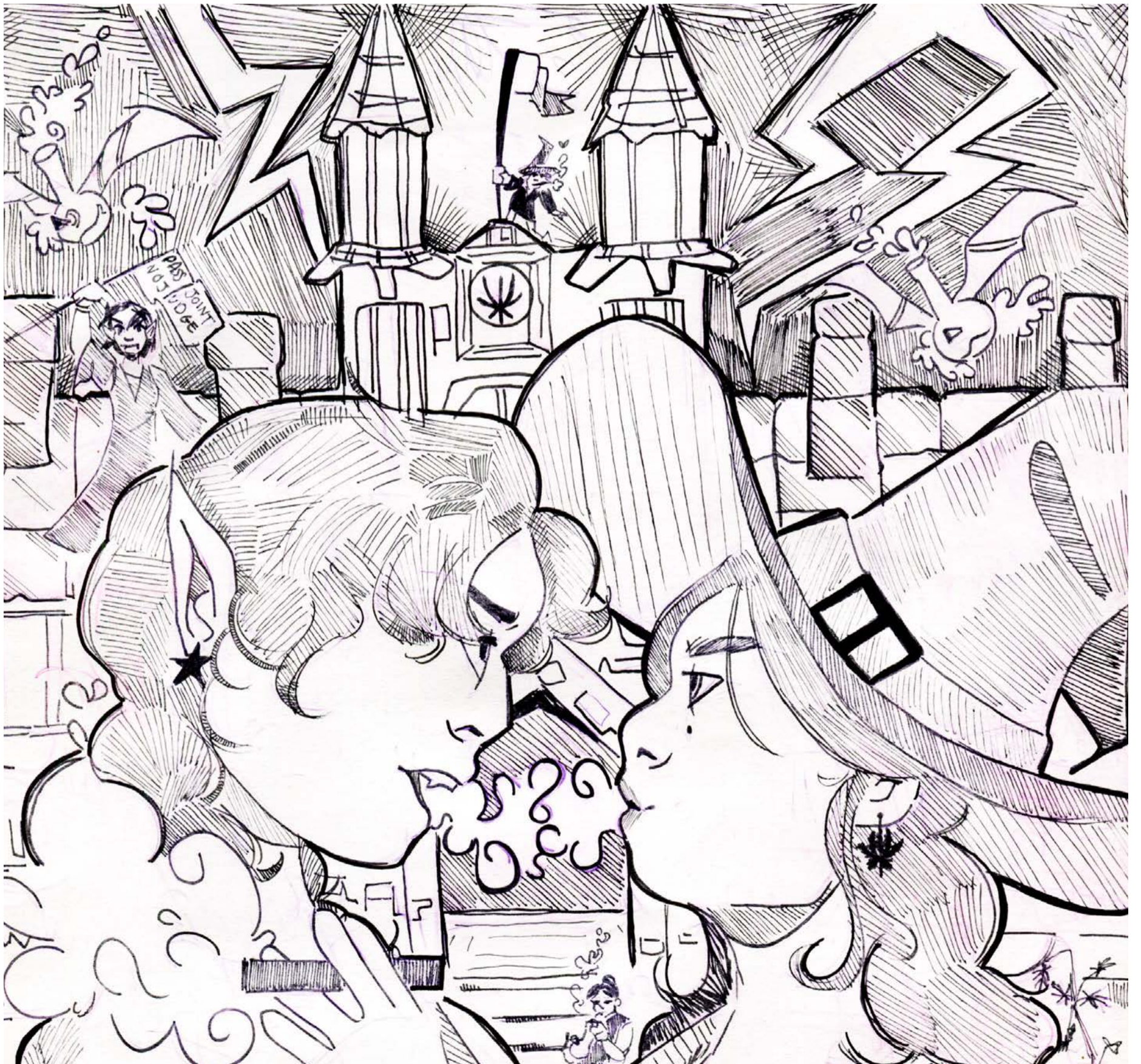
Ira Patole
Opinion, page 18

Puff, puff, pass: stoners of USyd

Misbah Ansari
Feature, page 12

Racism Laundering

Jayden Nguyen
Analysis, page 8



Why Labor fails Palestine

Angus Mcgregor
Analysis, page 7

Repselect

Katarina Butler and Luke Cass
News, page 6

USyd's ties to AUKUS

Angus Dermody
University, page 10

Acknowledgement of Country



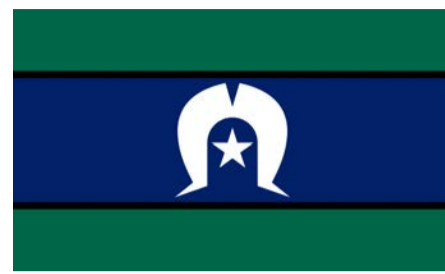
Honi Soit publishes on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. Sovereignty was never ceded. All our knowledge is produced on stolen Indigenous lands. The University of Sydney is

principally a colonial institution, predicated on the notion that Western ways of thinking and learning are superior to the First knowledges 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 systems and mechanisms of colonisation.

As student journalists, we recognise our responsibility as editors of 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.

In this edition

- 4 News
- 6 RepsElect
- 7 Analysis
- 8 Referendum
- 10 AUKUS(yd)
- 12 Feature
- 16 Ghosts
- 18 Cringe
- 19 Stucco
- 21 SRC Gaffes
- 22 Puzzles
- 23 Comedy

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Misbah Ansari

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Katarina Butler, Luke Cass, Bipasha Chakraborty, Ethan Floyd, Veronica Lenard, Luke Mešterović, Eamonn Murphy, Caitlin O’Keeffe-White, Andy Park

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Front Cover

Evelyn Redfern

Back Cover

Bipasha Chakraborty

Editorial

In cases of demonic possession, the spirits of the past engulf one’s skin in such a visceral form that there’s no space for the present. According to William Faulkner, “the past is never dead. It’s not even past.” Faulkner’s denial of the past feels like a saving grace for me as we approach the end of our *Honi* term. I am possessed and all-consumed by the present and the reality of this edition which made it through despite the horrors of our everyday existence.

We are witnessing the death of our editions but remember that the past does not exist for *Honi* because the paper’s spirit is forever enlivening. The living spirit is not to dismiss all that the past stands for but to remember that there’s always some undone work rendered by history that we need to finish, hold accountable and continue.

Every day editing this rag has been a reality that never became the past. It lives, breathes and grows on my skin every day and holds gratitude for all of you — especially my co-editors. Bipasha resides on my shoulders with her angelic artistic abilities, Caitlin tickles my waist with her wit, Veronica’s wisdom braids my hair gently, Katarina’s laughter leaves my eyes watery with enormous joy, Andy’s pragmatic calmness comfort my stomach, Ethan’s dedication leaves

me with a fist full of hope, Eamonn’s creative thinking grows like a flower in my hand, Luke Cass’s insightful questioning leave a lingering taste for knowledge on my tongue, and Luke Mesterovic’s impeccable knowledge sets my brain tingling to no end. Also, my parents’ never ending resilience and the ability to put everything back in place grounds my feet to no extent. This year’s mainly been for you, for providing me hope in all the times I forget what honest journalism stand sfor.

In this edition, Aidan Pollock (p.15) joins me in my mischief to make weed legal in NSW and Tim Robinson is on our side! Ira Patole (p.18) leaves us to think about how we subconsciously give into social stratification by indulging in cringe culture. Angus McGregor (p.7) maps out Labor’s complacency in the genocide of Palestinians. Thank you to Evelyn Redfern, the front cover artist of my dreams who made this queer, gothic imagery a reality with his incomparable artistic abilities.

Keep creating trouble and keep Shake alive.

In love, solidarity, and death to the past...

Misbah Ansari

Reading the Jacaranda Leaves

Spills and Thrills

All hell has broken loose in the NLS caucus! After Mikaela Pappou (ex-Vice President) returned to the fray after quite some time away, the Labor Left caucus itself has begun to unravel at the seams. NLS’ Instagram caption post-RepsElect claiming (unprompted) that they “dodged the split caucus allegations” seem to suggest there were allegations of a split caucus to be levelled in the first place.

We hear resident comrade, Gerard Buttigieg, lost out on his position of choice, and when push came to shove, it was Buttigieg vs. Rose Donnelly for the Welfare Officer position. And when the votes came in, Buttigieg won by a whisker. Where is the respect for their Vice President, especially considering the fact Pappou mysteriously resigned mid-year?

This is so not radical chic.

**LETTERPRESS
YE
OLDEN
MEME
GENERATOR**

Mickie Quick
2023 USyd
Printer-in-Residence
Exhibition
of residency
works

ON NOW: Fisher Library, level 1, near lifts.

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Dear Honi,

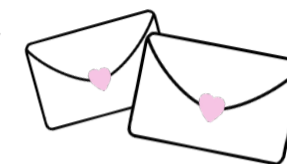
I must respond to Zoe Le Marinel’s article in the pages of *Honi* about their observations about the newspaper. This is what Zoe Le Marinel claims in their article about *Honi*: ‘To many, its well-worn tropes - love letters, odes, think pieces - are a comfort, whilst to many they appear lifeless.’



the student body today other than the occasional collective eyeroll and laughter over the firing of one of your own?

Regards,

Iwayama A



Dear Iwayama,

Perhaps it’s a symptom of dwindling political engagement among the student body, or a sign that our funding is finally drying up, but it can be said that *Honi* is not the bastion of campus discourse it once was — we might have lost the plot.

Though, the characterisation of *Honi* as a “comfort zone” is far detached from the reality of our publication. A mindless scroll of USyd Rants or a glance into the skip bins near our stands seem to prove that *Honi* remains an agitating presence on campus.



As long as there are student politicians’ egos to tame, University management to oppose, and campus Liberals to watch cry over our disregard for civility and acceptability, we will continue to publish our rag and provide a platform for students with something to say.

This is the perpetual promise of *Honi Soit*.

Sincerely, the Editors.

I agree to an extent. Sure, the occasional ode, puff think piece and love letters are benign and harmless enough. But once they become the core part of a publication, they define that publication and it is undeniable that *Honi* has lots of puff think pieces, odes and desperate wants for love letters. Probably because no one truly love *Honi* right now. They become narcissistic to a loathsome degree and become not too dissimilar to the *Evil Queen* asking the mirror about her beauty. This is why they are so lifeless as Marinel astutely observe.

Honi no longer command the conversation on campus, au contraire, that role has sadly been abandoned. You have lost the plot. Youth is annoying, as Marinel correctly observe, but there is a line between youthful annoyance and gross entitlement.

That line have been crossed to the very core. Yes, I agree that students have plenty of power but when steered by a spirit of absurd detachment from reality and retreat into the comfort zone like *Honi*, they are less effective. Not entirely ineffective, just far less effective. What good does *Honi* give to

It’s our final edition of the year! No more opportunities to talk shit or profess your love. Are you as upset as we are?

Whorescopes

Aries: Reclaim being a cuck and communicate through it. You and your partner will feel closer towards each other through the action as you watch them, so rejoice in the moment and touch yourself harder.



Taurus: What is pleasure if not a celebration of all the ways your body can move? Hug each other harder and harder through the process and see how you gel with each other through it. Them sitting on your face by the balcony as they’re on their knees is the way to go before them fucking you upside down near your house door.

Gemini: Slow down and let the water in the bath get hot. The steam is a perfect lubricant for eating them out under the water and some candle play as they drop some wax on you (with consent).

Cancer: Putting your hand in their back pocket is a great leeway to a glorious time in bed. If you appreciate their ass, whisper in their ear and grab it harder as they’re tickling you on the neck. So much stimulation and you deserve all of it!



Leo: Take some tension off from your situation and get some peace in. You don’t know the wonder two fingers, a pebble stimulator and some humping can do for some internal liberation for you in a post-toxicity clarity.

Virgo: You will be tucked in bed after an early evening of rough backshots with light choking. Princess treatment is on the charts for you, so simmer in the softness of a forehead kiss after being dominated through the night.

Libra: You will run out of concealers and scarves because you will be covered in hickies from neck down your chest. God help your parents who think there’s a demonic possession in your home, because that’s some dracula-level passion right there, baby.

Scorpio: If that neighbour and their partner are winking at you from their driveway, know that they are smitten with you. You will be at theirs with some natural wine and slowly swooning with both of them on the porch leading to some kissing.



Horny Soit whispers sweet nothings.

Sagittarius: I want to laugh with you in bed! You will be silly and naked in their bed quite often and explore intimacy through laughing at each other’s funniest moments.

Capricorn: Sometimes not feeling like the shit is normal. You falter, jerk yourself off for a few days and get back. Remember that all my dreams come back to you.

Aquarius: I am going to rip off your clothes as soon as I see you so don’t have your expensive dress on. You will be indulging in some truly rough foreplay so keep some viagra and water in that satchel!

Pisces: You might be dressed as a warrior at that Halloween party, but tonight you will be covered in my passion (and cum).

Been a year, phew! We’ve picked up too many dirty cum rags, felt some legs quiver and exchanged hot and heavy spit over the year. All worth it, my dirty sluts, last whorescopes of the year so make it count.

Art by Luke Cass and Luke Mesterovic

The Gig Guide

Wednesday 1 November

Amy’s Trivia // The Lansdowne, Chippendale // 7.30pm

Ziggy Alberts // Enmore Theatre, Newtown // 7.00pm

Thursday 2 November

FRIDAY* - Darling Live // Oxford Art Factory, Darlinghurst // 7.00pm

Liv Loud 2023 ft. Cool Sounds // Oxford Art Factory, Darlinghurst // 7.30pm

Riley Pearce - How Will I Know? // The Vanguard, Newtown // 7.00pm

Half Alive // Metro Theatre, CBD // 7.30pm

Friday 3 November

Fergus Bailey & The Teeth // The Vanguard, Newtown // 7.00pm

South Summit EP Tour The Lansdowne, Chippendale // 7.00pm

Lagwagon // Manning Bar, Camperdown // 8.00pm

Saturday 4 November

Felipe Baldomir ‘You’ // Oxford Art Factory, Darlinghurst // 7.30pm

Anti-AUKUS Conference discusses drive to war

Simar Batra

The Sydney Anti-AUKUS Coalition organised a one-day conference at Redfern Town Hall last Sunday. The event aimed to address concerns related to the AUKUS military pact, the increased militarisation in Australia, and the potential ramifications of a military conflict with China. The conference featured a range of speakers who shared their insights and experiences on these pressing issues, fostering a productive and informative dialogue.

The first session, titled “U.S. Bases & Preparation for War on China,” focussed on the expansion of U.S. military bases and their possible role in a future conflict with China. Speakers included activists Elizabeth Hulme, Denis Doherty, and Bevan Ramsden.

The second session, “Nuclear Nightmare: AUKUS Subs, Waste & the Environment,” explored environmental and humanitarian concerns related to the AUKUS deal. Jason Bilney, a representative from the Barnarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation, discussed the impact of nuclear waste disposal on Indigenous lands. Jim Green, a prominent anti-nuclear campaigner from Friends of the Earth, detailed the alarming radioactive waste issues stemming from the acquisition of nuclear submarines. He spoke about how “The AUKUS pact’s push for nuclear-powered submarines generates radioactive waste, posing environmental and health risks. We need to prioritise sustainable and safe alternatives to military technologies”.

In the final session, “Resisting War Then & Now: Social Movements, Unions & Resistance to War,” a group of experienced anti-war activists shared their insights. Denis Golding, an anti-Vietnam War activist and former Builders Labourers Federation member, recounted his experiences from past anti-war movements, as did Peter Murphy, another anti-Vietnam War activist. Luke Hocking, representing Wollongong Against War & Nukes, and Feiyi Zhang from the Sydney Anti-AUKUS Coalition discussed the ongoing resistance and the need for collective action. Natasha Watts, the NSW Teachers Federation Senior Vice-President, emphasised the role of educators and unions in shaping the anti-war movement, saying “Educators and unions have a pivotal role in shaping the narrative against war. It’s our responsibility to raise awareness and promote informed discourse among our students and communities.”

Manning Bar books band with allegations of Nazi sympathies, again

Luke Cass, Luke Mesterovic and Veronica Lenard

Manning Bar has booked metal band Slaughter to Prevail to play on 5 December this year. Slaughter to Prevail has been the subject of allegations of neo-nazism, homophobia and transphobia.

These are allegations which the lead singer, Alex Terrible, denies.

Manning Bar is owned and operated by the USU, though bookings are made through a third-party.

Honi approached the USU about the booking last Wednesday. USU President Naz Sharifi said on Monday

that the “USU Board were appraised of some of the concerns about the band Slaughter to Prevail due to play at Manning in December. It has since been decided that the Band will no longer be playing at Manning or any other USU venues.”

Manning Bar previously booked bands with Neo-Nazi and white supremacist links in December 2022, and cancelled them after students and staff criticised the decision.

Then-President Cole Scott-Curwood said at the time, “While the USU did not make this booking, the accountability for it is ours. A strategic programming meeting with the USU’s booking partner has been set up and

we’ll be improving the vetting of acts playing at USU venues.”

President Sharifi confirmed that this program meeting had occurred. Sharifi said that the “USU recognises our responsibility in ensuring that any event that occurs at our venues have an overarching alignment with our values. We have implemented a strong vetting process with our booking partner to have mechanisms of control and accountability and will be reviewing these frequently and where necessary.”

“USU management will be working closely with our booking partners to ensure that the processes currently in place are effective,” said Sharifi.

USyd rallies on Eastern Avenue to protest the war on Gaza

Luke Mesterovic and Caitlin O’Keeffe-White

Over 150 people gathered on Eastern Avenue on Wednesday to protest the ongoing genocide of Palestinians by Israel. Organised by Students for Palestine, the rally met opposite the Chemistry building before marching to the Quad.

Students for Palestine convenor Jasmine Al-Rawi chaired the rally. She opened by acknowledging that it occurred on stolen Gadigal land. “Sovereignty was never ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land. And this acknowledgment is not just a symbolic gesture in the Palestine movement, we’ve always stood against all forms of racism, all forms of oppression.

“I think the fight for Indigenous rights is very connected to the fight for a free Palestine.”

Al-Rawi highlighted the ongoing nature of Israeli occupation in Palestine, stating “this conflict has not existed for just the past couple of weeks. There has been a war in Palestine for 75 years. There has been 75 years of ethnic cleansing, of dispossession, of occupation against the Palestinians. What we are seeing is a genocide.”

Nick Riemer, President of the National Tertiary Education Union’s USyd Branch, spoke on the realities of Israeli apartheid, stating “the natural reaction is really, what can we do other than recoil in horror? The massive proportion of Gazan housing that has been destroyed. The almost 6,000 people that have been killed.”

“Doctors operating on people without anaesthetic, and often by the light of mobile phones. 2.3 million people are

being starved of food and water.”

Riemer reiterated staff and students’ responsibility in speaking out against the atrocities committed by Israel. “You can’t make a difference in a historical situation if you don’t take a side. So what side do we take? We take the side of the oppressed.”

A Palestinian student and member of the UNSW branch of Students for Palestine shared their experience of the current conflict. They highlighted that the current conflict is not a religious war. “I want to express that this is not about religion, and send love and compassion to both the Jewish and Islamic communities, none of my words are targeted in any way at those practising Judaism. They are aimed at the actions of Israel, and specifically Netanyahu. The Jewish faith and Zionism have not, are not, and will never be the same.”

They continued by describing recent events as an “unprecedented” escalation of Israeli occupation.

“Being Palestinian, I’ve watched the wars before. The carpet bombings by Israeli F-16s on defenceless civilian populations. The thousands of innocent people dying with no one spared.

“We will not sit quietly when this morning Albanese announced he is sending Australian troops to the Middle East, not in our name. We must stand as a voice for the voiceless. We must stand together, outraged by the crimes against humanity in solidarity of peace and justice for all people. And that starts with ending the Western funded genocide of Gaza.”

A Palestinian solidarity activist, Josh Lee, agreed.

“It’s no exaggeration to say Israel could not do what it’s doing to the people of Gaza

right now without the complete backing of Western imperialist governments. They literally would run out of missiles if they weren’t getting resupplied every day by the United States.”

A member of the Palestinian Action Group, Fahad Ali spoke to the current conditions in Gaza, saying that “We’re calling for a future in which we can live in peace and harmony without the fear of violence, without the fear of bombs, without the fear of children going without, children who will never grow up.”

“Why are some lives worth more than others? There must be a solution. And the solution needs to begin with calling for an end to the war, a ceasefire. The establishment of peace. That is the only way we are going to get out of this.”

Anti-Zionist Jewish activist Yasmine Johnson spoke to the reality of war for children, asking “What kind of world do we live in where Palestinian children write their names on their limbs so when they’re killed in Israeli airstrikes their families can find them?”

Johnson continued, contextualising the violence of the Israeli state, “My grandmother had her childhood and her family stolen from her when she was taken by the Nazis. And now Israel and its friends want to use this crime against humanity to justify another crime against humanity now.”

The protest then walked down Eastern Avenue, before heading to the University Quadrangle chanting “From the river, to the sea: Palestine will be free” and “Free, free Palestine”.

The USyd Students for Palestine are holding another rally on Eastern Avenue on 1 November, calling for the University to cut ties with Israel.

Pro-Palestine activists around the world protest Israeli weapons manufacturer Elbit Systems

Andy Park

Activists around the world have protested against Israeli weapons manufacturer Elbit Systems. Elbit Systems is the largest privately owned Israeli arms and security company, producing 85% percent of the drones and land-based equipment for the Israeli military.

Elbit is also a major arm exporter, as their equipment is “field-tested” on Palestinian people. Recently, they received a \$180 million order from the Romanian Ministry of National Defense. The Australian branch of Elbit Systems is called “ELSA” (Elbit Systems of Australia).

Today, members of the Whistleblowers, Activists and Communities Alliance (WACA) protested Elbit at its office in Port Melbourne, Victoria. Protesters displayed banners reading, “Elbit drones kill kids”, “Ceasefire” and “Zionism is fascism”.

Protesters also noted that the Australian branch name, “ELSA”, has been removed from the building directory, and the signage outside the building.

These protests are part of a global

backlash against Elbit and its active involvement in the oppression of Palestine, primarily led by pro-Palestine activist group, Palestine Action,. Today, students and activists protested Elbit at Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston where Elbit was recruiting students at a convention.

Earlier this month, protesters also blockaded the entrance to Elbit’s facility in Cambridge, Massachusetts, pouring red paint in front of the building. The facility has since been covered in red paint, with the ID scanners to the buildings smashed and disabled.

Activists in the United Kingdom have also taken action against iO Associates, a company in the UK which recruits workers for Elbit. Earlier this month, activists sprayed offices with red paint in Manchester, Bristol, London and Reading, and activists entered the new offices in Manchester to protest against Elbit in September. Elbit UK’s job vacancies were temporarily removed following the protest but are now available on the website again.

Last week, WACA held a similar protest at Elbit’s Port Melbourne Office on 19 October before its action today. At this protest, one person was arrested by the

police. A spokesperson from WACA said in a statement, “We condemn the complicity of the Australian government with Israeli crimes against humanity. We demand that the federal and state governments cancel all contracts with Elbit Systems.

“We call on RMIT to end its lucrative partnership with Elbit Systems. We do not need more efficient weapons systems, nor surveillance systems used to spy on activists or to stop asylum seekers fleeing to escape war. Australia must send food and medicine to Gaza, not more warfare!”

Activists, students, and staff also protested outside the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) to call for an end to RMIT’s partnership with Elbit on 19 October.

Last month, pro-Palestinian activists also hosted a similar action outside RMIT to protest its involvement with Elbit Systems.

In 2022, RMIT announced a two-year partnership with ELSA to develop drones for mass evacuations during natural disasters and other catastrophes. A number of sites where this information was available now display broken links, including an announcement of the deal

on the Global Australia government website. Information around the deal is still available on this site.

RMIT has since released a statement on the matter:

“The RMIT University community has been greatly saddened by the reports of the Israel-Gaza conflict and its humanitarian impacts.

“Our thoughts are with those caught up in the violence and across our campuses waiting for news from family and friends. Our immediate priority has been to reach out to staff and students who might be impacted, providing them with support as they need it.

“With regard to partnerships, RMIT’s partnerships and collaborations stem from a deep commitment to innovation in undergraduate education, postgraduate research and employment opportunities and collaborative research projects.

“Importantly, RMIT does not design, develop or manufacture weapons or munitions in the university or as part of any partnership. With regard to Elbit Systems, RMIT does not have any research engagements underway with Elbit Systems.”

