

THE QUAD



ADMIN



THE ARTS





# Acknowledgement of Country

*Honi Soit* is produced, published and distributed on the stolen land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. Sovereignty was never ceded. For over 235 years, First Nations peoples in so-called 'Australia' have continued to suffer under the destructive effects of invasion, genocide, and colonisation. As editors of this paper, we acknowledge that we are each living, writing, and working on stolen Gadigal, Wangal and Bidjigal land, and are beneficiaries of ongoing colonial dispossession.

We acknowledge that the University of Sydney is an inherently colonial institution which is not only physically built on stolen land, but also ideologically upholds a devaluing of Indigenous systems of knowledge and systematically excludes First Nations peoples. We recognise our complicity in such systems. We strive to remain conscious of, and actively resist and unlearn, colonial ideologies and biases, both our own and those perpetuated by the University and other institutions like it.

As a student newspaper, we pledge to stand in solidarity with both First Nations movements and all Indigenous struggles toward decolonisation worldwide, endeavouring to platform Indigenous voices. *Honi* is committed to countering the exclusion, censoring, and silencing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in mainstream media.

Always was, and always will be Aboriginal land.

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## Editorial

Ariana Haghighi and William Shakespeare

Julius Caesar  
Act I, Scene 2

**Honi Soit:** Students at USyd!

**Students:** Ha! Who calls?

**Mark Scott:** Bid every noise be still. Peace yet again!

**Students:** Who is it in the press that calls on me? I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music, Cry "Students!". Speak. Students are turned to hear.

**Honi:** Beware the Ides of March!

**Students:** What newspaper doth approach disguised?

**Honi:** Beware the Ides of March. Beware wage theft. Beware the police at Mardi Gras. Beware the healthcare system. Beware what lies underneath. Beware faux-feminism in literature. Beware unbookable rooms. Beware stupid white bastards.

**Students:** He is a dreamer. Let us leave him. Pass.

## Letters

Hi Honi,

*I've found myself in the unfortunate predicament of thinking about the Coalition's nuclear energy yapping. My modest proposal is that we should not build small modular reactors, we should build a really big not-at-all modular reactor (RBNAAMR for short) in the middle of a metropolitan Liberal electorate.*

*A serious proposal should be put together for this, including very detailed plans about how exactly to bulldoze their electorate. Then watch their voter base cry and have the coalition shut the fuck up about nuclear once and for all.*

*Thanks for listening to me shout into the void!*

*Riding a metaphorical bulldozer,  
The Big "Fish-killer" Wind Lobby*



## Cartoon Caption Contest



Cartoon: Anthony-James Kanaan

This Week

Submit your best caption for the above to [editors@honisoit.com](mailto:editors@honisoit.com) for a chance to WIN and be published in the next edition! Winners receive a personalised limerick from Angus McGregor.

Winner: "The hell did you put in this herbal tea, doc? My pubes are going haywire."  
— Ollie London

Winner's reward, as promised:  
*There once was a student who left for London,  
They disappeared all of a sudden,  
When their roommate abandoned them,  
They sat everyone down again,  
To tell them, "He had such gumption."*



Cartoon: Alexandra Angus

Last Week



Cartoon: Anthony-James Kanaan

"WIG!"

## Culture Guide

### Wednesday 13 March

News From Home, 5pm @ Goodspace Gallery, Chippendale  
SUDS Presents: 'RED' (continues until March 23), 7pm @ Cellar Theatre, Camperdown  
FilmSoc Screening: 'Streetwise', 5.30pm @ Carne Lecture Theatre, RMC Gunn Building  
Biennale of Sydney: Cakes Da Killa + C Yalla & Webmaster, 7pm @ White Bay Power Station, Rozelle

### Thursday 14 March

Ekphrasis: A Midsummer's night poetry reading and zine launch, 5pm @ Goodspace Gallery, Chippendale  
Rough as Guts exhibition and RAG zine launch, 7pm @ Mothership Studios, Marrickville  
ART FOR THE END TIMES with Highly Strung Puppet (ArtsLab), 8.30pm @ 107 Projects, Redfern

### Friday 15 March

Honi Soit's 'Ides of March' screening, 3-5pm @ secret campus location  
PULP x VERGE - Writing for Performance, 12pm @ Verge Gallery

### Saturday 16 March

PULP Issue 13 launch, 7pm @ Glebe Hotel, Glebe  
DJ Please b2b Ben Fester, 9pm @ Club77  
Paddy's Gay 2024, 8pm @ Imperial, Erskineville  
Jus Diddit: The Gatho, 6pm @ Pari Ari, Paramatta  
Full Flower Moon Band w/ Sunfruits + G.U.N. @ Metro Social, Sydney

### Sunday 17 March

Louise Bourgeois exhibition (continues until April 24) @ Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney  
SAD DYK3 SUNDAYS, 4-10pm @ The Bearded Tit, Redfern

### Monday 18 March

Israeli Apartheid Week Screening: 'Roadmap to Apartheid', 5.30pm @ campus location (TBD)



"Thank god, someone made a playlist for this exact situation"



"I just think you should do a useful degree instead of Arts!"

Cartoons: Khushi Chevli



## Sydney's call for justice in Palestine resounds in 21st week of protests

*Luana Lima reports and photographs.*

Amidst the vibrant heartbeat of Sydney's Hyde Park, a passionate chorus resonated on Sunday March 3, as Palestine Action Group opened their 21st consecutive protest, rallying under the banner "Hands off Rafah! Stop the genocide!" This protest coincided with the collective mourning over the Flour Massacre on February 29, as attendees carried bloodied sacks of flour in a poignant protest.

Co-chair Jana Fayyad delivered a harrowing account of the Flour Massacre, speaking to the Israeli military opening fire on hundreds of people waiting for food aid in Gaza. Fayyad highlighted the dire humanitarian crisis, with people in the north of Gaza resorting to eating animal feed due to the aid blockade, and condemned the Western media's misleading coverage, articulating Israel's actions as human rights violations: "We have now reached a time in humanity where the most expensive bag of flour costs 118 human souls."

The speakers echoed the sentiment that the struggles in Palestine are interconnected with broader issues of colonialism and racism. Fayyad linked the Palestinians' grief with the ongoing pain of Aboriginal communities: "With every Palestinian baby massacred by Israel, I think of every Aboriginal baby that was slaughtered... With every olive tree destroyed, I think of this land, once thriving, now a lifeless infrastructure fueled by Western capitalism."

This struggle for justice and sovereignty was echoed by Meyne Wyatt, a Wongantha-Yamatji artist and activist. Wyatt drew parallels between the Australian government's demonisation of Palestinians and Aboriginal peoples, condemning the police state's actions and demanding justice for Aboriginal deaths in custody, including Kumanjaji Walker and David Dungay. He decried the gaslighting attempts by the Albanese government for both causes, emphasising the need for accountability: "Do not forget, do not forgive! We will not when it comes down to the voting polls!"

Fayyad then made a moving tribute to Aaron Bushnell, a US Air Force serviceman who self-immolated in protest outside of the Israeli Embassy against the US' complicity in the Palestinian genocide. Fayyad made a parallel to the historical significance of Turkish street vendor Muhammad Bouazizi's self-immolation in 2010, which sparked the Arab Spring.

Co-chair Dalia Al-Haj Qasem condemned Australia's complicity in the violence through its military exports to Israel and its recent decision to halt funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). She

questioned Foreign Minister Penny Wong's horror over the Flour Massacre, stating, "Where was your horror, Minister Wong, when a UN report revealed the sexual assault of Palestinian prisoners?" Al-Haj Qasem emphasised that Israeli military offenses were not confined to Gaza alone, exclaiming how in the past month, "Israel has launched airstrikes in eastern and south Lebanon. Shame!" She demanded tangible actions, including cutting diplomatic ties with Israel and imposing sanctions.