‘I take my report as read’: USU October Board Meeting

Katarina Butler, Luke Cass, Bipasha Chakraborty, Veronica Lenard and Luke Mesterovic

Honi Soit gathered in the corridor outside the Cullen Room — our designated location to wait for the USU Board to finish their in camera session — for the second-last time this year. With secret Board Business apparently going overtime, the rest of the meeting was characterised by Board Directors taking their reports as read and pleas for brief updates from portfolio holders.

There were no motions on notice, so the Board discussed the publications policy, which has been endorsed by the Board and moved to the governance committee. The policy concerned the role of Directors of Student Publications who approve content *PULP* prior to publication. The policy aims to ensure that *PULP* does not bring the USU into disrepute or ridicule.

“While we respect editorial independence, they are also USU staff and they are subject to the same scrutiny. We need to ensure that what is published aligns with our values,” said President Naz Sharifi.

CEO Andrew Mills gave his report, referencing the publication of the Interim Universities Accord Report which came out at the end of July.

He spoke to a slide of the quantitative results of the USU’s outlets, highlighting the increase in free and subsidised meals from 40,000 to 98,000 since the end of September. Mills noted the decrease in people accessing FoodHub from 500 to 300 people per day, which he noted was “more manageable”. *Honi* thinks students’ hunger, on the other hand, might be less easily manageable. When *Honi* asked about the ticketing system, Sharifi emphasised that it was a temporary system and the USU is attempting to get more volunteers to meet demand.

Sharifi attempted to speed up the report, saying “I think all of this information is already in our packs.” These packs are only available to Board Directors, not media observers nor USU members who wish to attend meetings.

Chief Finance Officer Michelle Tonge gave her report, noting the forecasted deficit due to the changed graduation schedule. Tonge said that USU is still predicting a surplus, with profits higher than expected for the second quarter of the 2023 financial year. Honorary Secretary Onor Nottle asked Tonge to request more long term information about the USU’s investments which currently provides a month-by-month overview. Tonge explained that they had already requested this from the organisation managing their

investments.

Honorary Secretary Nottle took her report as read, emphasising the C&S awards, recent Debating Dinner and the upcoming release of Issue 11 of *PULP*. Nottle also noted the upcoming student safety conference.

Nick Dower, Honorary Treasurer, took his report as read and thanked Tonge for her work on the financial reporting.

Vice President Madhullikaa Singh reported back about a panel discussion on diversity and inclusion from the international students symposium. Singh discussed the result of the referendum and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Palestine, noting that “all students should be able to access support systems through the USU, SRC, and Supra.”

President Naz Sharifi gave a brief report, shouting out the management team for the Someday Soon festival and noting the full handover of the disabilities community room.

attended.” This prompted Mills to ask “What event was that?”

Grace Wallman, Disabilities Portfolio holder, noted the recent opening of the new Disabilities Space, thanking everyone who has been involved with the campaign for such a room over the past nine years. Wallman also mentioned an application for additional Student Service and Amenities Fees.

Alexander Poirier gave an update as Queer Portfolio Holder, congratulating the three recently-elected SRC Queer Officers and the potential for collaboration after “already [having] had a few chats with them on how to best support queer students.” Poirier also mentioned their work collating a report into period products around the university. When *Honi* asked about this report, Mills said that Poirer was looking into other campuses, whilst the University was looking into whether this could be expanded beyond USU buildings.

The next board meeting will be on the final Friday of November.

Sargun Saluja gave the International Students portfolio report, promoting the joint USU-SRC badminton tournament celebrating 50 years of international students on campus, saying that she “personally attended the badminton tournament.” Saluja said, “I don’t think I’ve seen an event that well

RepsElect 2023 returns to the quad in student politics' night of nights

Katarina Butler and Luke Cass

RepsElect is the Super Bowl of student politics. That is, if nobody other than those involved watched the superbowl. Too bad *Honi* is involved (it is our job).

The products of backroom deals between left-wing factions played out in an over-stimulating night deep in the Quad's Professorial Board Room — a famous venue in the halls of RepsElect history, with 2018's meeting being dispersed by police. There were few surprises as to who was appointed to the coveted paid Office Bearer (OB) positions, with the campus Liberals unable to pick up a single executive position.

Outgoing president Lia Perkins (Grassroots) opened the meeting with a chant of "Free Palestine!" before incoming president Harrison Brennan (Grassroots) gave an Acknowledgement of Country. He spoke first about how USyd — as the first University on stolen land — has a lot to answer for in terms of Indigenous justice, and outlined the role of the SRC in achieving this. He then condemned Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestine, which was met by heckling from SALT, who asked "what have you done?"

This was to be a common theme of the night, as the SALT caucus heckled almost all speakers. SALT also characteristically nominated for election to almost all positions, only to withdraw their nomination after speaking. Upon taking the microphone, most SALT speakers turned face — and then yelled — at Grassroots, who they extensively collaborate with in activist organising and preferenced in the 2023 Presidential election. The purpose of this remains unclear.

The first election was for Vice President. Deaglan Godwin (SALT) and Annabelle Jones (NLS) were first to speak, jointly nominating in line with pre-negotiated selections. Godwin spoke about the many crises facing the world, from the genocide of Palestinians to the climate crisis, and asked "Where is our student union?" Annabelle Jones (NLS), then gave her speech, thanking Dan and Rose for their vice presidency. Liberal Councillors Shahmeer Hossain and Will Nicholas jointly nominated, but waived their right to speak. Unsurprisingly, Deaglan Godwin and Annabelle Jones were elected to the position. SALT's decision to go for the Vice-President position, where office holders are paid an annual \$10,000+ stipend and typically manage FoodHub, among other mostly administrative duties, is a change from recent elections, where they have declined to use their considerable bargaining power for such a purpose.

Five tickets nominated for General Secretary: Jacklyn Scanlan (NLS) and

Dan O'Shea (Unity) were the pre-negotiated ticket, Yasmine Johnson (SALT) gave a speech and then resigned, and Liberals Thomas Thorpe and Aryan Ilkhani nominated but were invalid due to affirmative action requirements. (Every campus Liberal, bar one, in attendance at RepsElect this year was a man.) Jacklyn Scanlan began her speech by coming out, a rare wholesome moment in the chaos of RepsElect: she spoke about the importance of avoiding austerity, saying "austerity kills unions".

Things heated up as the General Executive was elected. Jordan Anderson (Switch) kicked off the speeches by addressing the questions previously directed to Grassroots by SALT, denying that no one was present at pro-Palestine rallies. Rising above the chaos, Riki Scalan, the Returning Officer, donned noise-cancelling headphones and blew a whistle. All for naught, as the yelling continued. Eventually, Jordan Anderson (Switch), Shovan Bhattarai (SALT), Rose Donnelly (NLS), Angus Fisher (NLS), Sofia Flipovic (Switch) were all elected as general executives.

For the Education Officer position Shovan Bhattarai (SALT) and Grace Street (Grassroots) jointly nominated. Bhattarai said "the forces on the left are not where they need to be. We need to get real with activist organising". Street said "We are out and angry, we blame the liberal government for the job ready graduates package. It will be another big year fighting for the rights of students and staff." Following Street's nomination for the activist position, SALT yelled at Grassroots saying that they did not sufficiently invest in activism.

Rand Khatib (Grassroots) and Eliza Crossley (Switch) were pre-selected by the Women's Collective for the Women's Officer positions. They were thus elected, with rules introduced in 2022 preventing other candidates from running. In other autonomous portfolios where the same rules apply, Rav Grewal (Grassroots), Sidra Ghanawi were elected as Ethnocultural Officers; Cianna Walker, Taylah Cooper, Ethan Floyd were elected as First Nation's Officers — their three-person joint nomination a significant development for the largely dormant portfolio; Esther Whitehead (SLA), Jamie Bridge (SLA), Tim Duff (SLA) were elected as Queer Officers; and Nguyen Khanh Tran, Yi Fan [Victor] Zhang (Engineers) elected as Disabilities Officer's — with Tran returning for a second-straight year in the position.

Grewal (Grassroots), spoke to his nomination saying, "As we exist in a settler colony, our struggle must be decolonial." Cooper said, in speaking to the need for First Nations activism in the wake of the Voice referendum, "We are always living in a No

vote." Duff spoke to their preferred approach to activism, saying "We do not want a conciliatory response to queer liberation. We will not work with the police or with management. Community comes first, workers come first." SALT's heckles increased during the speeches of each nominated Queer Officer. It is unclear why. Tran spoke to DisCo's work this year — opposing the dismissal of disabled USyd academic Dr Niko Tiliopoulos and creating *Disabled Honi*. Zhang held a copy of the Disabilities Royal Commission report, asking "What is to be done [for disability rights]? This is what needs to be done".

Gerard Buttigieg (NLS), Jasmine Al-Rawi (SALT), Julius Wittfoth (SALT), Ellie Robertson (Switch) were elected as Welfare Officers. Robertson criticised the University's closure of International House, speaking on the need to put pressure on the federal Labor government for their "meagre" response to the housing crisis, saying there is "a need for safe and affordable accommodation for students, both domestic and international". Wittfoth followed the leader (Godwin) in talking about the Grassroots student politics faction. Al-Rawi and Buttigieg dedicated their speeches primarily to advocating for justice for Palestine.

Jack Lockhart (NLS), Maddie Clark (SALT), Thomas Williams (SALT), Jordan Anderson (Switch) were elected as Environmental Officers. Clark described Lockhart's speech as "a joke", alluding to NLS' position as the Labor Left faction on campus. "The Labor Party is in power and is overseeing the largest expansion of coal seam gas," she said. Anderson agreed, speaking on Tanya Plibersek's role in accelerating the climate crisis. Williams turned his attention to USyd, saying "They [management] have the power to give millions to weapons companies. They do have power, but they have interest in fucking over students." Uptis spoke about Grassroots (the faction).

Speeches for the remaining positions were filled with the miscellanea one would expect, given how the meeting proceeded thus far. Most speeches did not discuss the OB position the speaker had nominated for, except for those of the Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment Officers, Student Accommodation Officers, and International Student Officers. The elected OBs in all positions can be found on the online version of this article.

With half an hour left, the academic suspension of Godwin and Maddie Clark (SALT) earlier this year made its return to the spotlight, with both Godwin and Clark interrogating Grassroots' role in the academic probation process. For context, both then-SRC President Lauren Lancaster and outgoing President Lia Perkins were present at the protest — and Godwin claimed that their actions "also warranted suspension".

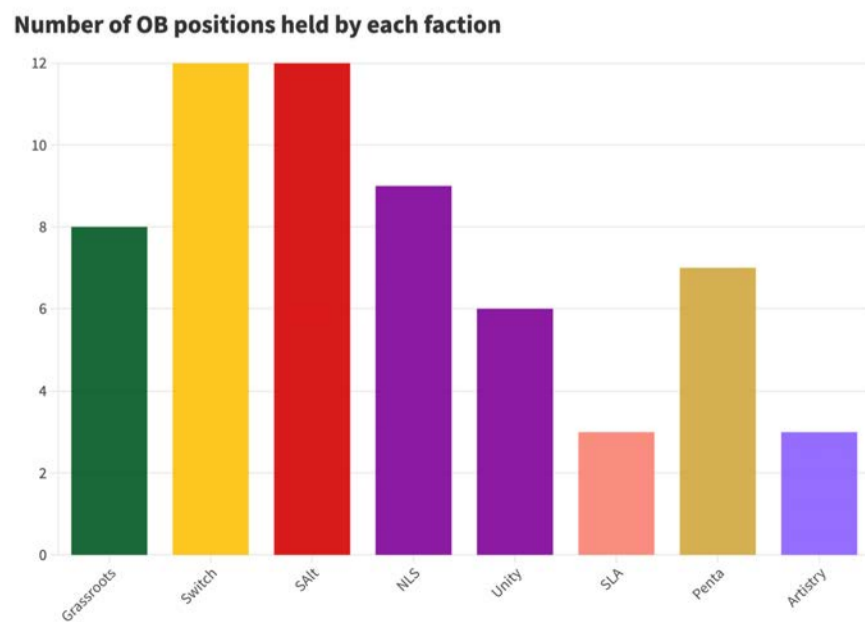
Godwin and Clark presented quotes from Lancaster, seemingly suggesting that the latter "threw us [Clark and Godwin] under the bus." Clark then targeted Perkins directly, asking "do you regret attending that protest? Because I fucking don't!" amidst cheers from SALT.

Tiger Perkins (Grassroots) challenged the allegations, pointing out that Godwin refuses to back up his claims with evidence whenever pressed.

"I have asked so many times for the transcript that Deaglan has read, which he claims is restricted under a gag order, yet freely talks about in a room full of hundreds of people," Perkins said.

"If it is true, then of course we condemn snitching on student activism. That is abhorrent behaviour that we all totally disagree with and would like to publicly distance ourselves from."

The meeting finished just after midnight, when werewolves customarily enter the quad. Attendees were encouraged to disperse quickly.



A Delicate Balance: The ALP and Zionism

Angus McGregor analyses Labor's stance on Israel through the years.

The recent attacks by Hamas have again placed the Israel-Palestine conflict at the centre of the news cycle. The Australian government response, both at the state and federal level, can only be described as reinforcing the broad support Zionism has had for years across the political spectrum. Despite the mass demonstrations in support of a sovereign Palestinian state, every state premier has lit up public monuments in solidarity with Israel, and the Albanese government — besides vague support for a two-state solution and urges that Israel follow international law — has stuck to the line that Israel has the right to self-defence.

Labor has a complex and difficult relationship with Zionism. Labor played a crucial role in the foundation of Israel, but as the Labor base has become increasingly made up of Arab-Australians, and left-wing politics critical of US foreign policy and colonialism in all forms, that dedication to Israel has fractured. The combination of placating that internal left wing pressure while adopting a public stance that, in their eyes, is neutral enough to remain electable, is part of a broader ALP strategy to stay in government by preventing the Coalition's wedge tactics.

The pressure on Australia to support a Jewish state began in the early 20th century with Australian involvement in World War 1. Stories of Australian soldiers liberating Jewish communities from Ottoman rule became popular and Sir John Monash, war hero and commander of the Australian Army in France, was himself a prominent Zionist who petitioned the Australian government to support a Jewish state. When the world learned the horrors of The Holocaust, that pressure only grew.

At this point, as the Labor government under John Curtin feared an Arab revolt, they followed the British line of not supporting a Jewish state. Curtin had to quash a pro-Zionist motion at the 1943 ALP convention as Labor's voter base became increasingly hostile towards the British Zionism

became mainstream among Western democracies, it was Australia leading the way.

Herbet "Doc" Evatt, the Labor Foreign Minister and Chairman of the UN General Assembly, was the main sponsor of the November 1947 Partition Motion which granted Israel territory under international law for the first time. He then aggressively called for votes to admit Israel as a member state until he succeeded in 1948. "Without him, the Israelis would never have got in..." the Polish envoy Dr Julius Katz-Suchy summarised. Evatt did all of this with full endorsement from the party and its base. Ironically, due to lingering antisemitism, it was the Coalition that was more sceptical of Zionism.

When Labor fell into opposition, they continued to push the Coalition government to maintain support for Israel. Zionism became part of the Cold War consensus as the Arab world became increasingly aligned with the Soviet Union and Israel with the West. Both parties sided with Israel when they went to war with Egypt in 1956 and called on Jews to be allowed to immigrate to Israel from the Soviet Union. Gough Whitlam, opposition leader at the time, often attacked the government for not going far enough, saying in August 1964 that they had "succumbed to Arab pressure." By the 1970s, with the major push from Labor, support for Israel was never questioned and taken for granted.

While Whitlam in the 1972 election expressed solidarity with the Israeli Labor party and won support from the majority of Jewish groups, his administration saw the collapse of the Zionist consensus as Labor voters and politicians grew more sceptical of the US anti-communist project. When the 1973 Yom Kippur War broke out, Australia did not condemn the Syrian and Egyptian attacks on Israel but did condemn the US weapons being airlifted in to support Israel. Supporting Israel became tied to supporting Vietnam and other projects that the left increasingly saw as forms of neo-colonialism.

within Labor started pressuring the caucus to support Palestine. The National Union of Students split in 1974 over a motion to condemn Zionism and in meetings with Jewish ALP members, Whitlam explained his shift in policy by pointing to the Arab-Australian community becoming "more articulate." When he was accused by Jewish groups of abandoning them, Whitlam said, "You people should realise there is a large Christian Arab community in this country...". Clearly, the electoral calculus changed for Labor, making a purely Zionist stance untenable. Before he was dismissed, Whitlam approved establishing a Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) liaison office in Canberra and, in a UN Women's Rights conference held in Mexico City, the government even supported a motion equating Zionism with racism. The 1970s was the closest Labor got to supporting a free Palestinian state.

Supporting Israel became tied to supporting Vietnam and other projects that the left increasingly saw as forms of neo-colonialism.

The landslide election of the Fraser government in 1975 led to an internal backlash against the left faction in Labor who was blamed for being too radical for the Australian public. In an attempt to move back to the centre, Labor's new policy on Israel started to resemble the modern-day attempt at playing both sides. Bob Hawke, who visited Israel twice in 1971 and 1973, and Bill Hayden were both viewed favourably by Jewish groups and largely reversed all of Whitlam's changes. Hawke rescinded the motion equating Zionism with racism in 1986 and maintained Israel had a "right to secure and

recognised borders." Hawke only supported Palestine to the extent that he appealed broadly to human rights and an adherence to international law, whereas Whitlam explicitly condemned Zionism. The Keating government helped supervise the Palestinian elections in 1996 and the Foreign Minister Gareth Evans was critical of Israel, arguing it needed to be held to standards of any western liberal democracy, but never criticised Zionism as an idea.

Labor's non-committal approach was successful up until recent years mainly because the Coalition became extreme in their support of not only Zionism but the far-right government that has dominated Israeli politics in recent years. The Howard government had the most pro-Israel voting record in the UN besides the US, and the Morrison government, desperate to score points with Jewish voters in teal seats, recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. These flippant destabilising policy decisions make Labor's rhetoric look sensible in comparison to the electorate as a whole. However, the internal and electoral pressure Whitlam faced in the 1970s are starting to materialise again. Arab-Australians, who marched in the thousands in support of Palestine, are an even larger voting block now and the left faction is becoming more outspoken than ever before in its criticism of Labor's pro-Israel stance. State branches like Queensland in 2021 condemned "ethnic cleansing" and the "oppression of the Palestinian people", and in response to the recent attacks, multiple Labor MPs in NSW signed an open letter in support of Palestine, publicly breaking with Premier Chris Minns. The Greens are also strongly in support of Palestine, and like on climate and housing, their comparatively radical stances are threatening to take votes away from Labor's left flank.

It remains to be seen if Labor's strategy of placating the left with small concessions, like reversing the Morrison government's recognition of Jerusalem or changing how Labor refers to West Bank settlements at the 2023 national conference to "illegal and occupied," will be enough for the party not to lose significant support. For Albanese, this is the same gamble as AUKUS and the stage three tax cuts. He believes Labor can only change the country when in government for long periods of time and is terrified of the backlash past Labor leaders like Whitlam faced for supposedly going too far. Shamefully, the result of the recent Voice Referendum only cements that caution going into the next election. With this current strategy, explicit support of Palestine and liberation for Palestinian people, beyond pushing for humanitarian aid, is unlikely.



“Racism laundering” in the Voice referendum

CW: First Nations readers are advised this piece discusses the Voice to Parliament referendum and colonial violence.

If the Voice to Parliament referendum taught us anything, it was that the process of constitutional amendment inevitably provoked a paternalistic vote. It was the greatest irony to have all voting-age citizens decide the political, historical, psychological, and generational fate of First Nations peoples. This had been the effect of so-called Australia’s intentionally conservative constitution — change is incremental to prevent fracturing its dependence on mythology: *terra nullius*.

On either side of the Yes and No positions, a prevailing sense of white guilt sought absolution. By extension, people of colour (POC) either sought Indigenous solidarity, or sided with racist beliefs. While it is necessary to remember that white supremacy underpins conservative Australian-nationalism, it seems equally, if not more necessary, to realise the role of POC in either perpetuating or resisting such racism. Perhaps it seems paradoxical that POC may agree with racist ideas, but POC-endorsed conservatism, ironically, legitimises settler-colonialism among the communities it has always sought to oppress.

On either side of the Yes and No positions, a prevailing sense of white guilt sought absolution.

Itsekiri writer Nels Abbey coined the term “racism laundering”, being “a process in which the skin colour of an ethnic minority appears to facilitate policies, practices, and narratives that would otherwise be condemned as bigoted.” In the context of the Voice referendum, racism laundering describes the use of First Nations figures to advance paternalistic stances — granting campaigns a sense of moral impunity, protected by claims of Indigenous self-representation. The conservative No campaign conformed to this model by using Jacinta Nampijinpa Price and Nyunggai Warren Mundine as figureheads to argue that the Voice would “divide” Australia by granting constitutional “racial privileges” to First Nations

sensationalised as an existential threat to the rights of POC, particularly of refugee background, who have fled political oppressions. For capitalists, this reinvigorated fears of private-property repatriation not seen since Mabo. Ironically, this rhetoric falsely implies that the constitution was created in a vacuum. As if Australia’s federation did not legally depend on *terra nullius*, nor was it motivated by the perceived existential threat of non-European immigration as “a matter of life and death to the purity of [Australia’s] race and the future of [the] nation”.

The framework of racism laundering allows us to criticise this campaign as an attempt to separate non-Indigenous conservatives from settler-colonial values. Genuine white supremacy sought absolution through the presence of Mundine and Price, to reconcile racism with First Nations authorities. The scepticism-inducing arguments of “if you don’t know, vote No” and the supposed “racial divisions” to ensue were direct attacks on ill-informed communities who had little awareness of the constitution’s function, history, nor the point of the referendum itself. This campaign capitalised on the absence of common historical knowledge about the Frontier Wars; Indigenous genocide, and the lie that white privilege in Australia no longer exists.

This campaign capitalised on the lie that white privilege in Australia no longer exists.

As the Blak Sovereign Movement argued, the Yes23 campaign was not innocent of racism laundering either. Historian Gary Foley’s index, “The Noel Pearson Dossier” brings attention to Pearson’s engagement in racism laundering and political conservatism despite being the predominant Yes23 figurehead. Financing of Yes23 by corporations including BHP and Rio Tinto also aroused suspicion, given their destruction of lands and sacred sites such as Juukan Gorge, and those in the Pilbara. As BPU President Keiran Stewart-Assheton has argued, the Yes campaign refused to reckon with the racism embedded within the constitution, instead focussing on

Jayden Nguyen wants you to stay alert of white supremacy.

progressive No critique, however, was shadowed by the conservative No campaign — the latter being responsible for the coercion of POC en masse through strategies of misinformation and culture-war rhetoric.

Western Sydney encompasses arguably the most ethnoculturally diverse electorates in Australia. Since the referendum, the Centre for Western Sydney has published research analysing Sydney electorates’ outcomes. For half of Western Sydney’s electorates, the Yes vote bettered the national average, despite nonetheless recording predominant No outcomes. This is important to consider as Western Sydney had been made a national spectacle regarding voting predictability, frequently characterised by the predominant No outcomes during 2017’s same-sex marriage plebiscite. In this context, it is essential to deconstruct the effectiveness of the conservative No campaign on Western Sydney’s POC communities of relatively low socio-economic status.

As the Blak Sovereign Movement argued, the Yes23 campaign was not innocent of racism laundering either.

Independent MP for Fowler Dai Le claimed that cost-of-living pressures were of main concern to her electorate, an ethnoculturally diverse constituency particularly representative of Western Sydney’s Vietnamese community. Her apolitical stance, which sought to reorient public focus from the referendum onto socio-economic issues, did little to educate her diverse electorate on the stakes of constitutional alteration for First Nations communities. Le’s rejection of responsibility particularly strained

Vietnamese-Australian campaigners to bridge the gap between language barriers, and lacking political and historical education. What Le represented to the Vietnamese community, and Australia at large, was an unwillingness to reckon with the decolonisation of immigrant-dense suburbs through education and community involvement. As historian Gary Foley writes in his book “Native Title is Not Land Rights!”, the Battle of Dien Bien

Phu — in which the

Vietnamese emancipated themselves from French settler-colonialism — “had an impact on the Aboriginal community in Redfern” particularly in anticipation of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. To question Dai Le’s words to *The Conversation* — “I love this line, ‘we are one, but we are many’” — do we Vietnamese-Australians not owe liberational solidarity to First Nations peoples, as they found in us?