Sarah Shaweesh, founder of the 24/7 picket outside Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's Marrickville office, stated that "as long as Gaza is occupied and its people slaughtered", the complicit Labor, Liberal, and Family First parties "shall find no peace either". Shaweesh called for the election of the Greens, "who have come to visit us day in and out at the picket." Speaking for Families for Palestine, Shaweesh demanded an immediate ceasefire, the cutting of all ties to Israel, the reinstatement of UNRWA funding, and the Palestinian right of return worldwide.

Eddie Shepherd, a Jewish member of Tzedek Collective, stated that

dissociated from the history of Judaism and the inherent traumas of genocide. She invoked the Jewish concept of B'tzelem Elohim — the idea that every human is created in the image of God — as well as the Jewish value of nourishing others to conclude that Zionism "is in contempt of human life." Shepherd vocalised Tzedek's demands: "an end to Jewish ethnic supremacy and racism, an end to theft and destruction of land, the right of return for Palestinians, and the self-determination of Palestine."

Lebanese barrister Mahmud Hawila accused the Labor Party, "who tried shutting down this protest," of complicity in genocide, pointing

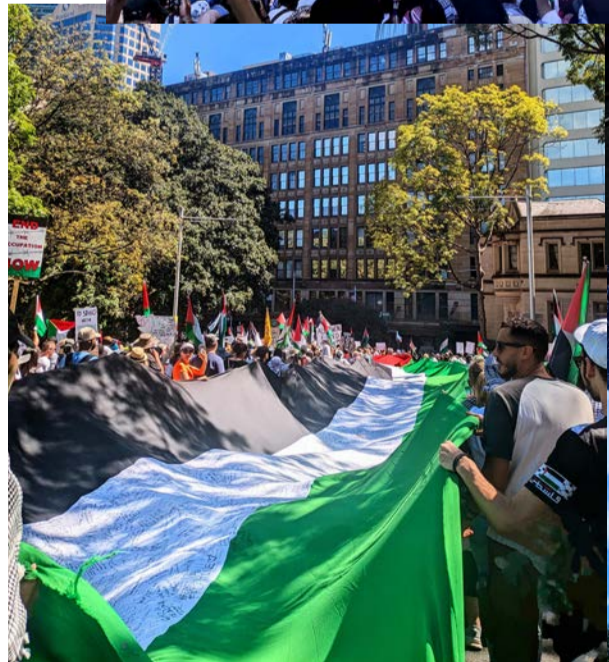
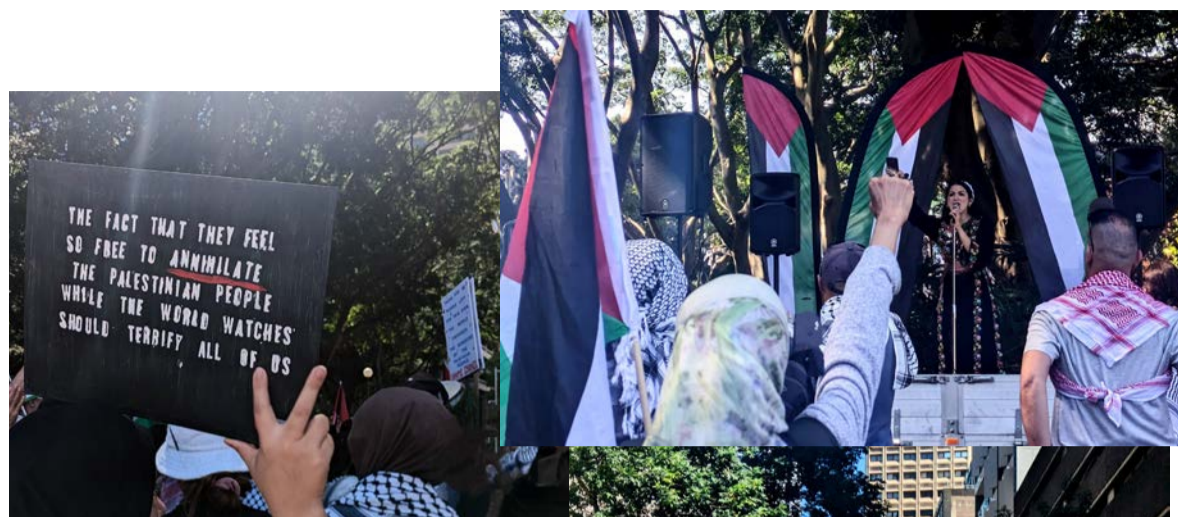
defence contract with the Australian government, Hawila argued that the Labor Party is "responsible for every bomb dropped, every shell fired, and every life lost." He stated that Australia needs to stop providing F-35 bomber plane parts to Israel and sending troops to bomb Yemen. He concluded the speeches by stating that "Palestine is a story, and it has a victorious ending. The story ends with a free Palestine, from the river to the sea."

Attendees then marched around Town Hall, disrupting the CBD with the chant, "while you're shopping, bombs are dropping." Amidst the sea of voices calling for justice, a lone individual exclaimed "Go Israel" while giving the finger.

In a statement to *Honi Soit*, Jana Fayyad emphasised the Palestinian liberation movement's determination "after 140 days of genocide, and over 21 weeks of protesting", vowing to continue lobbying "until Australia cuts all ties with the illegal Israeli occupation [and] war criminals such as Anthony Albanese and Penny Wong — who have had a direct role in the massacring of 30,000 Palestinians — are no longer leaders of this country".

As the protest ended at Hyde Park, Fayyad's call to action reverberated through the crowd, inviting attendees to a vigil honouring the martyrs and starving children of Gaza on March 20, reminding that "our power is in our numbers". She declared that the Palestine Action Group will persist in protesting through the Holy Month of Ramadan, affirming, "if we know anything about the terrorist state of Israel, during Ramadan, they increase their atrocities", and "we must continue showing up for Palestine."

to Australia's funding, military intelligence, and provision of military supply to Israel. Given Israeli company Elbit Systems' new \$917 million



## Maths prerequisites will no longer be required for multiple degrees

*Angus McGregor and Zeina Khochaiche report.*

Starting in 2025, two unit Mathematics prerequisites will no longer be required for admission into multiple University of Sydney degrees.

Prerequisites will no longer be needed for Commerce, Science, Medicine, Psychology, Veterinary Science, and Economics degrees. These subjects are HSC courses that universities proportionately deem as compulsory for eligibility and entry into certain degrees on offer.

Prerequisites will still be required for Engineering Honours, Advanced Computing, and Pharmacy.

Two unit Advanced Mathematics prerequisites were introduced by the University in 2019 for 62 single and combined degrees in an attempt to encourage students to take higher levels of mathematics in high school and raise academic standards for undergraduates.

However, there was a 10% drop in NSW students who chose to take Advanced Mathematics between 2018 and 2023 while the simpler standard course saw enrollments increase slightly over the same period.

The trend of students taking more general Maths courses is not restricted to NSW. Victoria experienced a 15% decline in enrollments for their Specialist Mathematics course between 2017 and 2022.

Vice Chancellor Mark Scott pointed to this decline in HSC Advanced Mathematics enrollments as the primary reason the University is shifting their policy: "Through no fault of their own, many students don't

have the opportunity to take advanced mathematics at school — a situation exacerbated by ongoing maths teacher shortages that affect some schools more than others."

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education) Joanne Wright said that disparity was clearer for those students living outside urban areas: "Schools in regional and remote locations are significantly less likely to offer Advanced and Extension Mathematics."

To maintain an incentive for students to take advanced maths, students who do will now receive one point towards their selection rank under the University's Academic Excellence Scheme if they receive a Band 3 or above. Previously, the scheme was awarded based on a Band 5, Band 6 or E4 accreditation. However, from 2025 students may now be eligible to receive adjustment factors that the University will update soon.

"All our students will have access to early and personalised, general and faculty-specific Mathematics support as they embark on and complete their degrees", according to Wright.

Support in the forms of preparatory workshops and bridging courses will be facilitated by the Learning Hub. Within certain units of study, group sessions and individual support from staff and peers will be provided.