Liverpool City Council Mayor Ned Mannoun defensively took to Ben Fordham’s 2GB program in response to Waleed Aly who explained that electorates featuring greater levels of educational attainment were more Yes leaning compared to No leaning electorates. This was sensationalised by NewsCorp as a classist remark, framing Aly to have suggested Western Sydney’s generally lower attainments of tertiary education represent an innate political backwardness. However, Aly was actually explaining a simple statistical correlation. This attack on Aly’s ill-perceived remark allowed a continual perpetuation of racism laundering, as Mannoun furthered the myth that First Nations’ constitutional enshrinement would privilege certain ethnic groups at the exclusion of others. His opinion shadowed the presence of dissenting voices in Western Sydney’s POC communities.

POC have been distracted from the endurance of an underlying white-nationalism ethos.

The conservative rhetoric Mannoun indulges thus separates POC social disadvantage from that of First Nations peoples, misconceiving an opportunity of liberational solidarity as racial antagonism. Indeed, POC have been encouraged to believe in a sense of colonial-exceptionalism and to thus enter into a contradictory ideological alliance with white conservatism. As POC have contemplated issues of class while ignoring the equally necessary dimension of race, they have been distracted from the endurance of an underlying white-nationalism ethos that defines the conservative No campaign.

How the No campaign intentionally misled immigrant communities about the Voice

Immigrant communities are regularly overlooked in political campaigning and susceptible to political manipulation. The referendum on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament showcased how these communities were deliberately targeted with disinformation from the No campaign, or found information on the referendum inaccessible.

Inaccessibility is a large problem, as households from non-English speaking backgrounds often struggle with political literacy, as the majority of information provided is in English. Asylum Seeker Resource Centre CEO, Kon Karapanagiotidis, has stated that the Australian government should have been “better prepared to engage multicultural communities on the ground” during the referendum, noting a missed opportunity to provide resources in a variety of languages earlier. Additionally, information provided can be complex and explained in political jargon, making it difficult to reach communities that are often also low SES and lack access to education. Social and political contexts within immigrant countries of origin also contribute to the issue: those who were second-class citizens before immigration, or experienced political unrest, often distrust authority and fear changes to the status quo — and must be informed in a manner which understands this context.

Western Sydney, one of the most multicultural areas in Australia consisting of a high immigrant population, had 10 federal electorates that voted No.

Some of this can be attributed to the inaccessibility of the Yes campaign, which has been criticised for its inability to communicate its issues to cultural demographics outside the inner city.

However, The No campaign against the Voice has used rhetoric specifically targeting unique fears in the immigrant community, especially in Western Sydney, in order to spread disinformation about the capacity and intentions of the Voice. Disinformation in general is sinister, but especially so when it targets those who are financially insecure, have to surpass structural barriers simply to make ends meet, and deeply fear losing their newfound stability in Australia. Additionally, immigrant communities — specifically East and South Asians — fall victim to the ‘Model Minority Myth’, which creates a false dichotomy between ‘model’ minorities and other minorities, ultimately dividing immigrants based on how proximate and conducive they are to upholding whiteness. This was leveraged specifically against immigrants

through rhetoric from the No campaign about ‘division’ and ‘undeserved special rights’, creating yet another false dichotomy: ‘hardworking, satisfied immigrants’ vs ‘lazy Indigenous people who want special rights’.

The Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) has accused the No campaign of creating a “distracting narrative” around the Voice. This is specifically notable when confronting disinformation about reparations and Land Back. The concept of Land Back has been willfully misconstrued as forcing people to give their physical land back to Indigenous people, or forcing people to pay extra taxes as ‘reparations’, creating a scare campaign which has spooked financially insecure migrant communities - especially in the midst of a cost of living crisis. This disinformation is particularly pernicious as it has pervaded not only Western Sydney, but immigrant communities all over Australia. Maninder Kaur, a student at the University of Sydney, has testified that throughout the Indian immigrant farming community in Far North Queensland, disinformation about having to give back farmland and participate in a ‘UN scheme’ has been running absolutely rampant.

President of FECCA, Mr Carli, has also said that No campaign messaging has targeted immigrant communities and “fronted about their own sense of being Australian”, focussing on leveraging immigrants’ sense of insecurity regarding security and citizenship status. Peter Dutton himself has claimed that the voice will “re-racialise our country”, a claim which resonated particularly strongly in communities from countries with strong ethnic tensions like Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Myanmar. Even the Australian Electoral Commission booklet itself stipulated that the Voice “creates different classes of citizenship”, fuelling fears within these specific communities that they may return to the same dire situation of second-class citizenship status if Indigenous people were given “special rights”.

Immigrant communities have uniquely pervasive fears about financial insecurity, dispossession, and authority figures. The failure to make information legitimately accessible, alongside the No campaigns specific targeting of these fears in order to propagate disinformation, is a disgrace to both honesty and democracy.

Social media and aligning your political identity

Ondine Karpinellison has seen that infographic on your story.

Mobilisation of social media in times of political crises is the new norm. Some may struggle to remember the early versions of Instagram, where you would simply deposit recently taken photos with loosely related captions. Now, the app has a far greater use. This generation has seen its powerful utility time and time again in digital activism, with movements like BlackLivesMatter, MeToo and the Arab Spring, gaining traction from their amplification on social media. These past few weeks in particular, the passionate activation of this activism has become overwhelmingly visible.

When a story, infographic or statement is posted on Instagram in the name of political resistance, criticism seems to ensue from both sides of the political spectrum. Critics reject the notion that social media activism can represent a legitimate form of participation in the political sphere, whilst supporters celebrate the increased accessibility provided by these platforms. Are people simply reinforcing their leak-proof echo chambers and signposting their political views? Or are they

meaningfully contributing to a deliberative political space that social media alike has come to represent?

There is no question that the very nature of activism has shifted and we must now consider the inclusion of social media as an inevitable resource and asset. The speed with which information can be shared is remarkable. The organisational capacity of social media and its ability to mobilise the masses in the pursuit of grassroots activism has dramatically expanded the reach of these movements. While it is vital to question those who choose to remain “disengaged” or “neutral” in the online space, it is particularly necessary to investigate the capacity that this kind of political participation has in sparking meaningful political action.

However, even where people engage well online, there is a considerable trend where this form of activism often replaces meaningful political action, rather than complementing it. Barack Obama infamously rejected “call out culture” as an inconsequential and

judgemental action undertaken by young people that, while appearing meaningful, ultimately does not constitute activism. The term “clicktivism,” or, more pejoratively “slacktivism,” as defined by academic Max Halupka is, “an impulsive and non-committal online political response, which is easily replicated and requires no specialised knowledge.”

The ease with which one can appear politically engaged, and in many respects feel politically engaged, in the online space, promotes the creation of a ‘hyper-real’ discourse. Within this discourse, political opinion and activism remains constrained to the digital realm, meaning that people are less likely to attend a protest while fervently flagging their political leanings online. Infographics provide a perfectly bundled statement of intent, or information about an unfolding situation that can easily be reposted on an Instagram story. But if you don’t go beyond that, are you truly politically engaged, or are you just politically conscious? In an age of information, consciousness is a necessary and significant first step that

should by no means be demonised, but it is not enough.

Navigating the fine line between being “politically conscious” and “politically engaged” is a debate that will continue for decades to come. But this is the wrong debate to be having. To be cognisant of this distinction, and actively negotiate it, is at least a sign of an attempt at political participation.

By contrast, to claim an apolitical stance, to remain out of politics online, is, ironically, an actively political position. Remaining apolitical is a failure to recognise those for whom political meaning is impressed upon their bodies, who do not have the choice to engage or disengage. Those who cannot simply turn off their phones because the news depresses them. Those that cannot exist in the world neutrally. As such, the question of the power of being political on social media is not one of virtue signalling or perpetuating an echo chamber. Rather, it is a question of who can choose to engage and who can’t.



EXPOSED: Sydney University management's hidden preparations for war



Documents obtained by Students Against War under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act* suggest that University of Sydney management are actively aligning themselves with — and attempting to profit from — the Albanese Labor Government's drive to war on China.

Vice Chancellor Mark Scott has repeatedly ignored requests from students to disclose USyd's ties with AUKUS, even though USyd management has no mandate from staff and students to militarise our University. In 2021, soon after the AUKUS announcement, students held a Student General Meeting (SGM) that included a resolution to oppose "the University's connection to the Australian military in light of the recently announced AUKUS submarine deal."

When confronted by one student activist earlier this year, Scott pointedly refused to make known the University's position. The student told Scott that if the University chose to get involved in the AUKUS alliance and nuclear submarines program then he would be "condemning students at this university to fight and die in a war for the interests of the bosses." Scott retorted that "I think that's somewhat simplistic... what about national security?"

Heavily redacted documents give a glimpse to the extent USyd is preparing staff and students for war, and its desperation in concealing the extent of its pro-war agenda.

Early days

The documents reveal that management began discussing the opportunities presented by the

AUKUS alliance just one day after its announcement. An undated report sent to Scott from Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) Emma Johnston suggests that management "have a unique opportunity to do something over the next 3-4 years to leverage off our USSC relationship and all that is happening politically at the moment."

The USSC (United States Studies Centre) was established by the Howard Liberal government in response to concerns that economic opportunities were being jeopardised by criticisms of the US in Australian academia.

Funding

In April 2022, Professor of Practice and Director of Defence Research Dan Corbett sent an email to Johnston titled "Topics for US Visit."

In the email, Corbett advised Johnston to seek collaborations with US educational institutions to acquire grants from the Australia-US Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (AUSMURI) and Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)—both of which are involved in developing new technologies for the American and Australian war machines; for instance, DARPA was responsible for the invention of Agent Orange. The email notes that "now is a good time to show research in sovereign capabilities and to take advantage of ADF/DoD funding, and leverage that to get AUKUS collaborations and funding."

The documents show that the University is interested in applying for the 4,000 Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) announced by the Albanese government to support the roll-out of the nuclear submarines. The

and Science faculties are highlighted for their contributions to "robotics, hypersonics, littoral and undersea, UAV (School of AMME)", and "AI, Information Warfare (IW), cyber (Schools of CS and EIE)."

The Faculty of Medicine and Health is mentioned as contributing research to "health and resilience in contested environments (such as submarines or other)."

Professor Ben Thornber, a former employee of Rolls Royce and NASA, presented a slide show on behalf of the Digital Sciences Initiative Defence Working Group in May this year. The slides contained information about possible areas for defence funding and research at the University — including quantum, hypersonics, undersea, littoral warfare, and weapons systems — as well as "updates and opportunities" with regards to the defence industry.

To demonstrate that the University is ideally positioned to advance the AUKUS partnership, the briefing lists the arms companies, Thales, BAE Systems, Airbus, and Rolls-Royce as "UK Industry partnerships under AUKUS". Every one of these companies are implicated in Israel's war crimes in Palestine.

Blood money

Just last year, the University renewed its partnership with Thales. Thales partnered with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) to upgrade Heron combat drones which are currently being used in the genocide of Palestinians. The business of genocide and war is lucrative for Thales, whose Australian Chair is the University of Sydney's Chancellor Belinda

Angus Dermody lifts the lid on USyd militarism.

\$128.5 million allocated to these CSPs was the only significant funding for universities in the 2023 Labor budget.

Submarine school

In a briefing for Johnston's visit to the US and the UK, the hypothetical contributions of several faculties to AUKUS and the drive to war on China are listed. The Engineering

Hutchinson.

Thales have profited off the other imperialist slaughter in Ukraine, as well as the ethnic cleansing of West Papuans by selling armoured Bushmaster vehicles to the Indonesian military.

USyd recently released a statement offering Palestinian students counselling, but at the same time they are making strenuous efforts to deepen ties with the US war machine and with the companies raining bombs on Gaza.

The common good

In a briefing paper titled "Security and Resilience Initiative for Research & Education" prepared by Johnston and DVC (Education) Joanne Wright, the University also highlights what they see as their role in fostering "innovative research for the common good, including in our relationship with the Department of Defence."

The provided examples of where the University are already acting for the "common good" include the Business School's "executive training for the Department of Defence team" and the existence of the Jericho Smart Sensing Lab — a partnership between Sydney Nano and the RAAF which produces the sensing technology used to "monitor the electromagnetic space and underwater domains for Australia's defence."

Preparations for war have nothing to do with the "common good" and everything to do with shoring up the interests of the capitalist class and the Australian state. In justifying the further militarisation of the University in response to AUKUS, management cites the University's role in World Wars One and Two: "an important number of staff and students not only served during the wars, but our academic experts were increasingly relied upon for strategic contributions."

The World Wars were an imperialist slaughter where tens of millions died, including hundreds of USyd staff and students. Workers and students have everything to lose if the drive to war on China and the militarisation of our universities continue unchecked.

If we want to avoid the horrors of another World War, then we must actively resist the militarisation of our universities. USyd must sever all ties with the arms industry. Students and staff at this university have the power to fight this agenda and ensure that our education is for the real "common good", not for the good of arms companies and imperialist powers.

Management is getting organised — it's time for us to get organised too.

This essay thinks, therefore, it is: A defence of first person in academic writing

Nicola Brayon

An article submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for this humble rag

Sydney University Student Newspaper

Honi Soit

The most irritating standard imposed on academic writing, in my opinion, is the instruction to "avoid using first person language". While it is not universally upheld, at many points throughout university and high school, I have been told to write in third person exclusively, or, worse still, had marks deducted for submitting an assignment using first person pronouns (despite the exemplar we were instructed to follow doing the same thing). First person is not just inoffensive — it is honest, concise, and important. Detering students and academics from its use is pointless at best and actively harmful at worst.

It doesn't seem clear where, exactly, the convention of avoiding first person in academia comes from. Many academic works which have been lauded in Western canon for years are written in first person: Plato's *Republic*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, and Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, among others. Despite this, the norm has existed since at least 1959, when Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* cited it as an academic convention worth observing. This norm has persisted, with many contemporary academic style guides insisting upon the removal of first-person pronouns from scholarly work.

What's so offensive about first person language? Linguistically, person refers to a set of pronouns that identify the relationship between the speaker, addressee, and the entity identified pronominally. First person includes the speaker ("I" and "we" in English), second person includes the addressee ("you" in English, with "y'all" and "youse" being non-standard, but valid, second person plural pronouns), and third person includes neither speaker nor addressee ("he", "she", "they", and "it", for example). Pronouns, and the relationships they represent, are

an intrinsic and value-neutral part of communication. Insisting upon avoiding them cannot have a linguistic basis: it is purely conventional.

Here are my four main aversions towards the rule:

Objectivity

The main objection was that first person appears subjective, while third person seems more objective. For example, a sentence like "I think this thesis is important" seems more biased than "this thesis is important". The problem with the former sentence, however, is not that the author used first person, but that they tacked a superfluous verb phrase onto their claim. Removing phrases like "I think" or "I believe" can be a good way of refining your academic work, but not because of the pronouns they use. These qualifying phrases restrict the modality of your claims, making them seem less persuasive and more personal. In an example such as "In this essay, I argue that...", first person does nothing to the perceived objectivity of the claim. Replacing "I" as the subject of the phrase — "this essay argues that..." — is barely semantically different. Furthermore, it's unclear if objectivity is possible or necessary in academic writing. What we write is, inherently, a byproduct of the research we have done, the worldview we maintain, and the paradigms present in the institutions we attend. Few claims are universally true. Obscuring the author's presence in their paper doesn't lessen the impact of their biases on what they have written. While it is important to draw clear lines between fact and opinion or conjecture when you write, that does not mean that those facts can be, or should be, positioned as objective truth.

Formality

Most guides advising against using first person in academic writing cite "informality" as a reason to exclude it. This suffers from the same conflation as the prior point: "I think that..." is a phrase that one could easily consider improper in academia. The informality of that phrase, though, does not stem from its subject, but its proposition. Looking, again, at examples such as "I found that...", the only way they could be classed as informal is circularly; they may sound informal because of how we arbitrarily define "formal" to exclude them. There is no valid tonal reason to exclude first person from what we consider valid academic writing.

Persuasiveness

Several guides framed third person writing as more believable than first person. This, again, is only true of hedging or qualifying statements that ought to be omitted. If anything, clearly identifying the source of a claim — "we conducted a survey that found..." rather than "the survey found..." — more clearly evidences that claim, lending credence to it, even if that credence is only superficial. Readers are aware that the paper they are reading was written by a person. To suggest that awareness of that would make them doubt its conclusions places no faith in readers.

Conciseness

The last defence of avoiding first person is that cutting first person phrases out of an essay makes it more concise. If it is possible to cut out a first person phrase without altering the meaning of a sentence, it is true that it is superfluous, and likely an example listed above like "I believe". Removing first person pronouns from necessary phrases does not make

writing more concise, and likely makes it unnecessarily complex. When the subject of an active phrase like "I argue" cannot be substituted with another subject, such as "this thesis argues", the writer is forced to use passive voice: "I conducted a survey" becomes "a survey was conducted".

Passive voice is also advised against in academia, can get unwieldy and sound unnatural, and can bury the agency of the actor in a given context, which can be bad; consider "a link between vaccines and autism was found" versus "I found a link between vaccines and autism". Any capacity that third person and passive voice does have to confer objectivity to a statement can make tenuous or singular results sound universally true. Passive voice does not make writing more concise, but it does make it less pleasant to read.

Most of the critiques levelled at first person are targeted at superfluous, qualifying phrases like "I think". If you are writing an essay and want it to sound more convincing or formal or be more concise, you should omit those phrases. However, blindly removing first person pronouns will only serve to make your writing worse.

The way we define academic writing has implications which trickle down past the bounds of academia itself. This definition shapes the essays and papers that academics produce, and, as such, the way that members of the public receive, understand, and act upon the claims that academics make. It is used as a tool to punish or reward students who write in a particular way. Being averse to first person writing is not just a silly thing that I have a personal gripe with; it informs how academics, students, and the public engage with academia. We should make our standards for academic writing as robust and honest as possible.

PUFF, PUFF, PASS

WHAT DOES CANNABIS LEGALISATION MEAN FOR STUDENT COMMUNITIES?

Misbah Ansari lays down the case for cannabis legalisation.

It's 2am at Victoria Park and you're walking back from a death metal gig at The Lansdowne. You decide to lay by the glistening Vic Park pond and want to light up your last blunt as the remnants of the gig are still playing in the back, and boom, a cop clad in a trashy neon jacket shows up at your corner announcing that this shit's illegal and what not.

This buzzkill is the reality of many blunt euphorias, where every whiff is loaded in whether there's some police (and their loser sniffer dog), security or a party pooping, law abiding citizen out there to report you. When you look at it, it's nothing too deep: blobs of dried up herb ready to be burnt or cooked up and invariably consumed. It's, on its surface, not deeper than a shot of whisky on ice or a pack of nicotine on the table. The criminalised aspect of the herb can then be attested to two things — one, a lack of understanding of the safety of its bodily impact and two, a moral code embedded in the skeleton of the current legal system that decides what products, activities, and lifestyles are appropriate.

The debate of legalisation vs decriminalisation

The path to legal cannabis consumption in Australia is multifaceted, primarily divided over the argument of whether we should pursue mere decriminalisation or legalisation. While these are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories, as legalising processes can start with the decriminalisation of drugs, public policy spaces sometimes find themselves stuck in a limbo between the two, and which they should be working towards.

Decriminalisation means that whilst use would no longer be an offence, there would still be a chance of a person to be fined for cannabis possession and consumption (around) but no criminal conviction for the same. However, under a legalisation model, there are no sanctions or fines as products being openly sold and cultivated under government legislation.

Honi spoke to Professor Donald Weatherburn, former Executive

Director of the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, who explained that “the principle difference is that when you decriminalise something, you remove the criminal sanctions that would ordinarily apply.”

Earlier this month, NSW introduced a “two-strike” system in the build up to Labor’s overhaul of the current state Drug Law system. Under this scheme, people caught with drugs of any form might be fined approximately \$400 up to two times depending on the severity of their conduct and then made to undergo a compulsory training after which their fines will be wiped out. The failure to reform behaviour after the training means that the person will have to pay the required fees.

While this system reduces the number of people charged under criminal law, by sticking to a fines-based system paired with community training, it still does not remove all of the criminal connotations and surveillance power over the communities. In the ACT, where weed is currently decriminalised, smoking is restricted to private consumption at home with potential for fines over smoking in public.

Ben Mostyn is a Legal Aid Solicitor and researcher working in the field of Drug Reform in the USA and Australia. In a system where weed is legalised, “we would fully regulate the growing and supply of cannabis. I think 21 states in America now do where you can basically walk into a shop, buy cannabis, the cannabis is regulated, you pay tax on the cannabis,” said Mostyn.

The moral compass around drugs

Cannabis legalisation and drug reform is not just a legal issue, but broadly a moral issue too. While overtly secular, the Australian legal system, like any other colonial western power, is entrenched in Christian puritanical values of morality. Legal philosophy scholar Professor Augusto Zimmerman talks about how “Christianity was included in the law of the land applicable to the situation of the colonists.” The ignorance of Aboriginal customary law happened with the slow and imperialising in interpreting “divine law” into the political and legal fabric of the country, creating stringent moral boundaries around acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

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Let's face it. Most of us have smoked. While it might be personally annoying to be around those stoned motherfuckers, life still ran fine. I do not make this argument to negate any possible health issues and safety around the consumption of drugs of any kind, but to put in perspective the way smoking weed is depicted as such a criminal catastrophe when in reality it's a simplistic lifestyle choice.

Smoking weed in public, and as a form of socialising, is erased from the public landscape with the heavy policing of marijuana. NSW Council for Civil Liberties (CCL) President Josh Pallas agrees that the prohibition on smoking in public feeds the stereotype of police being a “fun police”. He says that “constructing a society of civil compliance subjects of the state is pretty problematic.” The way we look at public spaces then is interesting, because there is rarely any public health discourse around smoking cannabis and how we can facilitate safer spaces for consuming marijuana. Rather, we exclusively focus on removing it from the social fabric of society.

Youth culture has always been influenced by drugs, to some extent, and the criminalisation of drugs does not stop their consumption, but encourages more illicit usage. People do nangs at house parties in the backyard, cocaine lines in the bedroom, and blunt rotations on the balcony. This isn't an isolated experience; these exchanges happen on every level and have since time immemorial. Pallas provides a civil liberty perspective, saying we should “legalise all drugs and treat them as a health issue rather than a criminal issue”.

The concept of limiting the consumption of cannabis to personal space, rather than in public, essentialises the behaviour of those who consume weed as delinquent. The chances of these delinquencies are higher when

weed is stigmatised beyond the public purveyance, which functions to treat it as inherently secretive. Pallas says that we “don't have sophisticated discussions around drug reform, considering how paternalistic notions of statehood are”. He discussed the way there is a “parochial, top-down hierarchy of moral values” in the way people operate their lives and that this extends to things like sex work, queer relationships, and protesting actions of the state. The stereotype of a lazy and unproductive stoner also feeds reluctance to regulating the recreational use of cannabis.

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In 2019, lesbian, gay and bisexual people consumed more drugs (30%) than heterosexual people (16.1%) in general. These communities are more often involved in the process of engaging with a dealer and communicating through encrypted chatting sources like Telegram, Whatsapp and Wickr to receive the goods, leading a life of further secrecy and “illicit” consumption. In the event of legalisation, these underground networks would not be present and cannabis would be sold through legitimate suppliers, supplier networks and established shops.

Ben Mostyn encourages us to imagine what a legalised landscape would look like. According to him, we need to consider ways in which weed is regulated for public consumption as this diverts focus beyond a criminal angle and what the community needs. “The selling of cannabis should be kept on a community level,” added Mostyn.

“We wouldn't want big tobacco to get involved. We would probably try to keep it at a bit of a community level. Small coffee shops are a good option. People could probably only own one or two coffee shops. We wouldn't allow

chains to spring up. You would probably only maybe want one or two per suburb. You know, assuming it follows the same rules as cigarette smoking now.”

Why do students smoke?

USyd is a hotspot for stoners and I am always impressed by how well people escape the eye of the cameras and security. Anytime I smell some devil's lettuce while walking past Manning around 9pm or a little puff, puff, pass happening in the dark gazebos of the Law building, I cannot do anything but laugh.

Honi conducted a survey asking students about their patterns around smoking weed. When asked about how often they consumed weed, the majority of the people (35.9%) smoked everyday and around 23% did once or twice a week. A third of respondents (33%) wanted to smoke on campus but were afraid of security, although approximately 22% had smoked on campus at times.

Whilst not included in the survey, the concerns around security and policing are more elevated for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour and queer people who consume weed in general.

About 80% of the people were fervently in support of weed being sold in cafes in different forms. Almost 45% of them were afraid of being caught when meeting up with their dealer. People who are dealers also need to remain mainly anonymous, use pseudonyms and are under hypervigilance about what they do. This illicit “dealing” can be dehumanising on many levels, especially for people who are small-scale dealers with other primary jobs and selling drugs like cannabis for extra money.

Josh Pallas describes the criminalisation of drugs as having a “homogenising effect” which “serves the end of constructing the society that it wants through prohibiting things that it doesn't want”. Enforcing ideas of what one should and shouldn't do, and how they should live their life permeates student communities and puts them in a surveillant environment meant to monitor their every step.

If universities are meant to be safe spaces, should they not facilitate an environment without policing?

Mostyn also focused on the problem of strip-searching of young people for weed at events and concerts, which Mostyn called a disproportionate method and “out of touch with community standards”. The campus is full of signs notifying that you're on CCTV and being surveilled every step on the way. Students then turn to more secretive forms of having weed as the police presence deviates from its safety, providing structure and monitoring violence created by drugs, but performing violence on those engaging in an innocent consumption of drugs.

Health-based vs crime approach

In one of the responses, a few doctors recommend patients in need of medical marijuana to get it from the “community”, meaning localised dealers, as it's a more affordable and accessible option. A shift from crime-focused angle to a health-focused one is integral because it broadens the conversation around drugs and makes people think how we can make drug use a safer, regulated option rather than something that is inherently a crime.

When asked about why they consume drugs, most students usually smoke for a mix of medical and recreational purposes. For several people it was a social lubricant,

relieved anxiety, was a muscle relaxant, regulated their periods, helped deal with panic disorders, insomnia, eating disorders and depressive episodes. In the interviews, people's focus kept going back to interactions with the police and sniffer dogs in public places rather than the positive experiences of smoking marijuana.

Mostyn opines that “no one takes marijuana just for medical purposes, recreation plays some part in it”. And rightfully so. The supposed mutual exclusivity of two factors and taking away the factors of pleasure, fun, and socialising from cannabis means that our policy makers are out of touch with reality. According to Pallas, “all drugs should be a health issue” because there are serious health concerns around drugs like ice, cocaine, and ketamine which might induce psychosis and subsequent violence among consumers.

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Cannabis legalisation in NSW is currently in limbo. The Greens introduced a Legalise Cannabis Bill 2023 to parliament in August this year, which would legalise the supply of cannabis products in all forms in the state. This bill is yet to be passed but will be incomplete without looking at ways to form equitable consumption patterns and destigmatising the product.



Behind closed doors: I think you should get high with Tim Robinson

In every moment there exists millions of worlds, and from these millions only one is chosen to become a reality. These worlds are invisible, smoothed over by social norms, and have become mostly inaccessible as a result. Our social lives exist on-rails. Performances that we have seen over-and-over again become internalised, they shape us and the lives around us. Within these scripts and semiotics is a petrified reality, a wealth of possibility broken into digestible constructs, funnelled through what Aldous Huxley calls the “reducing valve” that condenses our consciousness into a “measly trickle.” For Huxley, the antidote to this reduction was mescaline, a psychoactive drug that reprioritized what his brain had deemed as unnecessary, allowing a view of reality unmediated by the tremulous tenor of culturalised interest. To follow in his footsteps, I eat some edibles, put on *I Think You Should Leave* with Tim Robinson (ITYSL), and as I begin to feel them kick in, step back from myself and slowly open the doors of perception.

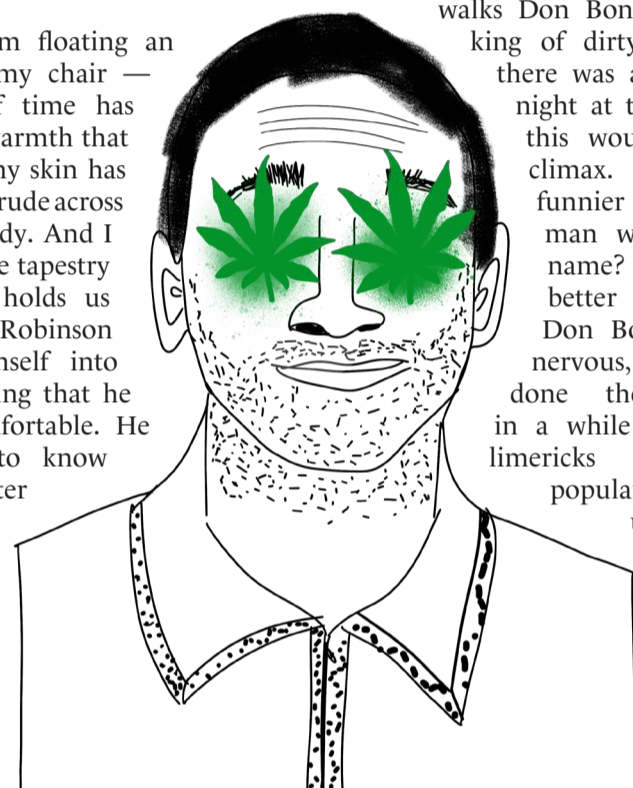
Tim Robinson’s work, and arguably all comedy, relies on the rupture of conventions, with each of ITYSL’s sketches featuring highly understood social scenarios such as a TV courtroom drama, a shopping-channel ad for a doggy door, or the experience of having a man with long hair act weirdly shocked you don’t listen to some now-dead jazz musicians who were apparently “really good”. We have all experienced these things or we feel like we have. The music, set-

design, and acting of a courtroom scene is indelibly inked in our collective consciousness, even if we’ve never sat down to watch an episode of *Law and Order* or its seven spin-offs. ITYSL takes the formulaic constructions of these social shorthands and injects the real-world into them. It dresses the scene of a boys’ night-out, with Robinson’s character promising that him and the guys “[are] not going to want to leave the house.” The doorbell rings, the music crescendos, Robinson and his boys turn to the door. We’ve seen this before, it’s reminiscent of all those male wish-fulfilment movies like *The Hangover* or any mid-2010s Zac Efron movie.

By now I’m floating an inch above my chair — my sense of time has ended. The warmth that rests under my skin has begun to protrude across my whole body. And I can see it. The tapestry of life that holds us together. Robinson slouches himself into a suit, knowing that he looks uncomfortable. He wants you to know his character before he opens his mouth. In that suit, he is exporting the social imagery of what it means to

wear an ill-fitting suit. Why must a shoulder seam that sits an inch too long/short dress a person in subconscious social ridicule? To what end does that benefit us? Robinson wrings the enormity of this meaninglessness from each character he embodies. I curl up a little bit more as my limbs swirl within my body. Huxley described the drug-induced de-conceptualisation of an image or event as “the final stage of egolessness... an ‘obscure knowledge’ that All is in all.”

I return to the boys’ night out. In any other show, this would be where the stripper or whatever walks in, but in ITYSL, the door opens and in walks Don Bondarley, the king of dirty songs. If there was an improv-night at the Marley, this would be the climax. What’s funnier than a man with a silly name? ITYSL is better than this. Don Bondarley is nervous, he hasn’t done these songs in a while and dirty limericks aren’t as popular as they used to be. We watch as he begins one song, forgets the



Aidan Pollock starts to see things.

words, and then forgets another. No punches are pulled, we watch as Robinson’s friends put their heads in their hands. The focus is not on the lyrical content of the limericks, but on the role both parties play for each other. Don Bondarley has been paid to be there, his role is determined, and he is failing to perform. The guys are uncomfortable, unwilling to comfort Don Bondarley, instead pretending that he isn’t there.

On seeing a chair in the centre of a room while on Peyotl, Huxley describes it as such: “A rose is a rose is a rose. But these chair legs were chair legs were St Michael and all Angels.” Perhaps he’s questioning the chair itself, it’s Platonic ideal. A chair doesn’t just have four legs and a back, it must also answer to its own context. Imagine an office chair in a McDonald’s, The Iron Throne in a café. These are foreign entities in their new homes. The office chair is just as much a chair as any other in a McDonald’s, yet it is not a chair there.

I get up to get a glass of water, I look at my phone: I’ve been watching ITYSL for three hours. I go to take a glass out of the cupboard, moving past the coffee mugs. My hand pauses before I reach the glass. A chair is an angel, perhaps a coffee mug is a vessel for water, too. Maybe I could even drink water out of a wine glass? I return to the couch. Before me, after me, the door to a new world opens.

Art by Caitlin O’Keeffe-White

Zeina Khochaiche looks to the constellations.

It’s coded in the stars

I was in Year 11 when my best friend asked me what my “Big Six” (the six major planetary placements in my astrological chart) were: Sun, Moon, Ascendant, Mercury, Venus and Mars.

A full astrology chart has twelve placements that are completely unique to us according to location, time, and date of birth. Astrology offers a celestial theory to determine physical characteristics, personality dispositions, and environmental compatibilities. Should we dig a little deeper, we can identify romantic or platonic compatibility, understand the impacts of changing planetary alignments or explore the interaction between each of our placements.

And in 2017, if you took the reading of your

astrology chart seriously, then you had Co-Star downloaded on your phone.

Launched in 2017 by NYU psychology graduate, Banu Guler, Co-Star transformed astrology reading’s place in contemporary pop culture. It combined astrology readings with social networking and an aesthetic monochrome design, allowing friends to track and compare astrological charts.

Co-Star is an aesthetic convergence of astrology readings, social networking, and paywall temptations. The app’s distinct aesthetic comprises a completely monochromatic interface, daily mysterious aphorisms, and therapist-

like personality reads. But most distinctly, Co-Star offers us the ability to track and compare our friend’s astrological chart.

Co-Star claims that its “powerful natural-language engine uses NASA data, coupled with the methods of professional astrologers, to algorithmically generate insights about who you are and how you relate to others”.

Now although we don’t know the extent of this supposed “NASA data”, it is clear that the combination of social networking, astrology chart breakdowns and a moody aesthetic serves up a hit for the insurrection of the digital Zodiac. Astrology has worked its way into

many of our pop-culture references since its initial rise in the 20th century.

However with or without Co-Star, astrology theory has worked its way into many of our pop-culture references. The study and socialisation of astrology has been an oscillating talking point in pop-culture since gaining mass media popularity in the 20th century.

Since 2017, Co-Star has grown immensely. It now boasts more than twenty million downloads and continues to lead the astrology tech market.

The app has a distinct daily message feature which details mysterious Tumblr-like predictions and astrological readings at random times of the day. When asked about her experience with these notifications, a



Vale JL

When I first heard that JL had passed, it was on a post his fiance had made on the Facebook event for his 40th birthday. Snowed under with uni and a fair bit younger than him and his friends, I had been thinking of not attending, but three days out from the event he passed in his sleep and the event was cancelled.

It is said that Gautum Buddha was born and died on the same day, passing at exactly 80 years of age. This was the first thing that popped into my head when I saw that JL had fallen just short of his 40th. JL was a vehement atheist, that Richard Dawkins type that hates all organised religion, so he would have resented the comparison. In our myriad conversations, he hated my way of talking around a point, so he would have hated this article in principle. For a man who had a lot of things to say, many of them very wise, he had the laconic, blunt delivery that many older Australians wish they had.

JL was a bull rider before I met him. He won a contract to ride bulls in the US and the night he signed the contract, he took his mates to the pub. At some point in the wee small hours of the morning, someone convinced him to ride a bull as a send off to his old life. He fell, and the bull stamped on his head, breaking his skull in 17 places. For the rest of his life, JL had a brain injury. He had a slow shuffling gait, he was sometimes very clumsy, and at other times you could see the words stuck on the stuttering tip of his tongue.

I once asked him if he regretted that

night. He said he didn’t. He said his life after that point was down to good fortune.

When I met JL I was managing a bottle shop for an independent chain. I had a guy working under me who JL once described as “as useful as tits on a bull.” JL was working in the same chain, at another store, where the GM would come downstairs and bully him everyday. When the fella at my store stopped showing up to work, they sent me JL, almost as a way of ridding themselves of deadwood. It was very mean spirited.

It was a terrible time in my life. I didn’t know it at the time, but it was a similarly horrid time for JL. He was a talkative man, and I sometimes had to remind him that we could talk while we worked. Over the course of about nine months, we turned our underperforming little shop into the very best one in the entire chain. JL loved craft beer, in fact that may have been the love of his life, and he would spend Friday and Saturday nights camped out by the beer fridges. He was rapturous, prothesising about brewing processes and freshness and ingredients. Soon after he started working with me, our Friday evenings were punctuated with regular customers coming in just to hear JL’s recommendations, to say hello, to talk with a friend. We were like the cafe where the barista knows your name and your coffee.

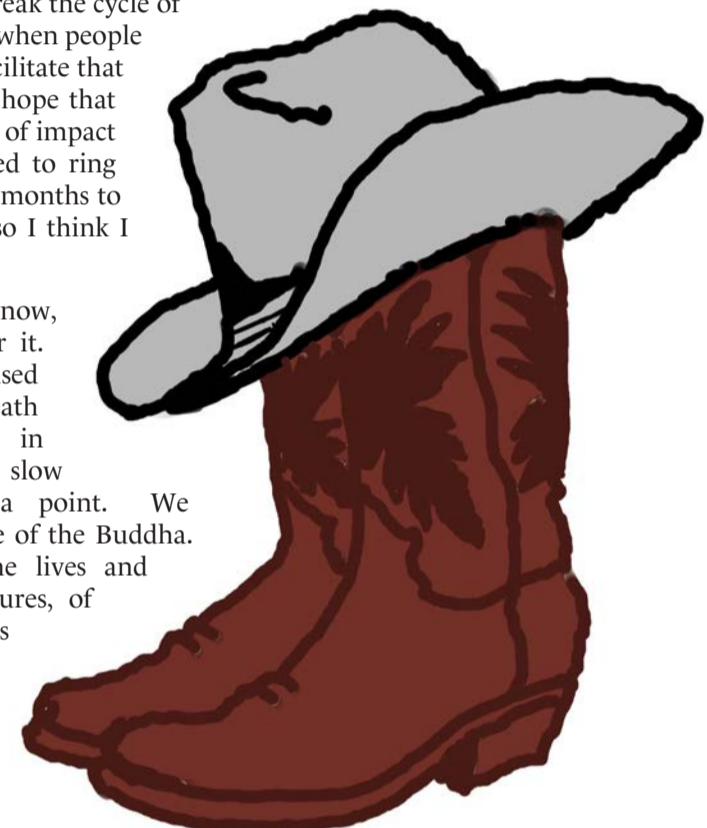
More than that, JL made me want to get out of bed. I was in the throes of a deep depression and I’ve always found the mornings the hardest when

that’s the case. JL was great in those days, with a kind word, or a joke, or a kick up the arse for me when he got in. Before him, I had been closing the shop for a couple of minutes everyday to hide out the back and have a little cry. I didn’t need to do that as much when JL worked with me.

More than that, JL made me want to get out of bed.

Don’t get me wrong, JL didn’t cure me. I did a lot of very hard work on myself; therapy, healing, and changing habits in order to break the cycle of depression. It helps when people around you help facilitate that though. I can only hope that I had the same type of impact on JL’s life. He used to ring me every couple of months to check in and talk, so I think I might have.

That’s over now, and I’m poorer for it. That’s why I raised the birth and death of the Buddha in my infuriatingly slow way of making a point. We know about the life of the Buddha. We hear about the lives and deaths of great figures, of less-great politicians and celebrities, and we canonise them in obituaries when they’re gone.



Vale JL (1983 - 2023)

Art by Luke Mešterović

Lachlan Buller remembers a friend and colleague.

These people have profound impacts on our lives in one way or another. Most of you would never have met JL, a former bull rider from the bush, a cicerone, a father, an ex-husband and new fiance, a royal pain in my arse at times and a wonderful friend and co-worker always. It seems unfair that JL’s passing goes unnoticed.

The traditionally nuanced aspects of astrology theory has been arguably moulded to the commodification and aesthetic-marketing that contemporary society is willing to pay for.

Traditionally, the practice of astrology and natal chart analysis predates modern science, NASA or vending machines to third century BCE Mesopotamia. It is interesting to consider how contemporary astrology

utilises Artificial Intelligence and ‘NASA Data’ when an ancient study of the stars existed so potently.

Regardless, the study eventually made its way to India, then to Greece during the Hellenistic period and only centuries later to the back end of your newspaper in the seasonal column.

The traditionally nuanced cultural aspects of astrology theory has been arguably moulded to the commodification and aesthetic-marketing that contemporary society is willing to pay for. Now, we fall victim to enticing paywalls, revolving TikTok rhetoric and shallow attempts of self-discovery all made palatable by the satisfying colour palette and interface masks like Co-Star.





Ghosts of International House by Jo Staas

The Ghost in the Quad

Since I first stepped foot in the Quadrangle, I felt it was a safe space for me to be. I was able to be alone and feel spiritually protected. However, the Quad isn't quite what I initially thought. The almost 200 year old building has a history behind it. I've heard rumours about what may be underneath; perhaps it was built on top of an ancient burial ground, or a sacred forest, or stolen farmland. Many solo midnight walks and study sessions on the low-rise walls later, it is now a place that breeds anxiety. Everytime I walk inside the area, with its gothic style windows and doors, I can feel someone's eyes on me.

It all began on a warm night in November, my friends and I had talked for a while, which had led to an in-depth discussion of spirituality and the idea of the supernatural. All having interest in the topic, we had a good laugh about how we should draw up a Ouija board and take it to the Quad... so we ended up doing that. It seems silly now, drawing up a Ouija board on the side of a cardboard box, but quite frankly we were all dead serious about it working. We had researched how to dispose of it and how it worked, and you don't need an expensive board to make the spirits want to communicate (they don't seem to be too materialistic in the afterlife). Once we had written out the features of a typical board and made a cut out of the planchette, we made our way through the eerie quietness of campus.

When we got there, we set ourselves up in the centre of the building. With a few giggles and spooky hypotheses, we placed our fingers on the planchette and I took the lead. We called out for any spirits and let them know that we came with no bad intentions. After a few moments of hesitation and disheartened glances, the planchette began to move. It was a very surreal feeling; it didn't feel as though someone was pulling or pushing, it felt as though we were subconsciously moving the piece in the same way. The spirit we spoke to was very playful and seemed somewhat nice. None of us were terribly scared or uncomfortable, especially since the spirit spelled out his name as "Dugz". After around five minutes of conversation with the apparent former professor of the University, the energy changed, the answers were random sporadic letters, and the building became much colder than it was before. Something else had joined us.

With worried looks, we all agreed to say "Goodbye" and leave the board. Respectfully wishing the best to the spirits, we left, shivering through processing of what really had just happened. We had discussed doing it behind the Anderson Stuart building after we finished up at the Quad, but when we arrived round the back, we all had lumps of anxiety in our chests and were almost in tears. At this point, we disposed of the board and decided to head home.

A few days later at 2:30am, I woke up in a startle from a very eerie nightmare. A friend and I were walking down City Road on our way to Broadway, when all of a sudden, he started running. I ran after him but failed to keep up. He turned the corner and I fell, rolling until I eventually hit a curb. When I hit the curb and opened my eyes, I was taken to a dark, sketchy area. There was a woman with a dog in front of me. I was screaming for her not to hurt me. When she turned her neck and screamed "stay away from her", I turned my head to see an old faceless woman. Waking up in a startle, I knew that this wasn't just any type of nightmare.

The next day I talked to my friend and she mentioned that she had a nightmare too. Her dream consisted of the same structure; she had her friend who began to run, she chased her, everything began to spin and then the same old faceless woman appeared to her (but with a bag of bones). After that,

Ellie Robertson speaks to spirits.

these dreams became a recurring thing in my life, sometimes accompanied by sleep paralysis. Eventually it stopped but to this day I continuously feel a strange presence in the Quad, and I reckon I always will. Something I wish someone told me before using a Ouija board is how tempting it is to use one again. Every so often I find myself wanting to try again and speak to more spirits, but I need to remind myself of the extent of fear I felt throughout those couple of months in my life. If you take anything from this article, it should be to ensure you don't partake in the temptation, who knows what you might allow into your life.



Art by Sofia Angelini

The Erskineville Ghosts

I am beginning to really doubt that there are any people living in Erskineville. Nestled between the giant pillars of Redfern and Newtown, it's easy to forget that it is there until an aimless walk takes you there, off the corner of an unfamiliar street. Walking through its streets I feel that the whole place is paper-thin.

The streets are lined with old federation houses, weedy gardens, and chipped whitewash paint. The whole area is sun-bleached, faded in pale clean colour. You'll be delighted, as I was, at the wild abandoned quality of it. The playground equipment is graffitied over, the grass grows in tufts up through the poured rubber. A hills hoist in a paved front yard is rusted stiff,

casting rungs of shade over a bleached deckchair that no reasonable person would trust to hold their weight. The air is stifled, your footsteps make no noise. Erskineville is a promise of secret hideaways and nice forgotten corners, drenched in white sunlight.

I spent several hours there, past the odd castle that is the Imperial Hotel. After a while, I started to notice the strange lack of people. Sure, plenty of the houses look dilapidated — but whole batches of minutes would go by before I saw someone. Always strangely dressed and moving slowly, they moved past without acknowledging me. Pretty normal for Sydney, city people aren't as friendly. But as the passersby thin out, it starts to bother me. Why? Why is no one here? Why does the street spiral inwards like a corkscrew? Why is there a basketball court here?

My head, even as the day dimmed. As the afternoon crept on, I decided it was time to go home. But somehow, I kept getting distracted. I found a weird succulent climbing a chain-link fence, with geometric patterned bulbs decorated with all the colours of a bruise as it heals. I found a cricket bat wedged up a drainpipe. The drawn open window of a second storey building and the lace curtain blowing out of it, anchored to the ground by the muck of an open drain.

There isn't anything in Erskineville, but you never want to leave. There is always something inexplicable and odd happening, something that happens just for you with no one else around to see it. You can take a photo of it if you like, but the picture never does it justice. Erskineville is intoxicating.

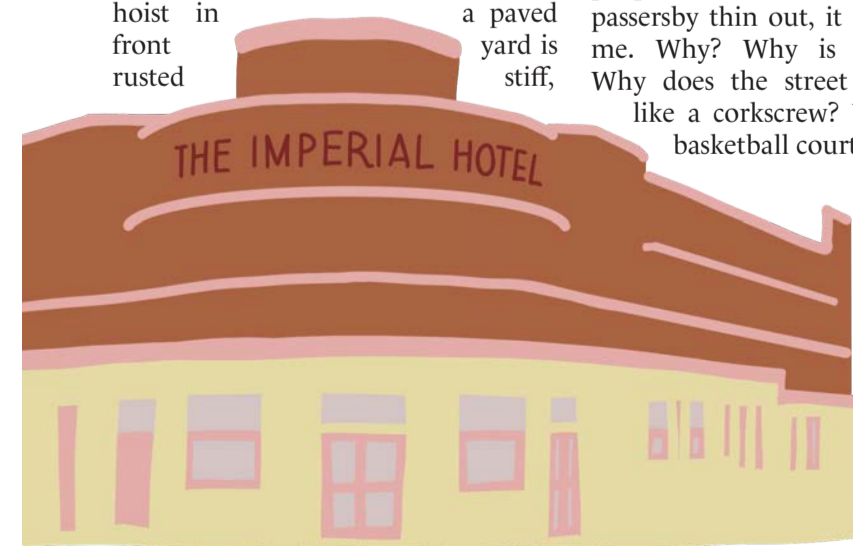
As I continued to wander, transfixed, the streets continued to twist inwards. It felt less like walking home and more like circling around a whirlpool. I was getting dizzy, and the colours of the faded laundry on the washing lines were sapped of more and more colour. As evening came, no lights went on in the streetlamps — only the faint light of the porch lamps kept me going. The scuffed walls of the buildings faded into blues and greys, and the parked

Zoe Le Marinel goes for a walk.

cars with their odd dents and scrapes turned void black. Rattling drains sound almost like breath. Enormous, eldritch breath.

As I wind closer to the centre of this strange, empty suburb, the rattling is louder. From within the houses, I hear faint sounds of scuffling, scratching, scraping. So many houses, but no people, I think to myself. Why? It's the inner west, it should be bustling. At least some loiterers should be hanging about.

There is a tremor in the ground, and the pavement suddenly pitches down to an angle and objects go rolling along the tarmac towards the centre of the spiralling streets. Like a coin spinning in a funnel I tumble down past 70s redbrick and federation colours. No matter how much I drag my fingers through the goosegrass and weeds, I can't slow myself down. The last thing I see is a cul-de-sac, sunken in the middle like a sinkhole. The faces of the houses peer down into a maw encircled with endless rows of jagged teeth: corrugated iron, plasterboard, folding deck chairs all sawed off to deadly edges. Rancid breath rises, smell of stink bug and jacaranda mulch. I tumble in, and the lights go out.