Wright also noted that Mathematics becoming compulsory in 2026 for all HSC students will help raise the standards for those entering university. However, only Standard Mathematics will be mandatory under the new rule.

## UNSW postured to scrap trimester system

*Angus McGregor reports.*

After an internal review and years of concerns from staff and students, UNSW is likely to end its controversial trimester system and return to a semester timetable in line with all other Australian universities.

Introduced in 2019, the trimester system was designed to give students greater flexibility while also allowing some students to graduate earlier. Instead of a long midsemester break, the campus would be used all year.

Students would take up to three subjects in three ten-week terms as opposed to four subjects in two 13-week semesters. The total length of the academic year increased, and summer and mid-year breaks got shorter.

According to then-UNSW Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Professor Merlin Crossley the change also resulted in fewer timetable clashes, fewer scheduled classes, and a reduced exam load. "It's reduced the pressure on campus and allowed us to reduce the number of early morning and evening lectures," he said.

Minutes from an academic board meeting show that an internal review last year concluded that the system

"must change."

The 2023 review found that students in a trimester system had 40% less time for paid work and 41% less time to participate in extra-curricular activities on campus. Further, 63% of students reported that the system impacted their ability to socialize with friends from different universities.

Over a thousand students protested trimesters when they were introduced. Students and the NTEU argued the change was a money making exercise rather than a genuine attempt to increase student outcomes.

Associate Professor Richard Vickery, UNSW NTEU branch president, said that any changes should not be committed unilaterally. "Last time there was no proper consultation with students and staff... it's essential that it happens this time."

Almost all of the students *Honi Soit* talked to said they supported a return to semesters. One said that "having fewer exam periods" would reduce stress and workload while another said longer breaks would "allow me to travel and see friends more consistently."

## Forum calls for abolition of USyd residential colleges

*Khanh Trinh reports.*

Student activists from the Feminist Liberation Collective (FLC) called for an end to the University of Sydney's residential colleges at a forum that addressed a nearly century-long history of sexual violence and hazing.

Dashie Prasad, a member of the FLC and former USyd SRC Women's Officer, pinpointed a long history of elitism and nepotism as a key culprit behind universities' chronic inaction on residential colleges.

"The Vice-Chancellors at Sydney have actively backed the Colleges and very few have done anything to actually hold out sexism. This university has a long history with the colleges," Prasad said. "The Vice-Chancellors have an affinity to people who historically had and will likely continue to fund the institution, the colleges and will send their children here."

Bart Shteinman from Labor for Ending Homelessness concurred with Prasad, describing universities like USyd as "unaccountable corporations" and criticised universities' lack of affordable rooms for international students considering the nation's housing crisis.

"Why can universities bring over hundred of thousands of international students but no obligation to house any of them? There is really a lack of requirements from governments to force universities to think about their priorities."

Systemic inaction was a recurring theme cited by activists throughout the event. In 2018, the landmark Red Zone Report was released by End Rape on Campus following fierce criticisms of the 2017 Broderick Report voiced over Broderick's "limited" terms of reference and "sanitised" response to sexual violence in university colleges.

Similar heat was also levelled at the 2017 National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), when the Commission refused to publish campus-specific data and failed to include recommendations.

Panellists also expressed cautious optimism in response to the federal government's endorsement of a National Student Ombudsman. Although current USyd SRC Women's Officer Eliza Crossley supports the

plan, she said that an Ombudsman "having teeth" is an "oxymoron" and that the endorsement represents only a "small" win.

According to the federal Ombudsman Act 1976, although the Ombudsman wields substantial investigative powers, it cannot enforce recommendations and has a high threshold that complainants must meet to demonstrate that an investigation is necessary.

Siobhan Patton from Action for Public Housing said that despite Australian Labor's "solid power in all jurisdictions", the governments were "not necessarily willing to use their levers against the housing crisis". Having lived in a residential college at the University of Queensland, she said that colleges across the country shared a common sense of entitlement.

"The entire structure [of residential colleges] is irredeemable. For the most part these are old institutions whose forte is predominantly old school types. Whenever there were challenges to that culture, whether it was rape culture, doing anything that went outside the line of tradition, there was all sorts of obfuscation," she said.