Art by Veronica Lenard

DO WE NEED TO CANCEL CRINGE CULTURE?

“Cringe” is truly one of the most interesting cultural and linguistic phenomena specific to our generation. Cringe, as an emotion, is just an intense second-hand embarrassment, something that might make you want to “shrivel up on yourself” (the verb’s original meaning). But we moved beyond that meaning a long time ago. Cringe is now primarily used as a descriptive word; when we exclaim “That’s so cringe!” we’re not indicating that something is making us cringe. In fact, most of us, when we type that sentence, aren’t even feeling remotely embarrassed. Instead, cringe has become a signifier for a category of actions. What that category of actions constitutes is incredibly interesting due to its infinite variety, but for the most part, we use it in a derogatory manner. We use it to mock and laugh at the person who is doing something we know better than to do. This use is not particularly empathetic and we should dive deeper than merely accept cringe to mean something that makes us, the viewer, feel embarrassed.

Instead, cringe has become a signifier for a category of actions.

There are two other meanings that the phrase can then have. One, a normative claim, implying that the doer should feel embarrassed about their actions. Or two, that the actions are embarrassing simpliciter. In the second case, the embarrassment caused doesn’t need to fall on a particular person but can fall on a collective as a whole. In this case, the actions are considered “shameful,” where shameful doesn’t mean “shame-causing,” but implies actions the collective disapproves of.

In these two senses of this word, I think cringe culture has its most pernicious effects. When cringiness enters the social and political sphere, coupled with a constantly lowering threshold of what is considered cringe, it becomes a tool for social self-segregation and political gatekeeping.

In the social sphere, it becomes something synonymous with “uncool.” Cool, as an aesthetic term, has incredible nuance, and could be dissected endlessly, but the simplest

and most accepted meaning of how we use it currently is “a trait or an action that is socially accepted, admired and considered desirable.” And in that sense, “cool” is one of the most important criteria for social self-segregation. You like people that you consider cool, you want to hang out with them, and you want them to be your friends. And you do not like people you consider cringe.

Self-segregation becomes problematic when it impedes important social intercourse.

Arguably, social self-segregation isn’t harmful in and of itself. No one should be forced to be friends with people they do not want to be friends with; friendship with a specific person isn’t a fundamental right. But self-segregation becomes problematic when it impedes important social intercourse and reinforces social inequality.

Interacting with people who are different to us is not just important for a better society but also for personal growth. It opens avenues for unexpected friendships and new experiences. Universities are supposed to be places where you step out of your own social sphere for the first time and interact with people who are socially and culturally distinct from you. It is meant to be a place where you learn how to navigate differing views while still treating people with respect. You should be learning how to grapple with the fact that people actually lead very different lives than what you assumed was the bog-standard when you were in school, where everyone was from the same social, economic and geographical background. Self-segregation prevents that.

Yes, social self-segregation has always been happening, but cringe culture makes it worse by cloaking the more insidious reasons behind those preferences in “silly, goofy” wrapping, and by making people give disproportionate importance to trivial things when socialising. Should I really be having such a negative response to someone just because they made an

Ira Patole cringes at her cringe-worthy over-analysis of cringing.

unfunny joke? Maybe if cringe culture had been less popular, one cringey incident would have taken up less real estate in my head and I would have been more inclined to let it slide.

Attributions of social value cannot be divorced from social inequality.

Coming back to the purported “insidious reasons,” what we consider cringe or cool is not objective. Attributions of social value cannot be divorced from social inequality. We fundamentally admire what we consider better, and what we consider better is almost always what the socially superior class, race, and gender are partaking in. People who didn’t go to rich private schools will not be aware of the social intricacies of that class and will undoubtedly commit faux-pas that are considered cringe.

This is doubly bad in the political sphere because the immediate social rejection faced by people committing cringe-inducing acts makes the very people who have the highest stakes less likely to engage in those spheres. It is most important for people from marginalised backgrounds to be present, heard, and prioritised in political, especially student political spaces, but the social stigma accompanying the different ways in which these students talk, engage, convey their ideas and express themselves disincorporates them from ever asserting themselves in these spaces.

Political awareness, like all else, is a result of your privilege and access to resources.

Political awareness, like all else, is a result of your privilege and access to resources. An education in an expensive private school with access to well-trained teachers and high-quality curricula undoubtedly makes

you better equipped to engage with political discourse. But when that capability makes you talk over the very people you claim to be fighting for, something has gone wrong. Even if their views may be contradictory to their own emancipation, as someone who has had privileged access to epistemic resources, the obligation falls on you to engage with them even at the cost of your own comfort. There are people who have their hearts in the right place but haven’t had the resources to develop their political ideologies and are still learning. They might have come from a background that never allowed them the time and space to care about non-immediate issues. They shouldn’t feel hesitant to voice their opinions in political spaces when their engagement is in good faith, nor should they be lumped in the same category as people who had the opportunity to learn and chose not to. A university is supposed to be a safe space for them to come across and engage with new ideas to grow and expand their worldview. Political engagement (of all things) shouldn’t feel more difficult by virtue of being from a disadvantaged social position.

A university is supposed to be a safe space for them to come across and engage with new ideas to grow and expand their worldview.

I do want to conclude by saying I’m not entirely pessimistic about cringe culture. I do not think that cringe culture is an incomprehensible evil that causes grievous harm to people. Cringe culture can be used in progressive ways, especially to shape public perception of what they should be supporting; cringe culture, when used to hold bigoted people in positions of power accountable, is very good. Nevertheless, we need to be a lot more critical of cringe culture than we currently are. We need to better understand cringe culture in all its nuances and use it with careful consideration.

In the mood for affordable housing? Apply now!

Aidan Pollock thinks you should live at STUCCO.

The cost of living crisis deepens its roar everyday. University students struggling to make ends meet on the pittance of Centrelink or on unreliable casual work are resorting to living in dingy houses with wallpapers of mold. One student from Malaysia I became friends with was kicked out of his home illegally, unaware of his rights or the avenues for assistance. He told me this in the living room of my home, where he had been referred to by the SRC.

Beginning as a glass-making factory on Wilson Street, Newtown/Macdonaldtown, STUCCO has been turned into student-run cooperative housing that caters to the people most in-need, without the impositions of landlords or high-prices. Based on an egalitarian philosophy, STUCCO is maintained by its forty student-residents, with general meetings held fortnightly to discuss items relevant to the cooperative, the maintenance of the building, and the inner-workings of each of its four committees.

To apply all that is needed is that you must attend three meetings (with at least

one being a General Meeting), must be an Australian citizen or Permanent Resident (this is due to NSW laws), a USyd student (either full-time, or part-time and registered with disability services). The dates and times of each meeting are listed on the STUCCO website.

But even if you are an international student, STUCCO offers emergency temporary accommodation — regardless of citizenship or resident status. If you or someone you know has been kicked out or is unable to find somewhere to live, we have a number of rooms set aside for exactly that situation.

As of 2023, STUCCO has been around for 32 years, with over 600 students having filled out its rooms during its lifetime. Built on the foundation of needs-based housing, it allows those who would otherwise be unable to move out of their current places a chance to find stable and accepting accommodation. In every unit there are ghost-spots, names unremembered and belongings left-behind. This quasi-inheritance contributes to STUCCO’s atmosphere

of expression, connection, and decades-long cooperation. Unit 6, my unit, has a segment of wall in the kitchen used as a graveyard, with each name a memento mori, reminding me as I cook eggs of who once lived here, of who cooked eggs where I now stand.

I will still remember STUCCO as STUCCO remembers me.

One day, two or three years from now. I’ll add my name there, my vagabond mark. And someone I’ve never met will wonder where I am now, maybe it will be you. Maybe one day you’ll decide to paint over that graveyard. And I will still remember STUCCO as STUCCO remembers me, the thrum of my time here beating throughout the halls like a tell-tale heart under infinity-white walls.



Art by Maya Costa

The curious case of a stained schnozz: what is the stain on the statue outside Susan Wakil?

Caitlin O’Keeffe-White gets in touch with her inner Bill Nye.

It began with an anonymous tip and ended with a third year chemistry lecture in a desperate attempt to find answers to one question. It had plagued me since it was brought to my attention, a campus conundrum that I had no answers for — what on earth is the substance on the statue outside Susan Wakil, and why hasn’t it been washed away?

A source, who would prefer to remain anonymous, told *Honi* “I came across the stain when I moved into my new role in mid June of this year. Not knowing who any of these sandstone busts were supposed to depict, I initially thought that this particular individual happened to have a rather prominent red blemish, but I thought it was odd (and maybe a little cruel) that they’d go to such effort to use a different material for it.”

“On closer inspection, it had to be something else, like tomato sauce, but why was it so perfectly formed on this one spot?”

Honi decided to investigate.

Commemorating Louis Pasteur, a chemist and microbiologist who was instrumental in the discovery of vaccines, furthered understanding disease prevention, and whom pasteurisation is named after, the statue is one of the last remaining relics from the exterior of the former Blackburn building. Pasteur became a controversial figure in death, falsely claiming he invented vaccines he didn’t, and testing other vaccines without a medical licence

(considered dodgy ethics even during the 19th century). It seems unlikely that this is enough for someone to purposely deface the statue with an unidentified substance some 128 years later.

Senior Lecturer in Theoretical Materials Chemistry, Associate Professor Toby Hudson, told *Honi*, “It’s hard to know definitively why a substance adheres better to a surface than others, without knowing the composition or structure.”

Other students *Honi* spoke to felt the stain was one of two things — either tomato sauce, or bubble gum. An anonymous source told *Honi* that “Over time, I noticed [the stain] began to drip at an extremely slow pace. If this was indeed tomato sauce, it was significantly more viscous than any I’ve ever come across, taking weeks to move a few centimetres.

“Additionally, there was no sign of mould or any bacterial growth on it, nor had any animals or insects been attracted to it. The typically high sugar content of tomato sauce surely would’ve caught the attention of a fly or ant colony by now.

“I have since passed the blemish each week for the past few months. When I passed by a week ago, it was still there, bright and unspoiled as I first came across it.”

They added the possibility of a third option — blood.

“It being found between the Susan Wakil Health Building and the RPA surely doesn’t mean this is something else... right?” they told *Honi*.

While preliminary investigations, and copious amounts of true crime consumption, revealed to *Honi* that the stain was indeed not blood, we were no closer to figuring out what it actually was. This, Hudson told us, was crucial in figuring out why it had persisted for so long.

Hudson highlighted that in adhesion, the surface of the material is just as important as the substance stuck to it, with porous surfaces holding onto stains better than non-porous ones.

“One thing I think is that the base underneath looked a bit concrete-y or a bit sandstone-y. Those are super porous surfaces. So anything that gets in can properly get in,” Hudson told *Honi*.

With one part of the mystery of adhesion solved, Hudson then turned his attention to what the stain could be. *Honi* learnt that if the stain was tomato sauce, it would be able to be dissolved. “Let’s say for a moment it was tomato sauce, you’ve washed dishes before, it’s easy to wash up when it’s wet, but difficult to wash up when it’s dry, right?”

“So what’s happening there is that the water is evaporating, and that all the organic bits of the tomato and whatever else is in the sauce are now evaporating too.

“But, if it’s bubblegum instead of tomato sauce, this solid does not dissolve. You can wash bubblegum as much as you like, it’s never going to dissolve. That is an adhesion question, whether or not it’s stuck into the material.”

While Hudson told *Honi* that testing the substance in a lab was too time consuming, he did propose an experiment — if the stain can be removed by water it is likely tomato sauce, if not, bubblegum, or a similar substance, would be the culprit. It was an experiment that Hudson said would be allowed by ethics. With this in mind, *Honi* took to the streets.

We poured water onto the statue, and worked it into the stain, in an effort to dissolve the stain.

The stain remained.

We tried to pick the stain off with a metal fork.

The stain remained.

The stain had no discernable smell, could not be picked off, and up close, didn’t appear to be gum. With no more senses left to figure it out, and no more places to turn, we put the question of what substance the stain is to rest. Perhaps, not every campus conundrum can be solved, and maybe that’s okay.

University media has been contacted for comment.

Gaffes, Takedowns, and WTF moments: Another year of SRC Council

For another year, the elected representatives of the University of Sydney's Student Representative Council have convened on the first Wednesday, sometimes Tuesday, of every month to discuss motions and have political discussions about the pressing issues of our time.

It is simultaneously the living breath of student democracy and also the place where you go to lose faith in humanity. Egos abound, smug and cynical quips are a rite of passage, and debates quickly devolve into shouting matches. *Honi* looks back on the worst shenanigans, the best moments, and the craziest takes of the year.

Labor claps for SALT

Deaglan Godwin (SALT) spoke against Tiger Perkins' (Grassroots) amendment to acknowledge the progressive No movement for the Voice saying it goes "against the spirit of the motion." A rare moment where Labor and SALT agreed!

Badminton-gate

The Liberals definitely take the cake for saying the most messed up things this year on Council but the sheer absurdity as this unfolded was a marvel.

For context, NLS proposed a badminton competition for international students and a lot of the Left did not take it well:

Lily Wei (Penta): "I support this motion because this will be a great celebration of international students on campus."

Julius Whitforth (SALT) speaks against the motion: "It's ridiculous to think that, to alleviate the serious challenges faced by international students, we're going to hold a fucking badminton tournament."

Alex Poirier (Unity) speaks in support of the motion, noting that "this is the first step towards engagement for international students."

Jasmine Donnelly (NLS): "We asked International Students' OBs what they wanted, and they asked

for a badminton competition."

"Please don't be lame about this. It's a fun time and they asked for it."

Jamie Bridge (SLA): "Are we here for a fun time, or are we here to get shit done? What part of supporting international students involves badminton?"

Angus Dermody (Soli): "Albanese is leading the drive to war. That is a far bigger threat to Chinese international students than the lack of badminton tournaments on campus."

Jack Scanlan (NLS): "Badminton represents a way to bridge the divide between international students and the SRC."

Scanlan then compared badminton tournaments to smoking ceremonies for First Nations people, to incredulous heckles from SALT and NLS.

Deaglan Godwin (SALT): "I honestly don't know where to begin."

Headscratcher.

Thomas Thorpe (Liberal), Interfaith Officer, opens by saying that they'd "like to address the issue of the oppressed" and that "no one has been more oppressed than our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ."

I mean, he does hold all the power in all the universe!

Wolf of Wentworth.

Satvik Sharma (Liberal) said that all those who are oppressed around the globe "are the investment bankers and the consultants," before calling for "the complete deregulation of the

financial sector."

"Talking about the Afghani civilians staring down the barrel of a Thales gun, does this same principle apply to Nazi German soldiers looking down the barrel of an Australian infantry gun in WWII?"

This one from **Cooper Gannon (Liberal)** still makes no sense.

Eshays at Council?!

In the July meeting, **Satvik Sharma (Liberal)** brought an eshay cheer squad who bickered at the back for around 20 minutes before leaving. Bizarre.

Thinkers.

Ben McGrory (Independent): "The past 20 minutes have been a demonstration of why we need a Voice to Parliament (...) a bunch of non-Indigenous people fighting about what Indigenous people need."

Sums up a lot that is wrong with Council (and Australia).

President Lia Perkins, "The ironic thing about being the Chair is that you have to stand and everyone else gets to sit."

Andy Park trawls through Twitter.

Outgoing Pres Perkins gives us much to think about.

Tiger Perkins (Grassroots) said "trying to get money for activism is like trying to draw blood from a stone".

Wise.

Victor Zhang (Engineers) speaks as "someone who is capable of building killer robots" to say that they don't like killer robots and let's not build them.

Victor with a subtle flex of his STEM credentials.

How-far-will-they-go Liberal takes.

Satvik Sharma (Liberal) "There is only one solution to our public housing crisis (...) privatise all our social housing".

Not a ridiculous one liner, just sigh.

"Says you!"

Sam Barry (Liberal/National, same thing) cannot contain his genius when he responded to Deaglan who said, "You're disgusting!" to the Liberals as they would not condemn the military presence at the protests in France which led to a 17 year old being shot dead by police.

Cooper Gannon (Liberal) proposed a new OLE he called "BOMB1001" and said that the Department of Defence should "not just recruit at O-Week but every week."

A proper headscratcher.

Thomas Thorpe (Liberal): "We should love refugees as we love all people, but it all boils down to how we manage them."

Surprise! The Liberal Party dehumanising refugees!

"If you're homeless, buy a house!"

Liberal NPC says let them eat cake.

Satvik Sharma (Liberal) urged the SRC to "stand in global solidarity with Ron DeSantis".

Just one week ago, DeSantis arranged weapons and drones to be sent to Israel.

Satvik reads off a ChatGPT poem to Lockheed Martin (has happened twice).

Pure WTF moment. It's easy to laugh at the Libs but Lockheed

Martin supplies weapons to war criminals.

Satvik Sharma (Liberal) said at February Council that it was "sunny" today, but will be "partly cloudy" tomorrow, saying that the "climate is always changing" and that "he needs to warn Albo."

Straight up climate denialism.

Freya Leach (Liberal) calls Israel "the only true democracy in the Middle East".

Seriously?

Satvik Sharma (Liberal) argued that "stopping the boats was a good thing that saved lives."

Sharma with a NIMBY approach to human rights.

"I'll remind you that he was acquitted."

Thomas Thorpe (Liberal) clarified that the Liberals were not attending George Pell's funeral as they did not receive an invite, noting that he was acquitted. Speaks for itself.

Cooper Gannon (Liberal) said that if left wing groups can protest George Pell's funeral, right wing organisations should be able to hire and fire whoever they like based on sexuality.

Cooked.

"Why is colonialism bad, Tiger? There was no slavery in Australia."

Thomas Thorpe (Liberal) is always so calm and collected when dishing out these colossally bad takes.

Quippalicious (mostly the Deaglan show).

"Ooooh, secret. He thinks he's a secret agent or something."

Deaglan Godwin (SALT) says about Ben Jorgenson (Liberal) who said that they "will be vague and and will be non-descript" in their answers about their role on USyd Senate, due to the sensitive nature of their work.

Deaglan Godwin (SALT): "Satvik, were you just a loser at Fort Street High?"

A good old fashioned ad hominem.

"Can someone shoot this guy down?"

Deaglan Godwin (SALT) about Satvik when he randomly spoke on the Chinese spy balloon shot down over US airspace.

Deaglan Godwin (SALT): "George Orwell shot people like you."

Deaglan to **Satvik Sharma (Liberal)** after Satvik said that "George Orwell would be smiling"

at the SRC Left bloc.

Iggy Boyd (Grassroots) replies, "You're not very good at this...bring the other ones back!"

Boyd to Thomas Thorpe (Liberal) in the May meeting when he asks, "You talk about Israel being racist, do you think Hamas is racist?"

N-T-E-U! You know what we're here to do!

Cooper Gannon (Liberal): "Can you name one or two things that the recent strikes have changed?"

Harrison Brennan (Grassroots):

"Yes, management have changed their bargaining agreement with the union."

Gerard Buttigieg (NLS) to a fleeing Satvik: "Look at you run away, you little coward. How the fuck do you sleep at night?"

I've heard Papa Reagan gives him a forehead kiss and tucks him into bed.

Jasmine Donnelly (NLS): "I'm running for DSP because *Honi Soit's* been pissing me off all year."

No hard feelings!

What is SRC Council for?

Attending the University of Sydney's Student Representative Council (SRC) meetings is an absurd experience. Every month, the elected councillors and members of their respective factions gather to debate motions and primarily determine the SRC's stance on political issues, and any further action points relating to these motions.

However, rather than being productive space, Council meetings are frenzied and raucous. Not unlike the worst of Question Time in Parliament, Councillors exchange insults and shouting matches abound. Most of the meetings this year have been over five hours and gone late in the night. A lot of ordinary life is easily categorised and we make sense of experience with reference to what is familiar, but the delirium one feels as the meeting room literally heats up, and factions shout at each other for the hundredth time, is truly unique.

Apart from a creeping sense of nihilism I try to stave off, it got me thinking — what is the point of this? What do these people shout for? Who does this serve?

In theory, it is simple. The SRC is meant to be a form of representative democracy, where students vote for elected representatives to represent their views in Council in determining the student union's collective direction. However, it is clear that this does not hold.

The main issue is that only a small percentage of students vote in SRC elections. Student unions have been choked by Howard's VSU policy, which this paper has reported on and analysed endlessly, so even pre-COVID a healthy percentage of voting students would sit at around 10%. The underlying issue is that most students are politically disengaged. There are certainly structural reasons for this — such as the pressures of the cost of living crisis, the ongoing impacts of VSU, and the corporatisation of universities — but on the ground there is a general sense of apathy. The easy, default condition where ordinary life hums along, and university is just another part of this process. Engagement with politics is not viewed as a moral imperative, and

is more dependent on disposition. For instance, some people do not care for the humanities, and our education system is not structured to facilitate political engagement as part of daily life.

This means that partaking in student politics and attending SRC Council is a campus niche, rather than a place where student democracy actually takes place. In that case, what does it do?

Though there is no doubt that there are representatives who primarily engage in student politics for personal, often selfish, reasons — whether that be a future in politics, or some deep psychological need — it is uncharitable when student politicians are framed as purely self-righteous megalomaniacs. Even if they partake in politics for "selfish" reasons, it is likely that they partake in student politics on the basis of beliefs which are sincerely held.

Hence, SRC Council is, at current, an arena for student politicians to test their worldviews against each other, and spar on political issues. It is a simulation of meaningful discourse — a spectacle of competing beliefs and clashing personalities. Councillors deliver speeches which are either met with applause or disdain depending on whether other councillors agree or disagree with what is being said — though they are always heckled at. People rarely, if at all, change their minds due to a speech from a fellow councillor, and councillors usually cheer for people in their faction. The whole exercise is not dissimilar to a sport or a game which student politicians collectively buy into. Even the Liberals, who try to distance themselves from the activity by building their personas around irony, clearly get a kick out of delivering a speech they think takes the Left down a notch and, on occasion, even deliver sincere speeches advocating for their vision of the SRC.

Obviously, there are ways which Council meetings do have material impact but it is fairly marginal. For example, motions have action points attached to them, the most common ones being endorsing a protest campaign, or actioning to publicise a protest on social media. These activities are not distinct from the work that SRC collectives

do. Hence, excluding these instances, motions mostly indicate the Council's symbolic endorsement or opposition to a political cause or event. At this year's RepsElect, Socialist Alternative, a Trotskyist faction on campus, spent most of the evening criticising Grassroots, a progressive faction which sits on the left of the Greens Party, for not participating in activist building. Regardless of which faction was correct, this discussion would be better had in an open and honest space, without the symbolic baggage which necessarily comes with a space like RepsElect.

SRC Council is an arena for student politicians to test their worldviews against each other, and spar on political issues.

Put plainly, SRC Council is not the frontier where the world changes. I do hope Councillors would approach meetings with a bit less tribalism because what happens in SRC Council meetings has minimal impact on the world outside of it — even activist organising itself. Regardless of the quips thrown around at Council meetings, when a protest comes around, the factions which are actually involved in activism paint banners together, design social media posts, and attend protests in joint USyd contingents. Rather than arguing extensively about

the dimensions of a political issue at Council, they would be better off expanding discussion on building movements together, and how to do that (if it is even possible).

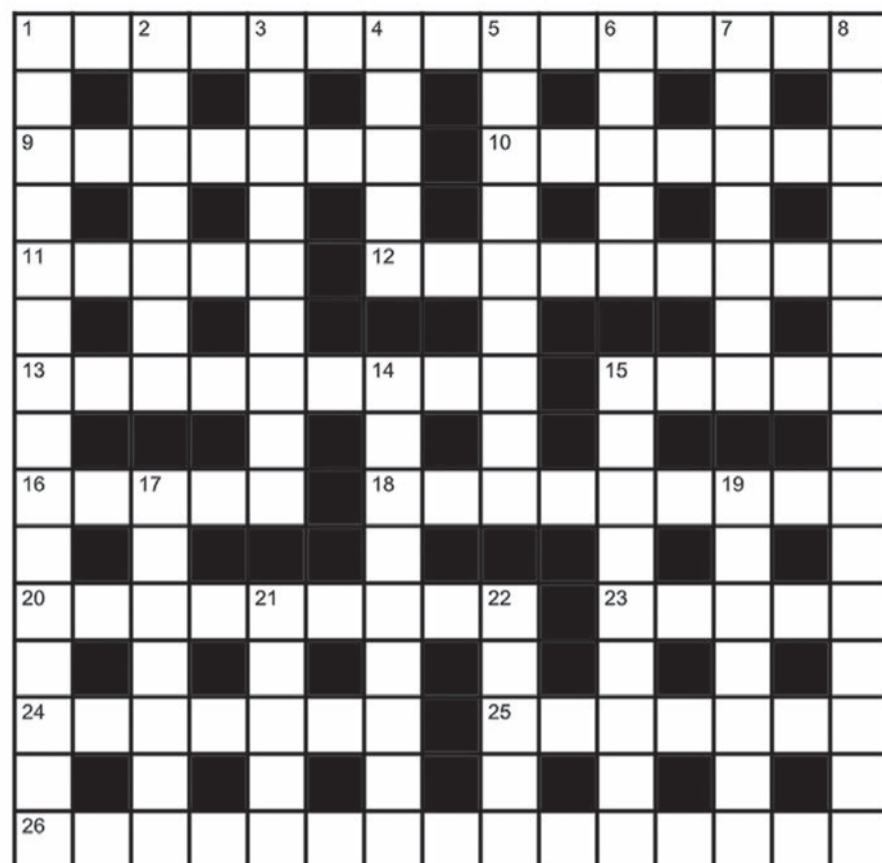
Put plainly, SRC Council is not the frontier where the world changes.

The average student watches their lectures (sometimes), sees their friends in between work, and goes home to watch Netflix. It will take more than shouting they never hear to get them to hit the streets.

Image: Students gathered for the opening of the newly refurbished SRC offices in 1987 — this is where we meet today. Courtesy of the University of Sydney Mediabank.



Cryptic crossword



Across

- 1 I say prone pools run an assembly (8,7)
- 9 Experiments with glasses? (2,5)
- 10 Traffic it an ulna? Partly backwards and mad (7)
- 11 Name French article after bird (5)
- 12 Reign badly in storm of liquor (6,3)
- 13 Spooner says smut excites dances (9)
- 15 Cockney had a snake (5)
- 16 Imagine American model after extreme terror (5)
- 18 Traitor at bad restaurant (9)
- 20 Loudly refuse company a shirt and vest (9)
- 23 Sip pee endlessly? Messed-up drink (5)
- 24 Kangaroo sterilised, hiding cock (7)
- 25 Band has one note - it's very fishy (7)
- 26 Help besieged Manila; capital storming cats and dogs (8,7)

Down

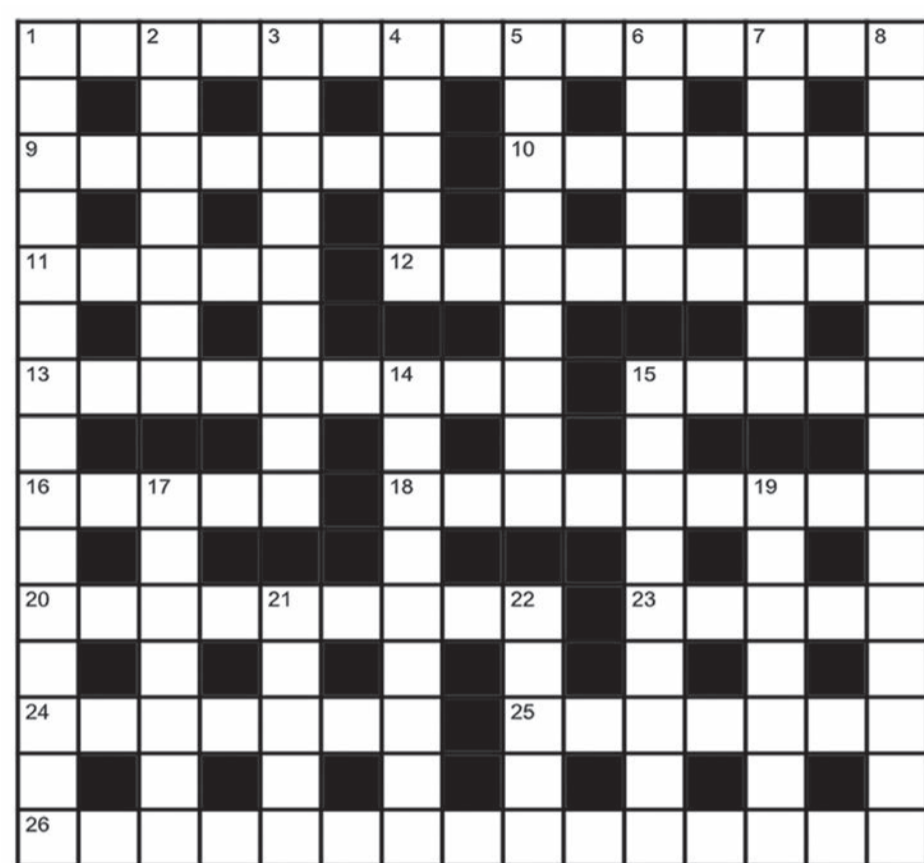
- 1 Go wild, be a Soviet muralist (5,3,4,3)
- 2 Alien in river has Rosie's job (7)
- 3 Ten photos destroyed, there and then (2-3-4)
- 4 In the midst of mango madness (5)
- 5 No paisley made in part of the world (9)
- 6 One time a round, you lightweight! (5)
- 7 Reveal sexuality to orphan going away (7)
- 8 Exolpsive relatives? (7,8)
- 14 Pastiche of Inside Out prior to Up (9)
- 15 First courses reportedly against English pasty (9)
- 17 Clothes from uni ruined (7)
- 19 Copy reputation with alcohol apparently (7)
- 21 Reverend's dresses (5)
- 22 Brand rates lady mid (5)

Quiz

1. Edvard Grieg's 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' was originally written for the original production of which verse drama by Henrik Ibsen?
2. Which 2001 film centres on a political crisis in Genovia?
3. Who won the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize for non-violent resistance to racial inequality?
4. The town of Tamworth holds an annual festival celebrating which genre of music?
5. John Deacon was the bassist of which British rock band?
6. What connects the previous five answers?

Find this week's puzzle answers at honisoit.com/puzzle-answers

Quick crossword



Across

- 1 Prince Edward, currently; an award given to high school students for volunteering, camping, etc. (4,2,9)
- 9 Pacific island (7)
- 10 Travel for fun (7)
- 11 Telling tales (5)
- 12 State violently oppressed by Israel (9)
- 13 Greek philosopher (9)
- 15 Italian dish (5)
- 16 Not consuming animal products (5)
- 18 Phylum of animals including insects, arachnids, and crustaceans (9)
- 20 Horizontal structures held when performing pull-ups (9)
- 23 Savoury flavour found in seaweed and tomatoes (5)
- 24 Fought for the ball (7)
- 25 Around Wednesday (7)
- 26 Bathing suit (8,7)

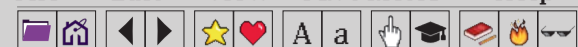
Down

- 1 Contrarians (6,9)
- 2 Raft sailed from South America to Polynesia (3,4)
- 3 Man of the forest (9)
- 4 Supply with necessities (5)
- 5 Mind power (9)
- 6 Traditionally African American music genre (5)
- 7 Dried grapes (7)
- 8 Communist symbols (15)
- 14 Outdoor café area (3,6)
- 15 Convinces (9)
- 17 Italian dumplings (7)
- 19 Flat expanse of highground (7)
- 21 Site of famous witch trials (5)
- 22 Red spice (5)

Sudoku

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

Puzzles by Tournesol.



[National](#)

[Sport](#)

[Lifestyle](#)

[Fascist Propaganda](#)

We live in a society ▶



NSW Police revenue-raise by releasing new cereal: PoPo Pops

"It's just like state tyranny, only crunchy!"

Oh, Lord for USU!



USU books Westboro Baptist Church for Someday Soon 2024.

"Hit me baby one more time!"



Britney Spears' tell-all memoir reveals Mark Scott stole \$15 million of royalties.

Coming soon to HBO: Scottcession



Mark Scott to determine which of his children to give USyd to.

Mark Scott releases new album "1962"



Featuring newest hits, "All You Had to Do Was Stay (at the bargaining table)" and "Blank Space (in the EBA)"

Mark Scott gathers DVCs for Last Supper:



"One of you will betray me and join the NTEU!"

Relationships ▶

Here's how Paul McCartney, 81, stays hard in bed



He starts by singing to his penis. "Hey Jude, don't let me down!"

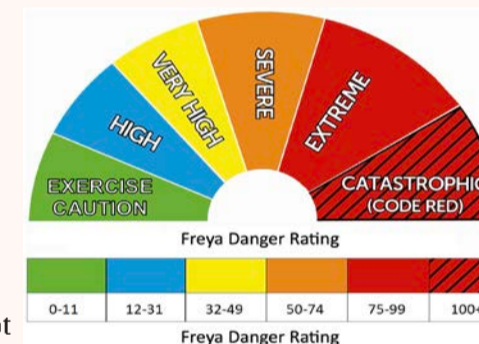
Local woman impresses at the local function



Look at her go!

'It's that time of the year': Law students shiver as Freya set to take new exam

Students at the University of Sydney Law School are taking extra time to tell their family "I love you" this week, as they prepare for Freya Leach to sit her exams.



Last year, Leach wreaked havoc with the summer plans of hundreds of criminal law students in a convoluted attempt to get a simple extension. This year, anything could be on the cards.

"Last year I had pretty much finished when Leach went to the Herald," third-year student Henri Hog told Honi. "This year I'm gonna wait till the last minute."

"I really hope she gets a good night's sleep and eats well in the lead up to the exam. We need her to be as calm as possible. She's like a lion on the savannah. I'm just a gazelle."

The Australian Federal Police told Honi: "while we have lowered the Leach-level to 'exercise caution', we can't rule out an attack.

"If members of the public see Leach, they are encouraged not to approach her. Leaches are most dangerous when desperate, for attention.

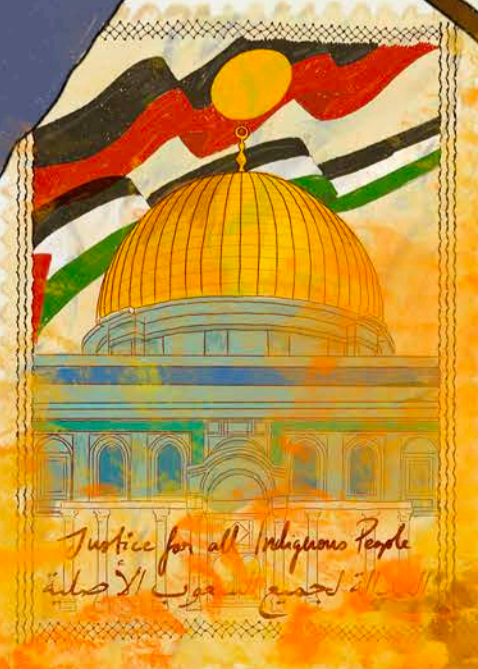
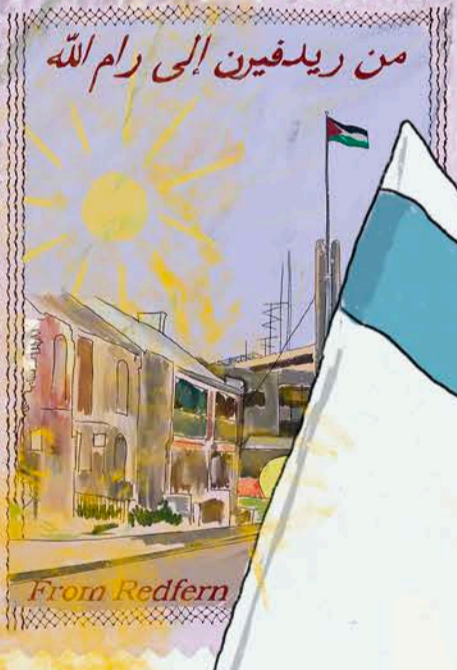
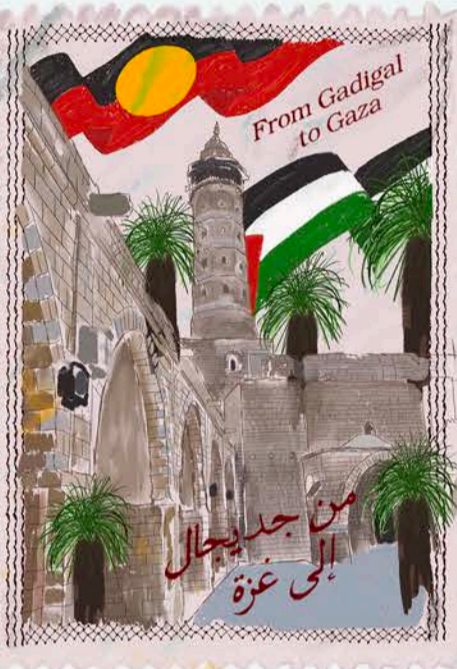
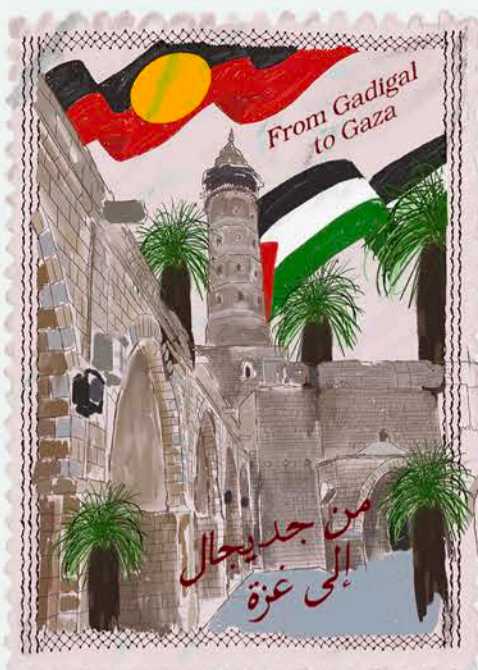
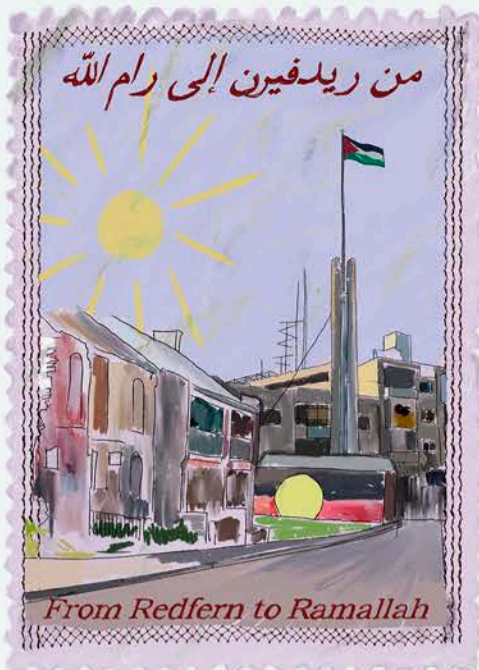
The AFP continued "we fear Leach could inspire copycats."

While Honi understands that being a copycat is in breach of the University's academic integrity rules, so was leaking a confidential exam to the largest newspaper in the state. Copycats need not beware.

Criminal Law co-ordinator Murr Derr told Honi, "I'm gonna call my exam character Freya, just for shits and gigs. We gave her that extension, by the way... Before she went to the media..."

The Law School is prepared for another incident. Phones, smartwatches, and carrier pigeons will not be allowed in the exam room.

Leach said in a statement, "This year I intend to sit my exam. I will do so through submitting 15 second videos (TikToks) for assessment."



Disabled Honi

JUSTICE



**Person-first
language**

Theodore Tsolakis
Analysis, page 12

**Access Denied:
USyd Buildings**

Gemma Lucy Smart
Campus, page 8

**Accessible Thesis:
Subtle Ableism**

Hūhana Jade Barclay
Perspective, page 19

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The SRC Disabilities Collective and SUPRA Disability and Inclusion Network recognise that our activism, advocacy and work happens on stolen, unceded Gadigal Land of the people of the Eora Nations who have, for countless generations, been the custodians of this Land. Indigenous peoples have had to endure significant injustices, despite being one of the oldest living cultures in the world. We are particularly indebted to disabled First Nations activists who fought and continues to fight against. We are committed to raising Treaty and Truth-telling within our activism as pillars of Indigenous justice going forward.

In our activism and work, we will uplift the perspective, voice and experiences of First Nations peoples in order to dismantle the colonial and ableist systems of oppression that plague every aspect of this colonial state for these systems of oppressions are intertwined.

Always was, Always will be Aboriginal Land.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 News	16 Art
6 News	18 Justice
8 Access Denied	20 Media
10 Feature	22 Puzzles
12 Language	24 Stand With Niko
14 Poetry	

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EDITORIAL

By **Khanh Tran**, **Gemma Lucy Smart** and **Jack Scanlan**.

It has been an incredibly tough year for disability justice in Australia with the recent release of the final report of the Disability Royal Commission and the relative dearth of consideration for disabled tertiary students in Labor's flagship Universities Accords. At the same time, it's also been a year when disability has been thrust into the spotlight, at the University and across the nation. It feels like finally disability matters are getting some of the attention they deserve.

The SRC Disabilities Collective and SUPRA Disability and Inclusion Network have been working hard with the opening of the disability space at the end of this year bringing a lot of hope for the future of the collective and network, and building a large and diverse generation of disabled

activists and a growing disabled community on campus. Disability Inclusion Week 2023 was the best we've seen yet, and we're super proud to bring you our first jointly funded and produced *Disabled Honi*.

We thank our amazing contributors for their tireless work, thought and care for the edition. There are many articles to highlight but we think that you will enjoy **Lisa Gronich and Sandra Kallarakkal's** investigation into disability inclusion at our campus, **Jade Barclay's** exposition of what genuinely inclusive research methodology looks like, and **Theodore Tsolakis'** explainer on person-first versus identity-first language to get you thinking about disability pride.

Activism does not stop when the year comes to an end. Through collective organising, we can tear down the disabling barriers we face.

What is Disability?

People with disabilities are defined as those “who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. as per the *United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).

Disability can be permanent or temporary, visible or invisible. And in the context of higher education it's important to appreciate that having a disability does not mean one is less suited to be a university student, it just means that one might need accommodations and support to achieve academically.

Discrimination on the basis of disability is prohibited by the federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*, these laws enshrine in law the rights of disabled students to access education “on the same basis” as non-disabled students.

You have the right to:

- Use an assistive device or mobility aid
- Be accompanied by a carer, interpreter, reader, or an assistant
- Be accompanied by a guide or hearing dog or other trained assistant animal
- Access reasonable adjustments for lectures, tutorials and assessments so that you are not disadvantaged by your disability
- Access lecture materials in a format that you can understand
- Seek redress for abuse or harassment on the basis of disability

Inclusion and Disability Services (IDS)

IDS is the main point of contact for accessing disability accommodations during your study. Some of the adjustments they can arrange include:

- Assessment and exam adjustments, including extra time, smaller exam rooms and use of a computer.
- Timetable adjustments
- Alternative formatting
- Access to assistive technology
- Lecture support

Contact Inclusion and Disability Services:

Phone: +61 2 8627 8422

Email: disability.services@sydney.edu.au

Fax: +61 2 8627 8482

GET IN TOUCH

This publication was made possible by a collaboration between the Students' Representative Council (SRC) and Sydney University Postgraduate Students' Association (SUPRA). Get in touch with us via email at:

SRC: disabilities.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

SUPRA: disability@supra.usyd.edu.au

Leading disabled scholar appointed to School of Health Sciences

Khanh Tran reports.

Former Assistant Policy Director of the Disability Royal Commission Shane Clifton speaks on his four years in role and future work at the University of Sydney.

Associate Professor Shane Clifton has been appointed to an associate professorship at the Faculty of Health and Medicine. In 2010, Clifton had a spinal cord injury leading to incomplete quadriplegia.

Prior to his appointment, Clifton spent four years as a researcher and Policy Director at the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability or the Disability Royal Commission.

Clifton's ties with Sydney University dates back to 2013 when he joined the University's Centre for Disability Research and Policy as an honorary associate to write *Crippled Grace: Disability, Virtue Ethics and the Good Life*. He was also interviewed by Disabled Honi last year in an article on virtue ethics and disability.

Talking to *Honi*, Clifton is frank about the lack of justice for disabled people in Australia, with ableism, "paternalistic and dehumanising attitudes" driving violence and abuse on disabled people.

"What has stood out to me most in my four years at the Commission has been the strength and resilience of people with disability and their families. This was apparent in the courage needed to share difficult stories with the Commissioners and the countless ways they have fought against the violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation perpetrated against them," he said.

"The nature and extent of maltreatment is shocking, as is the segregation and exclusion of people with disability from too much of mainstream Australian life."

Clifton is also noted for his campaign for academic freedom and support for LGBTQ+ inclusion in the evangelical Pentecostal Church when he resigned in 2018 after a protracted battle. Clifton was formerly Dean of Alphacrusis College, the theological seminary for the Australian Christian Churches and Assemblies of God, including Hillsong.

In the aftermath of the Disability Royal Commission, he urged governments, both state and federal, to implement its recommendations, especially with regards to the call for a disability rights act.

"Governments need to grapple with the report and implement its recommendations, and I hope they take the bold step of enacting a disability rights act."

According to Dr David Roy in *The Conversation*, a disability rights act differs from the existing disability discrimination laws in that it reverses the burden of proof in alleged discrimination from complainants to the defendant.

This includes changing how reasonable adjustment is structured



so that alleged perpetrators of disability discrimination take on the onus to prove that they did not discriminate. One major criticism of the existing reasonable adjustment regime from the Disability Royal Commission is that it creates "little incentive for employers, schools, service providers and other duty-holders to take active measures to prevent disability discrimination."

"Governments need to grapple with the report and implement its recommendations, and I hope they take the bold step of enacting a disability rights act."

Now, at the University of Sydney, Clifton wants to focus on the "happiness, strength and wellbeing of people with disability" in his research, including "strategies for attitudinal change and promoting an inclusive society".

"Disability studies is about life and its meanings, vulnerabilities and strengths and thus stimulates rich classroom conversation."

Sydney Law School establishes two scholarships for disabled students

Khanh Tran reports.

Established in recognition of two renowned disabled legal academics, the first cohort of David Benjafield Scholarship and Ron McCallum Interns will commence in early 2024.

Following the launch of a lecture series, the University of Sydney Law School has announced two scholarship programs for disabled law students. The two programs will offer paid work experience in the legal profession and students will get a chance to work in an organisation that helps marginalised and disadvantaged communities.

The David Benjafield Scholarship, named after Professor David Benjafield (1919-1980) who was a founding member of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission, he also presided as Dean and taught at Sydney Law School for more than twenty years. The Scholarship is open to both undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Law School.

"The goal is to help students navigate and challenge structural inequalities and lack of accessibility for disabled students in the legal field,"

Another program, the Ron McCallum Internship Program, takes its name after Emeritus Professor Ron McCallum. Both provide an opportunity for a disabled law student to work with organisations, including community legal centres such as the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC).

McCallum is the first totally blind academic to secure a full professorship at any university in Australia or New Zealand when he was appointed as the inaugural Blake Dawson Waldron Professor of Industrial Law in 1993. He also served as Dean of Sydney Law School for five years between 2002 and 2007 and was a special advisor to the Disability Royal Commission.

Established in 1982, PIAC is a renowned community legal centre offering free legal advice to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The body also provides legal support for public interest cases, including reforms to strengthen disability anti-discrimination laws.



Speaking to *Honi*, Sydney University Law Society (SULS) Disabilities Officer Lucas Kao said that the impetus behind the scholarship and internship programs were to represent and combat obstacles in the legal profession facing students with disabilities.

"The goal is to help students navigate and challenge structural inequalities and lack of accessibility for disabled students in the legal field," said Kao.

"In inspiration of their careers and the impact they have made, the two programs were made to honour them whilst hoping to build support for current and future generations of law students."

The organisation also has strong ties to student unions on campus, notably assisting the Students' Representative Council (SRC) in a successful case against the University of Sydney on HIV discrimination between 1993 to 1996 soon after the Disability Discrimination Act came into force. The case ended in a settlement and the University retracted its previous position of effectively barring students who tested positive to HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C from graduating.

Expression of interest for the two programs will open in late October or early November this year. The first cohort of David Benjafield and Ron McCallum interns will take their positions in the first half of 2024.

The Hidden Disability Flower and what it means

Gemma Lucy Smart reports.