Later this year, the NSW Greens, spearheaded by Jenny Leong MP, are set to launch a private member's bill to "abolish the colleges" and "create truly safe and accessible housing". Motivated by the opportunity, there was a unanimous consensus among panellists that student activists need to bring new students and members of the public to break through years of regulatory inaction.

For Prasad, it means "pushing for Labor to care about the abolition of the colleges". They pointed to the success of the years-long Placement Poverty Campaign in securing a recommendation from the Universities Accord calling for universities and employers to pay students for compulsory placements.

"I think increasing recognition of the radical roots of this campaign is really supporting this campaign. The more we talk about it, the more we advocate for it, this really brings us forward."

## USU CEO Andrew Mills resigns

*Angus McGregor and Ariana Haghighi report.*

University of Sydney Union (USU) CEO Andrew Mills has resigned after three years of service, effective March 11.

According to a statement by USU Board President Naz Sharifi, "The USU is in the process of appointing an interim CEO whilst we finalise our recruitment process for Andrew's successor."

Before working at the USU, Mills was the CEO of Arthritis Australia

and came from an economics and marketing background.

Mills was appointed in February 2021 after a four-month search, arriving with a focus to oversee the USU's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan.

Sharifi thanked Mills for his service to the USU and "wish[ed] him the best in his future endeavours."

*Honi* will continue to report on future developments.



## Casual academic refused work by the University of Melbourne

Angus McGregor reports.

A casual academic has received compensation and a public apology in Federal Court after the University of Melbourne admitted she was unfairly refused work after asking for increased hours.

The academic was allocated 12 hours a week for casual support work, but requested 5 more hours a week to complete her tasks.

She was refused further work on February 9 2021 after the request was made.

The refusal followed an August 2020 meeting where a supervisor told the casual that “if you claim outside your contracted hours, don't expect work next year.”

The Fair Work Ombudsmans took the University to Federal Court, arguing the University took adverse actions against the casual for exercising her

rights under the Fair Work Act.

The parties agreed to a penalty of \$37,295. The casual and another worker have already been compensated by the university.

Represented by barrister Richard Dalton KC, the university admitted fault in court today and acknowledged the process of evaluating the workload of casuals was insufficient. Dalton also said the university had implemented several reforms targeting how casuals were overseen to prevent similar issues in the future.

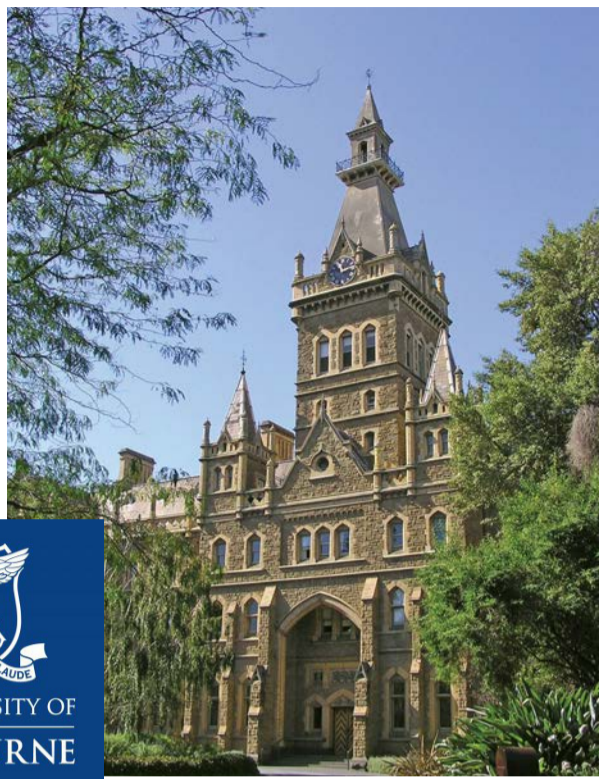
Dalton argued that there is no evidence to suggest the supervisor intentionally violated the Fair Work Act, but rather that it was a mistake caused by assuming the employee had adequate time to complete their tasks.