You may have noticed folks on campus wearing some interesting green lanyards with yellow sunflowers on them. These are not just a pretty accessory, they are a sign that someone has a hidden, invisible or non-visible disability. It's all part of the Hidden Disability Sunflower Initiative, which the University has decided to formally partner with from 2023.

Certain disabilities, medical conditions, or chronic illnesses may not be readily apparent. This lack of immediate visibility can pose a challenge when it comes to comprehending and acknowledging the legitimate need for support in individuals with "invisible" conditions, as the disability remains hidden from view.

Hidden Disabilities Australia describes The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower as "a simple tool for you to voluntarily share that you have a disability or condition that may not be immediately apparent – and that you may need a helping hand, understanding, or more time in shops, at work, on transport, or in public spaces".

Daniel Smith, Project Manager, Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), at the University of Sydney explains why the University decided to join the Hidden Disability Sunflower Initiative:

"We're proud to join the growing number of workplaces and institutions that support the Hidden Disability Sunflower Initiative in Australia. Supporting this initiative is part of our commitment to students, staff and visitors with disability outlined in our Disability Inclusion Action Plan. We want members of our community with hidden disabilities to feel supported during their time at the University – the Sunflower Lanyard is a great way for people with disability to identify themselves should they need a little extra help, understanding, or more time."

Individuals with non-visible disabilities make an autonomous choice to wear the sunflower as a way to communicate with those around them that they may have access needs. Student disability advocates were central in securing the University's commitment to the initiative.

Rosie Bogs, Faculty of Medicine and Health (FMH) student and the DIAP Implementation Committee's Postgraduate Coursework Representative shares why they were keen to get the University on board with the initiative:

"Wearing a sunflower lanyard gives me the extra confidence to ask for help when I need it from people who recognise its significance. It's important to me that they were recognised on campus because uni is a big part of my life - and so are my disabilities. It gives me a sense of community, too."

So, what do you do if you encounter someone wearing a Sunflower Lanyard? It depends on context. If you're simply passing someone in a public area or sitting next to them in a lecture hall, you probably don't need to do anything. If you're in a service role, teaching, or running an event, reach out to folks wearing the lanyard.

"We want members of our community with hidden disabilities to feel supported during their time at the University - the Sunflower Lanyard is a great way for people with disability to identify themselves should they need a little extra help."

A respectful and effective approach when initiating a conversation with someone is to say, "Hello, I noticed you're wearing a sunflower lanyard. Is there anything I can do to assist you today?"

Pay close attention and take cues from them regarding the support they require. Avoid inquiring about their specific disability or making assumptions about their abilities or needs. Instead, focus on offering solutions (if they want them) and being considerate. If the person has a caregiver present, address the individual with the disability directly.

Respect and kindness go a long way.

Where can I get a sunflower lanyard?

Sunflower lanyards are provided free of charge to the University community.

Students can get a lanyard through the University's Inclusion and Disability Services team, the SRC, or SUPRA.

Staff can get a lanyard by emailing the Diversity and Inclusion team:

diversity.inclusion@sydney.edu.au.

National Institutes of Health designates people with disability as a population with 'health disparities'

Hūhana Jade Barclay reports.

On 26th September 2023 the National Institutes of Health (NIH) officially designated people with disabilities as a population with health disparities. The NIH is the largest funder of medical research in the world, and specifically monitors minority health and health disparities research, but until now the organisation has not included funding or monitoring for the health disparities, discrimination, or intersectional barriers faced by disabled people.

It seems that acknowledging and researching health disparities comes as a natural consequence for groups that fight for civil rights, and this delay is no surprise as disability rights are a long way behind the rights of BIPOC, gender, and LGBTQAI+ communities.

This new designation comes with two bonuses:

(1) New funding opportunities for research into understanding and addressing the intersecting impact of disability, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status on healthcare access and outcomes.; and

(2) Revising the NIH's mission statement to remove the phrase "reduce illness and disability". As we don't say "reduce gender" or "reduce race", this will be more inclusive of the disability community who have raised concerns about the eugenicist undertones of the old phrasing.

Public consultation is open now until 24 November 2023 to suggest more inclusive updates to the NIH mission statement.

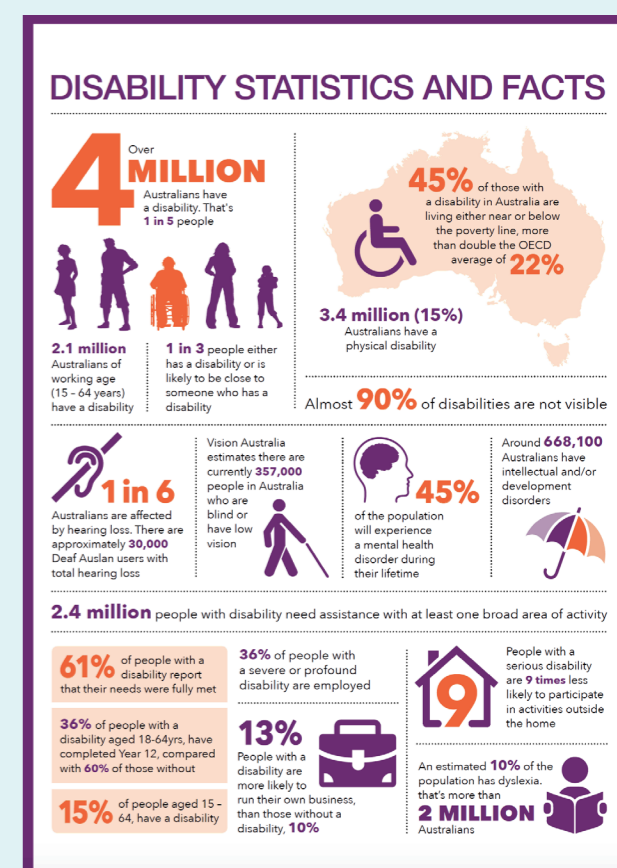
"The NIH now acknowledges that people like me exist, that we face health disparities, and that our health and lives are worth living in. While it may seem like a formality, as a disabled First Nations woman in STEM, living with and researching disability and health disparities, [I've seen the] blind spots and data deserts."

The NIH now officially acknowledges that people like me exist, that we face health disparities, and that our health and our lives are worth investing in. While it may seem like a formality, as a disabled First Nations woman in STEM, living with and researching disability and health disparities, I have directly seen how this lack of designation has led to blind spots and data deserts in medical research and healthcare



services.

This development news is freeing, and brings relief and hope. It frees up people like us to be a little bolder, speak a little louder, and stop wasting precious time and energy constantly justifying things that are obvious to those who live and work in those intersectional blind spots.



Do You Even Accessible?

Gemma Lucy Smart ranks the best and worst buildings for accessibility.

“They’ve got enough money for a meditation room, but not for a lift that works. I’ve complained so many times.”

Isaac, Sex Education Season 4.

Sound familiar? Season 4 of the glorious TV series ‘Sex Education’ brought us some well earned disability representation – including the deep and consistent frustration with the lack of building accessibility at a rich and outwardly inclusive institution. So after swearing at a broken lift yet again I decided our buildings needed a thorough and seriously satirical investigation to rank them. Because who doesn’t love a hypercompetitive critical academic lens applied to inanimate objects that can’t defend themselves?

So here they are, our best and our worst as voted by you dear readers **drum roll please**

BEST

Abercrombie Building (ABS)

Lush staircase AND working lifts? What a dreamboat. Leading the charge for the best buildings on campus is the signature social media ready home of the Business School. The ramp to the front of this one is as inviting as, well, a really good ramp and decidedly worth the bumpy trip TO it. All the rooms have accessible features and if you’re lucky you even get to have a class in one of the trial multifunctional teaching spaces that have diverse seating options and a funky layout. ABS, you sexy thing. In case you’ve not found this treasure yet, ABS can be found on the corner of Abercrombie Street and Codrington Street, and she has a cafe inside so it’s worth a visit.

9/10

Sydney College of the Arts (SCA, Old Teachers College)

A bit of a dark horse entry, for one of the older buildings on campus SCA punches above its accessibility weight. It gives you the world class aesthetics of a heritage venue we all know we partly went to this University for, and if you can work out the entrance (why are there ramps to the stairs? Where is the main ramp?). The lifts are turtles, not hares – but they work, there are hearing loops in most rooms, and the accessible bathrooms have automatic doors!



‘The look of love’: USU Board Doyenne Alexander Poirier

As former SRC Disabilities and Carers Officer Robin Eames tells me the fact that they announce when you’re using them is ... less than ideal but hey I don’t know maybe you like everyone knowing you’re about to pee I don’t judge.

8/10

The Conservatorium of Music

The Conservatorium of Music gets a special mention for being 100% accessible which means between SCA and the Con our artistic and musical colleagues are onto a good thing here. Only drawback is I’ve been by Conservatorium Students’ Association President Alexander Poirier that the lifts take 10294720842037 hours to move one floor because they also have to move pianos. All the signage in the building has tactile braille though, even the Students’ Association, so the Conservatorium gets a free pass for having to move big delicate objects and not just disabled students. Turns out it’s a symphony of accessibility in there.

7.5/10

Honourable Mention: The Charles Perkins Centre: what can we say, we like our grand staircases at the University of Sydney. Pair them with working lifts made of glass and you have another case of *delightfulitis*. Plus they do cool interdisciplinary work to improve global health in that building, always a bonus. Close to RPA, sporting accessible features and a concierge... *meow* what a catch.

WORST

Wentworth Building

Taking out the crown for worst building on campus is the home of the SRC, the Wentworth Building. As Disabilities and Carers officer Khanh Tran quotes: “As much as I hold the Langford Office and the SRC very close to my heart, the serial lack of windows, crumbling ceiling and dangling wires is a hazard waiting to pounce. This is before mentioning the woefully unreliable old lifts at the back of the building. Meanwhile, the maze inside the second floor is almost as if I’m in a game of Pacman.” I’ve also been known to swear at the lifts in this building, and the sushi place deserves an accessible entrance dammit.

3/10

The Quadrangle

She may be pretty, but once you scratch the surface it’s a hot mess. Ah the beautiful but inaccessible Quad. Jewel of Camperdown and nightmare for those of us with mobility issues, or needing an accessible bathroom, or like, basically human. Some rooms on the ground floor have been made accessible and props to the University for this, but there are large parts of the building that cannot be accessed except by the most spritely and able-bodied among us, and the room numbering is a nightmare. Perhaps some of the Engineering buildings or Wallace should be taking this spot, but the Quad is in our promo material, and

we deserve better.

3.5/10

The Chemistry Building

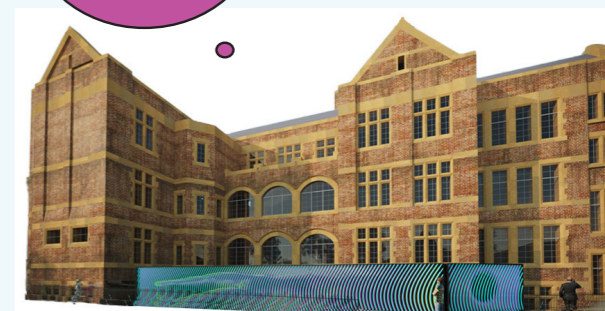
Old, hot, stinky. Do we even like Chemistry anyway? Just kidding, I love my chemistry colleagues and reckon they deserve better than a confusing rabbit den of a building with a temperature regulation problem. As Disability Inclusion Action Plan Postgraduate Representative Rosie Bogs quips: “What is with that gigantic bottom step? and why is the ‘warning’ label on one side only? you can see it on the way up but not the way down. It’s also painful to find the lifts in that place.” I know I’ve spent more time than I would have liked walking round in circles in that building!

4/10

Dishonourable Mention:

The Holme Building houses many things including SUPRA and while it is definitely a cut above the home of the SRC, its accessible features are often lacking or broken. The Courtyard Cafe gets a tick for good food, but time in the naughty corner for consistently blocking a clear path to the tiny lift.

4.5/10



Inaccessible Institutions?

Sandra Kallarakal and **Lisa Gronich** investigate the barriers to disability inclusion in universities.

Universities view themselves as places for ‘highly gifted’ members of society. Getting a degree is commonly viewed as the outcome of passing a series of academic obstacles, often many at once, under intense stress and scrutiny. Being able to pull off these hardships, fulfil them, and exit the other side unscathed is what a good student is expected to have done by the end of their time in university. Completion and acquisition of a degree is thereby an acknowledgement of their ability to survive this tough environment and emerge victorious on the other side. When a student does not meet these expectations set out by the university, it is seen as a defect of the student, rather than of the institution or system itself.

In Australia, universities are bound by the federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and Disability Standards for Education 2005 (DSE) to ensure higher education is accessible to disabled students. Universities are legally required to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled students to remove barriers and make tertiary study as accessible as it is to their non-disabled peers. However, there is a lack of structural and institutional support afforded to ensure such adjustments and accommodations are implemented — much of the onus in ensuring access to these adjustments is placed on the shoulders of disabled students themselves.

Universities base their support of a student’s disability through student registration with the university’s accessibility and disability services. Within this context, registration is evidenced by a clinical diagnosis. This already poses many problems for students trying to access support. Getting a diagnosis is often an incredibly time-consuming and sometimes very expensive process, and is therefore not readily available to

everyone who requires it.

Diagnoses, especially for chronic and mental illnesses, often also cannot be given instantaneously, as they require a person to be experiencing difficulty over a long period of time in order to qualify. Whilst there are valid reasons that the system of diagnosing a condition is set up this way, in a university context it leaves those struggling from an undiagnosed disability unsupported, often for years at a time.

If a student is unable to seek a formal diagnosis, either due to essential commitments, cost, lack of disability awareness or because of how taxing the process inherently is, then they are left to rely on simple extensions and the kindness of lecturers to attempt to support them throughout the semester. A formal diagnosis can unlock a world of potential adjustments and accommodations for a student, and can be the difference between passing or failing a course, a semester, or a whole degree.

After acquiring a diagnosis and registering for accessibility accommodations, the next step is a meeting between university support staff and the student affected to figure out what accommodations are needed. This meeting is important in understanding how a condition uniquely affects a student, however, in practice, this meeting can easily become one of the student trying to prove how their disability affects their ability to participate in university to the support worker. This often involves having to put on a persona that emphasises their disability and having to view past experiences through a medicalised lens of disability in order to justify the request for

accommodations.

This process removes a large degree of agency from the student experiencing difficulty, and their whole journey to accessing support for their disability is mediated by others in a way that neglects their self-determination. They must receive a diagnosis from doctors, be validated in their struggles by university support staff, and receive adjustments ultimately decided on by the university itself.

Moreover, the effectiveness of adjustments available to disabled students depend heavily on what students’ needs are. Gemma Lucy Smart, Sessional Academic at the University of Sydney and SUPRA’s Disabilities Equity Officer, explained that the system is straightforward if students’ access needs are.

“For instance, if a student requires assistive technology and it’s standard then they will get access to that no issue and it’s wonderful.”

Theodore Tsolakis’ experience reflected this. As a blind Law student at USyd in his first year of a JD, Theodore is able to use his own assistive technology customised to his preferences for exams, with his academic plan (AP) requiring he receive readings as accessible Word documents and lecture slides as PowerPoint slides. He noted that these adjustments, as well as exam accommodations, were usually “very easy to arrange”.

More complex situations and needs require further support. However, a majority of adjustments available for students tend to be generic blanket provisions, and not always inherently geared toward the individual. For example, assessment extensions are a common adjustment available through APs. While this adjustment can be helpful if a student needs extra time to complete tasks due to health reasons or carer commitments, if a student has trouble initiating

tasks, extra time doesn’t help them initiate tasks, and oftentimes it can result in putting off tasks for longer.

Hannah Rose, a third-year Arts student, noted that while Inclusion and Disability Services (IDS) can easily facilitate extension adjustments, other barriers, such as attendance requirements, are harder to accommodate.

APs can mention that a student’s attendance may be disrupted due to their disability, and that this should not be taken as a student showing disinterest or lack of commitment in the unit. Depending on the supporting medical documentation, the AP may advise university staff to ‘take this into consideration when reviewing their attendance record’ or to apply ‘relaxed attendance requirements’. However, this does not guarantee any directly actionable adjustments. An adjustment like this can easily be missed by staff – it only informs them

that special considerations will be approved. As Robin Eames, PhD candidate and former casual staff member at USyd, explained “disability services and special considerations run on separate systems and aren’t built with fluctuating or episodic disabilities in mind.

“I’ve had a special cons application rejected because an emergency ward discharge report for a dislocated shoulder didn’t specify a period of debility.”

These complex overlays of multiple different systems also mean that information about a student’s disability and the accommodations required does not always find their way to the people who need to implement these accommodations.

Theodore also noted that he has had to often justify his requested adjustments in receiving hard copy exam papers in Braille.

Sydney Medical School was removed from his position as a Unit of Study coordinator due to a dispute over disability exam adjustments, where he maintained that access to these adjustments granted to students meant that those students did not meet Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency’s (AHPRA) accreditation guidelines. Similar sentiments exist in other professional and prestigious degrees with attached accreditation boards, such as Law and Engineering, although it is likely such sentiments fly under the radar.

Smart notes that while an optional Disability Confidence Training is available to staff, it is often booked out. She highlighted that a new training module is currently in development for staff to ensure they are equipped with the necessary knowledge to navigate disability adjustment systems and understand their formal policy obligations. Hopefully, this helps curb

Universities are legally required to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled students to remove barriers and make tertiary study as accessible as it is to their non-disabled peers. However, there is a lack of structural and institutional support afforded to ensure such adjustments and accommodations are implemented.

of the issue, rather than enforcing any solution to this problem that has already been identified due to a student’s disability. Rose’s experience reflected this.

“[Attendance is] particularly tough with classes that [also] have a participation mark as part of the overall grade of the subject. Because when I can attend, sometimes being able to speak up in class can be physically as well as mentally challenging. So then the teacher would mark my participation poorly, assuming I wasn’t trying. I feel like I shouldn’t have to explain that my flare ups or exacerbations of my disability which make it difficult for me to attend class are unpredictable and I can’t plan them,” she explains.

As Rose’s experience highlights, disability adjustments are also often based on a static view of students’ conditions. If it is not static, students are referred to special considerations. However, there is no certainty

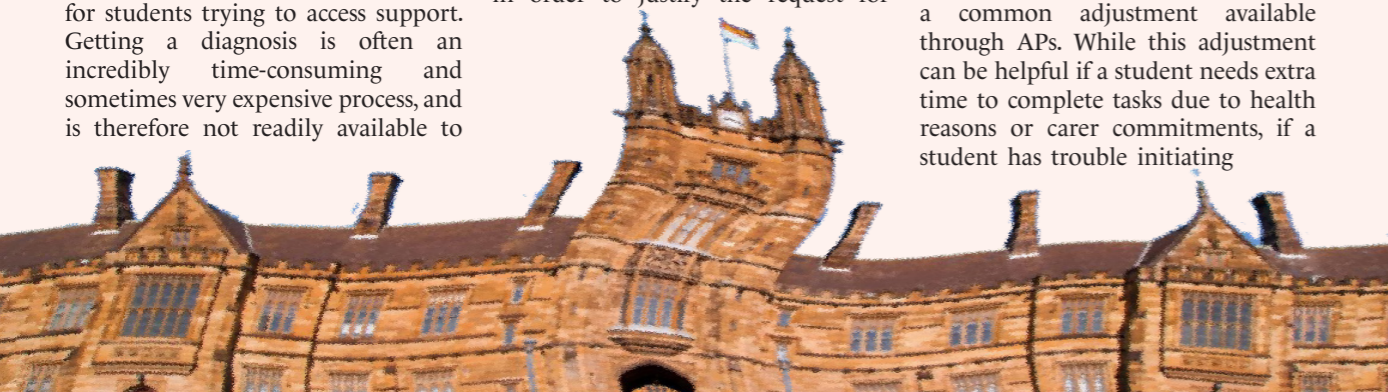
“I’ve gotten the question “do you really need that?” on more than one occasion to which I’ve had to reply “yes, I do [for reasons depending on the particular unit], my AP says I’m entitled to it, and I’ve requested it far enough in advance that there should be adequate time to prepare it,” he said.

Inconsistent levels of staff understanding on disability adjustments is a problem endemic at the University. Smart notes that some staff view APs as optional, rather than a necessity for disabled students because they do not “fully understand their obligations under University policy and the DDA”. This lack of understanding speaks to a larger issue surrounding disability adjustments – the myth of a ‘disability con’.

The presumption that people are ‘faking’ disabilities to gain unfair advantages, ‘disability con’ can undermine the implementation of disability adjustments in APs, even after being approved. Just last year, an Associate Professor at the University of

‘disability con’ conceptions.

Despite the many misconceptions about the needs of disabled students, the silver lining is that Disabilities Officers working at Inclusion and Disability Services genuinely care about their work and do their best to advocate for provisions to help disabled students. The problem lies not with them, but more so in the rigid structure that disability accommodations must follow, and the flawed administrative systems in place to deal with disability. Hopefully, by following the lead of frontline staff and respecting the self-determination of those with disability, we can work to eradicate some of the barriers that disabled students face in accessing accommodations that help them participate in university life.



Disability, Disabled, Different: Demystifying the Disarray

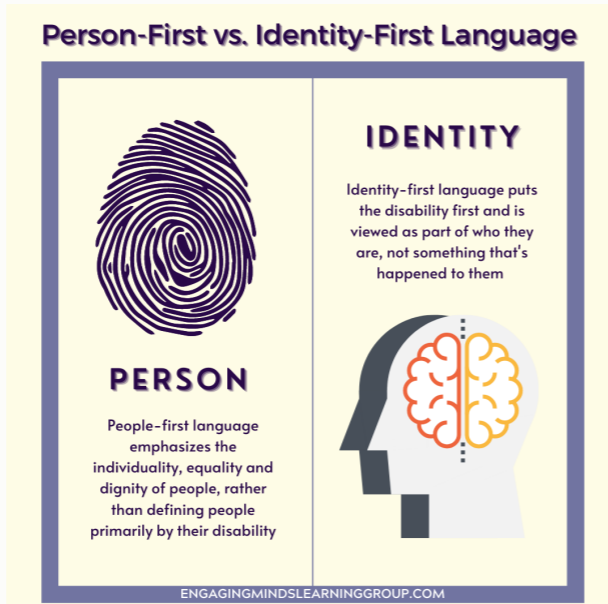
Theodore Tsolakis dissects the differences between identity-first language (PFL) and person-first language (PFL).

There are — in general — two ways of referring to people with disability. Why isn't there consensus, and which method should you use?

One approach, which is called person-first language (PFL), involves using phrasing such as “people with disability” and “person who is blind”. Its most vocal proponents include governments and some organisations that provide advocacy for people with disability. They say that it reduces the stigma surrounding disability by avoiding objectifying language so that people with disability are viewed as individuals who are first and foremost people who “just happen to have” a disability.

“I believe that the optimal strategy when communicating about disabled people is to use the language that the particular person or group prefers; and in cases where there is a lack of consensus, it is best to include a mix of PFL and IFL.”

Academics have argued that this framing will lead to people who do not have disability having a more positive impression of those who do. Supporters of PFL also claim that focusing on personhood will ensure that people with disability are not viewed as a homogenous group. Finally, they suggest that this phrasing may result in people with disability having a more optimistic attitude towards society and their place within it.



Person-first vs. Identity-first language

PFL is contrasted with identity-first language (IFL), which involves phrasing such as “disabled people” and “blind person”. Its proponents, who are largely disabled people and advocacy organisations led by disabled people, point to the lack of evidence that PFL reduces stigma and the recent suggestion that it might actually have started intensifying stigma. They also claim that a double standard has been created because PFL is only used to refer to disabilities and medical conditions, while IFL—with the notable exception of “people of colour”—is used to refer to all manner of identity characteristics.

For example, contrast the phrasing “child with brown hair” with “brown-haired child”, “woman who is pregnant” with “pregnant woman” and “man who is middle-aged” with “middle-aged man”; the latter is undoubtedly much more frequent. Finally, opponents of PFL also point to the repetitiveness and clumsiness brought about by additional words.

Several groups of people with disability began to use PFL in the second half of the twentieth century of which the most famous is probably the PeopleFirst movement, which emerged in the 1970s,

but its rise to prominence occurred in the 1990s when some government publications and academic journals mandated that it be used and that IFL be avoided. I, a disabled person, only became aware of the controversy when a nondisabled person reproached me for referring to someone using their preferred language. It seems that PFL has reached a level of saturation in the academic community that its use today is to an extent motivated by political correctness and conformity, with some people thereby committing the ad populum fallacy. The issue with mandating PFL is that it does not account for the possibility that—just as with other movements to modernise language—it is not universally endorsed by those concerned. There are large communities of disabled people who oppose it, the most vocal of which are the d/Deaf and autistic communities, but there are also individuals with other disabilities who eschew it.

The University’s Inclusive Language Guide warns that it is “critical to avoid” IFL, but it seems appropriate to wonder whether forcing PFL despite its persistent and widespread opposition is the most inclusive approach that could be taken. Some publications note the controversy around PFL but advise that it should continue to be used despite its opposition using

simplistic arguments which are riddled with logical fallacies.

In addition to PFL and IFL, euphemisms for disability in general and specific disabilities abound. While many such terms are no longer socially acceptable, some, such as differently abled, special needs, challenged and handicapable continue to be used by nondisabled people, even though a cursory

“I, a disabled person, only became aware of the controversy when a non-disabled person reproached me for referring to someone using their preferred language. It seems that PFL has reached a level of saturation in the academic community that its use today is to an extent motivated by political correctness and conformity.”

internet search for any of these terms would yield many articles decrying them.

These terms either inflate or downplay a disabled person’s needs and abilities, when in fact no two people—disabled and nondisabled alike—have the same needs and abilities, and people with certain disabilities would have far fewer needs in a world that is more accessible. There is also a small—but growing—segment of the disability community who have reclaimed euphemisms such as crip and mad, primarily to express pride and resilience with members of a like-minded community, but as with all other euphemisms, it is generally inappropriate for people who are not part of these groups to use them.

So, what language should you use? I believe that the optimal strategy when communicating about disabled people is to use the language that the particular person or group prefers; and in cases where there is a lack of consensus, it is best to include a mix of PFL and IFL. A media guide published by the Sydney University Law Society uses this approach, and some style guides produced by other organisations are also adapting to respect individual and community preferences.

Both PFL and IFL have an important role to play in increasing the social acceptance of people with disability, but the language we use to talk about disabled people is only one small piece of the puzzle.

Illustration courtesy of the NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

The infographic is titled 'Don't DIS myABILITY' and is divided into 'What's Hot' and 'What's Not' sections. It includes a 'Language Guide' section with a 'What's Hot!' and 'What's Not!' sub-section. The 'What's Hot!' section lists: 'Remember, the person always comes first! Use phrases like 'person with disability', 'person with an intellectual disability', 'person who is blind, etc.', 'Where possible, use the appropriate clinical name, e.g. 'person with schizophrenia', 'person with a mental illness, etc.', 'Say 'person who is little' or 'person of short stature'', 'Wheelchairs enable mobility, they don't confine people. Refer to people who use wheelchairs as 'wheelchair users'', 'Say 'unconscious' or 'in a coma'', 'The preferred term is 'seizure'', and 'People don't suffer just because they have a disability. Say 'has' instead of 'suffers from''. The 'What's Not!' section lists: 'Avoid terms beginning with the 'such as 'the blind' or 'the disabled'. Don't use words like 'abnormal', 'cripple', 'mongol', 'retard' or 'slow'', 'Don't use words like 'crazy', 'insane', 'lunatic', 'mad', 'nuts' or 'wacko'', 'Don't say 'dwarf'', 'Don't say people are 'confined to a wheelchair' or 'wheelchair bound'', 'Vegetables are what you cook and eat – not people who are unconscious or in a coma.', and 'Don't use words like 'fit' or 'attack''. The source is 'Family & Community Services Ageing, Disability & Home Care'.



The Promise and the Pain

words by Hūhana Jade Barclay

every day is a trade-off
between risking and reaching
speaking up or staying safe
living between the promise and
the pain

when our very existence
is exhausting
is contested
is paradoxical
is unreliable, invalidated,
disbelieved

when our health disparities
are so obvious and real
yet so unseen, undocumented,
dismissed

when we live between worlds
the kingdom of the sick
the kingdom of the well
invisibly in both
but not fully in any

when the burden of proof
the burden of education

the burden of paperwork
the burden of illness
the burden of existing
the burden of inaccessible
support
and unavailable accessibility
a thousand extra miles to crawl
before the starting line is in
reach

when this life, this world
this perspective and all it brings
the curiosity, the complexity
the insight, the oracles
the comfort with uncertainty
the systemic and unspoken
is obvious in our bones
but oblivious in our books

this precious life
this precious voice
this precious paradox
nestled between the promise
and the pain

Always Something

words by Gemma Lucy Smart

PART I

“It’s always something with you”
Always sick
You injured yourself again
Just an excuse, eh?
It’s getting old,
If I’m honest
You’re going to have to
Get over it
Grow up
Maybe this isn’t for you?
Not ‘cut out’ for it
Don’t bother me
No more
With your pain
If it’s real?
Cause let’s be real
It’s always something with you

PART II

“It’s always something with you”
I see the judgement
I make you uncomfortable?
With my illness
With my difference
With my ... disability?
Good
Get over it
Grow up
My body is human like yours
Vulnerable and physical
Interdependent not individual
Don’t bother me
No more
With your ableism?
Cause let’s be real
It’s always something with you

Painting the Pain

Composed by **Hūhana Jade Barclay** at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2019



“Warzones”



“Horizons”



“Everwrestle”



“Here”

Beyond the Royal Commission

Jack Scanlan examines what will happen after the royal commission.

Above me as I write this is a book shelf, and on that shelf in my peripheral vision is this purple blur. Above me is the 12-volume, 15 books, and over 6,000 pages making up the final report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (or the Disability Royal Commission) with 222 recommendations and dark purple spines staring down at me.

This royal commission was four years in the making, and it has brought a lot of pain but with its release there is hope in the disability community; hope for change, for justice, for a better tomorrow for disabled Australians everywhere. While the royal commission is dense and filled with thorough recommendations, the volume that interests me the most is the last one, Volume 12: Beyond the Royal Commission (Yes, I did shamelessly steal the name).

While this volume is more filled with recommendations on how the government should measure the effectiveness of policy implemented, the

“The question all disabled activists and allies might be asking is: ‘What is beyond the royal commission?’ and all that can be said is plenty of fighting ableism and winning the hearts of minds of the public and politicians for material change in the conditions of disabled Australians.”

one part of this volume that gets skipped over is making sure these recommendations get implemented. This volume can go on and on about implementation but that’s assuming the government even tries.

The Royal Commission is filled with recommendations, and as it says on the tin these are only recommendations to the government. From the Commission’s, the media, and most of the public the job of disability rights is done. The stories have been told, recommendations printed, and the government has launched a working group. The job is done, it’s time to pop the champagne.

But as any disabled activist will tell you: ‘this is just the start’. The Royal Commission is ONLY the first step, and is luckily the least political. The real fight is in

getting all of these policies implemented and fighting every politician in the way to get our justice and rights. This is the largest challenge we find, because what these recommendations do not talk about is the roadblocks, the price tag, the political capital, and the continual fight that is still needed.

Activists will start the fight for this but parliament is where these battles must happen and must be won. Parliament and the Government have primacy over the judiciary meaning if these reforms pass here the entire legal system will be shaped around this. If disability rights laws are proactive and not reactive we will have a government and a legal system that will provide the services, protections, and rights all disabled Australians deserve.

Already there has been push back, with politicians like Pauline Hanson and One Nations pushing back on NDIS funding and services offered describing the NDIS as a “scam” and a “rort”. None of the major parties (Labor, Coalition, Greens) have policies on a disability rights act, and the Greens are the only major political party pushing for desegregation of schooling and implementing all of the UN’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; but only by 2030.

The Albanese government’s policy has been more about stopping waste and fraud in the NDIS and NDIA which is needed but very little has been commented on what Labor will do other disability rights issues outside of the NDIS/NDIA.

The question all disabled activists and allies might be asking is: “What is beyond the royal commission?” and all that can be said is plenty of fighting ableism and winning the hearts of minds of the public and politicians for material change in the conditions of disabled Australians.

We have given our advice and told our stories. It is time for change, it is time to ramp up political pressure until change is seen. Until we have desegregated schools, a disability rights act, and see material change in the conditions and lives of all disabled Australians.

Accessible Thesis

Kia ora from Te Ao Meomeoa, The Land of the Dreaming.

I am Hūhana Jade Barclay. I am Ngāi Tahu.

I humbly acknowledge the diverse knowledges and sovereignty of all First Nations and displaced people and pay respects to the patients, scholars, healers, friends, and disability communities that have supported me throughout my PhD, and to elders past, present, and emerging.

To play a small part in creating a more accessible and just world, I choose to make my research accessible, open, and community-informed, and use open scholarship, and to share Kaupapa Māori research methodologies, and universal design principles wherever possible.

While academics and governments are starting to see the value in funding “lived experience” research and expertise in recent years, Kaupapa has a long history of putting community expertise and inclusion first in activism and research for both disabled and First Nations communities. Including and transcending co-design and the lived experience lens, Kaupapa Māori methodology adds an experiential aspect to knowledge generation and in essence is a combination of “nothing about us without us” and “with community, by community, and for community” and “*Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei*” “for us and our children after us.”

Here are a few ways we can bring an inclusive, sustainable, equity-driven spirit to all levels of research design and development, and how it has shaped my approach to my PhD research and teaching in practice:

Inclusive education, reflexive practice, universal design — reflect on positionality, power, implicit bias, and epistemic injustice, elevate erased or silenced voices from all forms of evidence, learn how to teach well and communicate effectively for CALD and neuro-inclusion.

Clinically-representative research sample — aim to include knowledge from diverse cultures and the most severely affected and mobility-limited participants who have been arbitrarily erased or excluded from traditional on-site single-disease research studies.

Person-centred gestalt design — consider the invisible sample: “who is centred, who is represented, who gets to speak, who is silenced, missing, or erased” from medical literature, clinical studies, population health, research samples, follow-up, and knowledge sharing.

Equity-driven data collection — prioritise the accessibility needs, culture, language, and convenience of the patient community over the convenience of the institution or research team.

Co-design, co-analyse, co-produced research — radically interdisciplinary collaboration with previously silenced or erased voices, prioritising community and researchers with relevant lived experience. Ensure each stage of the research is community-guided. This includes literature and involvement from disabled, BIPOC, neurodivergent, queer and intersectional authors, patient-scholars, healers, analysts, artists, students, community connectors, and data scientists.

Share accessible resources — speak like a real person, write for real people. Communicate discoveries clearly to scientists, health professionals, leaders, and intersectional patient communities. Use tools that make it effortless to read, watch, listen, remix, share, and translate.

Accessible knowledge generation, not just consumption — use approaches and tools that are open and accessible to me, and the community this research is conducted by, with, and for. Share the open approaches and tools I use, make it easy for those who want to do the same.



LOVE KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES ON THE SPECTRUM



Suhaila Mahafza sits down and watches 'Love on the Spectrum'.



The autistic community are frequently infantilised within discourse and pop culture, facing a stereotype of being “loveless” due to the burden of their disability. In addition to decades of poorly conducted research, this has contributed to a major taboo surrounding autistic romance and sexuality. Common phrases you may have heard thrown around include descriptions of neurodivergent people as ‘cold and lacking emotion’, ‘too honest to sustain a relationship’ or ‘too self absorbed to consider others around them’. Popular characters, such as Sheldon from US sitcom ‘The Big Bang Theory’ associate autistic people with immaturity and a lack of empathy.

However, just as television can perpetuate false narratives about the autistic community, it has recently shown its potential to offer genuine insight into autistic lives. The reality TV series ‘Love On the Spectrum’ offers a unique insight into dating and relationships amongst autistic people. The documentary series follows the experiences of autistic young adults in the dating world: setting them up on blind dates in hopes of connecting them in loving romantic relationships. It is my opinion that Love on the Spectrum lovingly confronts the challenges which many autistic individuals encounter, such as lacking an understanding of the nuance of romantic relationships, developing the confidence to leave their comfort zones, and offering unfamiliar people a deep insight into their world.

The show effectively breaks down “loveless” stereotypes about autistic individuals, embracing the personality and interests of its cast, and not attempting to suppress their character or autistic traits. It allows for autistic people who have struggled to form meaningful relationships to meet others who share their experiences, and find a partner (that may or may not end up as romantic). It amplifies the love and respect that autistic people convey to those around them, even if it may not be in a conventional form. Critically, Love on the Spectrum provides reflections of autistic people as loving adults; a wholesome and educational depiction that we sorely need more of.

However, Love On The Spectrum has been met with criticism in regards to its lack of diversity

and an inadvertent reinforcement of stereotypes. While the show makes an effort to portray autistic relationships through the eyes of each individual, unfortunately, the show often falls short. Episode narratives tend to direct attention towards their families and friends, and seem to include at least one highlight reel of a family member talking about their experience ‘having to deal with’ the negative moments in the lives of their autistic loved one. This promotes the outdated thinking associated with “Autism Awareness”, which problematises the behaviours of autistic people that are ‘burdensome’ to others in their lives. By viewing autism through the eyes of those who have to endure it in others, autistic individuals are deprived of agency. ‘Awareness’ implies neither listening or understanding. And while there is no denying that being a caretaker is not easy work, it is in this misguided focus that Love on the Spectrum does not always represent the autistic community in a supportive or accepting way.

Further, the series has been criticised for its undertones of “inspiration porn”. The show can unintentionally objectify autistic people into something more of a creature in the wild, rather than a human individual. It shouldn’t have to be such a massive deal for autistic people to form connections and express feelings of romantic love, sexual desire and even human respect no matter where they exist in the multidimensional spectrum. Many autistic individuals are already able to embody these concepts – it may not appear conventional, but the show must be careful not to sensationalise the experience they are attempting to normalise.

Ultimately, Love on the Spectrum serves as a valuable reminder that love knows no boundaries, and provides a valuable platform for the autistic community to share their perspectives. The show encourages us to approach neurodivergent experiences with care and authenticity. Its sensitive and informative portrayal of autistic individuals invites viewers to see beyond labels and misconceptions to appreciate the beauty of genuine human connections, regardless of neurological differences.

Migraine, more than just a headache

Simar Batra journeys through chronic pain.

I was first diagnosed with chronic migraine at twenty-two. Onset was sudden and debilitating. I’d wake up with an intense, throbbing pain that seemed to consume my entire head, making it impossible to get out of bed. Light and sound were unbearable. I often vomited from the pain. It felt like a vice grip was slowly squeezing my skull. But to the outside world, I looked perfectly fine. My friends, coworkers, and even some family members couldn’t comprehend the sheer torment I was enduring. This invisibility made it easy for them to question the validity of my pain.

Migraines, characterized by throbbing head pain, are more than just debilitating headaches. They encompass a spectrum of diverse subtypes, each with its own unique features and complexities. Understanding the distinctions between these migraine subtypes is essential for proper diagnosis, effective management, and providing support to those affected. In this exploration, we delve into the world of hemiplegic migraine, classic migraine, complex migraine, the common migraine, and vestibular migraine, shedding light on the wide array of symptoms and challenges that individuals living with these conditions face. From the transient paralysis of hemiplegic migraine to the disorienting vertigo of vestibular migraine, these variations offer a glimpse into the multifaceted nature of this often misunderstood neurological disorder.

This migraine’s sudden and unpredictable nature can lead to frequent work absences, reduced productivity, and difficulty maintaining a consistent work schedule. The symptoms, especially the aura in hemiplegic migraine and dizziness in vestibular migraine, can make it nearly impossible to concentrate on tasks. This migraine often leads to the cancellation of plans, impacting personal relationships and overall quality of life. Frequent medical appointments and the cost of medications can place a significant financial burden on individuals and their families.

The unpredictability and severity of this migraine may lead to job loss, as employers may not be able to accommodate frequent absences and reduced productivity. Individuals living with this migraine may struggle to secure new employment, especially in roles that require regular attendance and focus. Many people with hemiplegic and vestibular migraine are forced to change careers to accommodate their

health limitations.

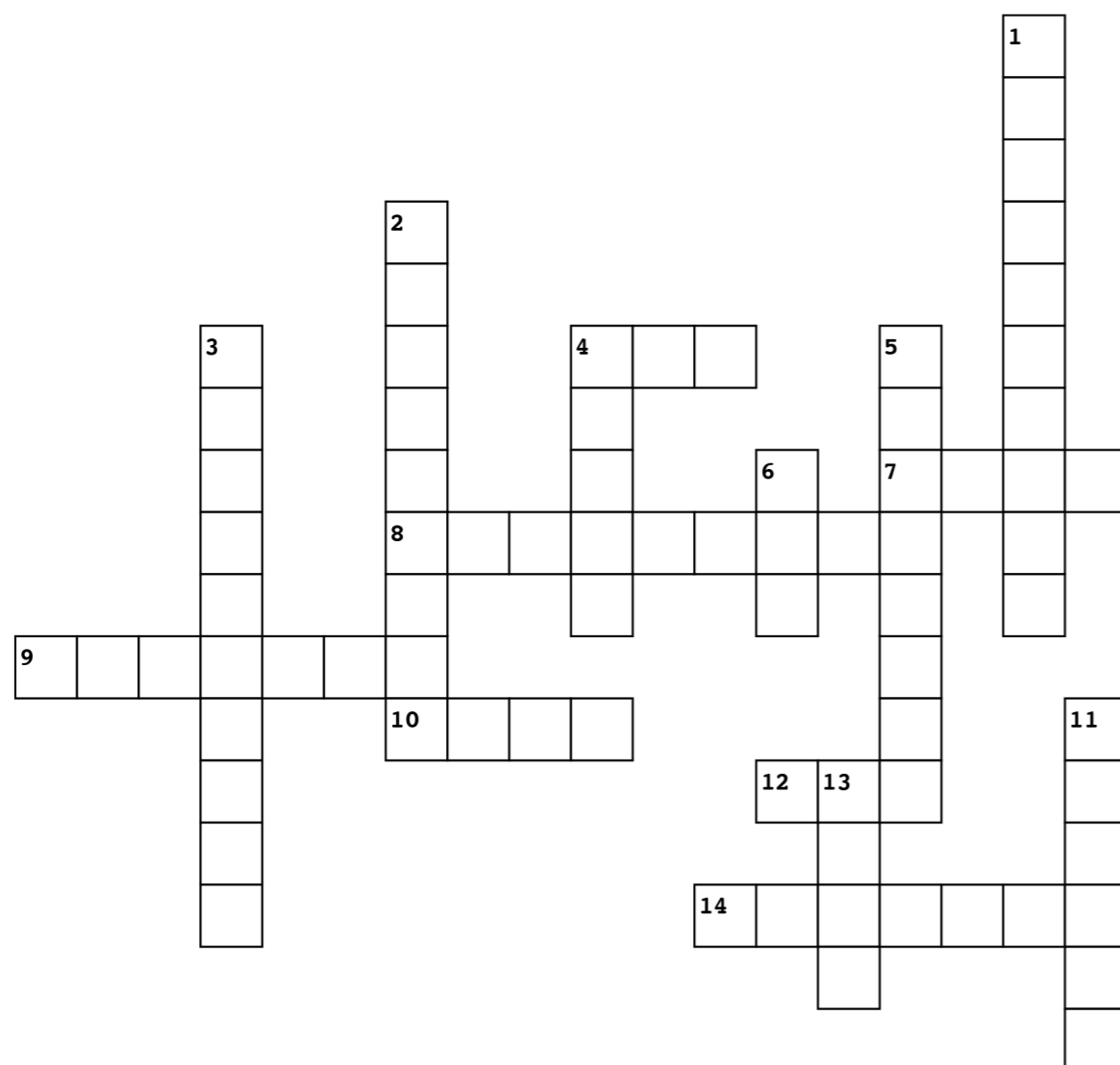
In the broader spectrum of society, misconceptions still shroud the silent agony of migraine. I remained burdened with the responsibility of proving the legitimacy of my suffering. In my unwavering resolve to bridge the chasm between chronic migraine and societal comprehension, I became an advocate for awareness.

I participated in support groups like Migraine & Headache Australia, shared my story on social platforms, and engaged in advocacy, striving to bring about change. My journey has revealed that, within chronic pain, the human spirit possesses a rare and resilient strength. Understanding, compassion, and the fortitude to battle invisible torment have become essential allies in the ongoing struggle.

Being a student with migraines often left me feeling isolated from society. The unpredictable nature of these debilitating headaches meant that I frequently had to miss school, social events, and even family gatherings. The fear of an impending migraine attack made it challenging to commit to plans or engage in extracurricular activities, leaving me on the sidelines while my peers enjoyed their experiences. The physical and emotional toll of migraines, coupled with the difficulty of explaining their intensity to others, further isolated me. It became a lonely journey, marked by canceled plans and the constant struggle to catch up academically. As I grappled with the pain and exhaustion, the sense of isolation grew, making me feel like an outsider in the bustling world of student life.

Life can be unpredictable and challenging, and for those of us living with chronic classic and complex migraine, it’s a journey fraught with emotional upheaval. Classic and complex migraine arrived unexpectedly, robbing me of vitality and turning life upside down. However, I’ve learned that resilience is a human strength. I continue seeking understanding, support, and effective treatments while forging a renewed sense of self and discovering that life can still be vibrant and meaningful.

Migraine may endure, but so does my commitment to shine a light on the hidden suffering within life. As I continue to tell my story and advocate for migraine awareness, I aspire to instill empathy, understanding, and a profound acceptance. This journey has unveiled the profound value of compassion, the intricate dance of emotions, and the enduring strength of the human spirit in the face of chronic pain.



Across

4. Student union responsible for undergraduates
 7. Condition where a person is unable to hear to a significant extent
 8. Number of years since the Disability Discrimination Act was passed
 9. Adjective describing raised or textured platforms for access
 10. Universal scheme for adjustments for disabled people
 12. Acronym for concept that there are more than one way of learning
 14. Language developed by a blind French educator

Down

1. Item that is used to assist mobility-impaired people for transport
 2. Percentage of disabled people who have a Bachelor's degree
 3. Concept involving making changes so that people can participate equitably
 4. Student union responsible for postgraduates
 5. Sultry, smoking gal mascot steeped in goss
 6. Animal often used to assist people
 11. Type of bird often found in urban areas
 13. Strategic plan required by state law at every public institution on disability inclusion

Stand With Niko Statement

We, the Students' Representative Council (SRC) Disabilities Collective and Sydney University Postgraduate Students' Association (SUPRA) Disability & Inclusion Network, condemn the University of Sydney and School of Psychology terminating Dr Niko Tiliopoulos' employment on the basis of his disability and ill health.

Dr Niko Tiliopoulos has been working at Sydney University for more than 16 years. If Dr Tiliopoulos contracts COVID-19, the condition represents an extreme risk for his health. For more than three years, he has been successfully teaching remotely due to his conditions.

A University spokesperson told Honi Soit that Dr Niko's circumstances do not fall within its disability accommodations.

"Unfortunately, in some cases it is not possible for an employee with a disability to perform the inherent requirements of their position."

We at the SRC and SUPRA say that this is a disgraceful and shameful statement. It is blatantly discriminatory. The University is effectively offering either death or loss of employment to a longstanding, beloved member of our university community.

Many other universities deliver rigorous and high-quality online education, some with decades in the

trade, think the University of New England with its flagship distance education programs. This includes the University of Sydney itself with a for-profit \$13,700 coding bootcamp delivered entirely online and an entire suite of premium online-only postgraduate degrees released this year.

It is hypocrisy of the highest order.

How can the University claim that it cannot accommodate Dr Niko's conditions being a matter of life and death when it offers online-only and partially online degrees?

Staff with disabilities do not deserve to be treated this way. Dr Niko does not deserve to be treated this way.

The University of Sydney says that it is committed to the Disabilities Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) which is required by state law. However, the termination of Dr Niko's contract betrays the very spirit that drives DIAP.

We stand in solidarity with Dr Niko Tiliopoulos and wholeheartedly support the National Tertiary Education Union's (NTEU) campaign and petition demanding the University of Sydney to reverse its decision and allow Dr Niko to continue teaching remotely immediately.

In solidarity,
 Khanh Tran, Gemma Lucy Smart and Jack Scanlan



Dr. Niko Tiliopoulos faces being fired for his disability. The University is refusing to allow Niko to teach remotely. If Niko catches COVID-19, his health is at extreme risk.

**[betteruniversities.work/
stand-with-niko](https://betteruniversities.work/stand-with-niko)**



SCAN TO SIGN HERE!

Dr. Niko Tiliopoulos has been teaching at the University of Sydney School of Psychology for sixteen years. Beloved by students, since 2020, he has been shielding from COVID-19.

We demand that Sydney University immediately reverse its refusal to accommodate Dr Niko and respect staff with disability.



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