Fiona Knowles, representing the ombudsman, told the court the threat

to terminate the employment of the casual was menacing and created a hostile work environment.

In a separate Federal Court action, the ombudsman is alleging another 14 casual academics were underpaid between February 2017 and December 2019.

The total underpayments are alleged to be \$154,424 with each staff member possibly entitled to between \$927 and \$30,140.



## New Griffith University payment system creates ‘financial pressure’

Angus McGregor reports.

A new payment system adopted by Griffith University failed to pay casual workers on March 7 leading to a dispute with the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU).

The system requires employees to agree on timetables and then submit fortnightly timesheets documenting their hours. New layers of approval have also been introduced to verify the timesheets.

Many casual employees did not receive their contracted timetables by March 7th and therefore were unable to submit timesheets for approval.

Those casuals did not receive any pay.

According to a report by the NTEU in November 2023, Griffith University has been responsible for \$2,566,655 worth of wage theft since 2014, which has impacted 664 staff members.

NTEU Queensland Secretary Michael McNally said in a statement that after an emergency meeting with impacted staff the union spoke with senior management.

The University has agreed that “any casual staff member who has not been paid today because they could not apply for payment will be reimbursed

for any financial hardship caused or exacerbated by their non-payment,” McNally said.

The University also agreed to send out a message to all impacted staff to inform them of the issue.

Libby Meyer, a casual academic who teaches music, said the delay in payment “has caused stress and financial pressure that should never have occurred while supposedly employed by the university.”

Meyer also said that she felt “disrespected” for having to ask when

she will be paid.

Another casual academic, Scott Patterson, who teaches sociology and migration law, said that the administrative mistake has “forced people who have had regular deductions from bank accounts for rent, mortgages, day care, child support, school fees etc. into overdraft.”

“I am now relying on charity for cheap groceries, friends to pay for petrol so I can actually get to work, and [my] family have paid my rent. I am one of the lucky ones.”

## Snap rally opposes Tony Abbott on campus

Sandra Kallarrakkal reports and photographs.

Students gathered in front of the Great Hall today as part of a snap rally action opposing former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott's appearance on campus. Abbott and podcaster Konstantin Kisin were invited to speak by the Sydney University Conservative Club.

Co-chaired by student activist Eddie Stephenson and SRC Education Officer Grace Street, the snap rally started with short speeches and chants outside Fisher Library, encouraging students to join the protest. Street noted that “Tony Abbott may think he's still welcome here because he was a student, but he was a St John's student of the colleges that we hate.”

Students then marched to the Great Hall chanting “Tony Abbott go to hell, take the Liberals there as well.”

At the Great Hall, Stephenson began the speeches by highlighting the proliferation of racist, xenophobic and homophobic policies espoused by Abbott during his time as prime minister, “[he made] ‘stop the boats’ the catch-cri of Australian racism and conservatism still to this day.”

Addressing Abbott's history with misogyny and homophobia during his time as SRC President as well as during his term, Tim Duff, SRC Queer Officer, said it was “absolutely shameful that [Abbott] would dare show his face a couple days after what should be a celebration of queer joy.”

Duff went on to say that when such views and culture were brought to his government “it's not a wonder that he had so little women in his cabinet, it's no wonder that his policies looked [as they did] because he made them here, he designed them here.”

SRC Vice President Deaglan Godwin spoke to Abbott's “defence of Australian imperialism”, highlighting that during his prime-ministership Abbott “oversaw the continued Australian involvement in the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan”. Godwin also brought attention to the importance of building “a movement against the far right: against racism, against injustice, against genocide.”

Several students were seen to be directed by Conservative Club executive members to the side

entrance of the Great Hall due to the rally.

Following the speeches, the rally marched to the other entrances while chanting against Abbott.

It was also reported that many of the ‘Abbott Off Campus’ posters put up yesterday were torn down early this morning.



## Cheers from NLS, heckles from SAlt – what's new at March SRC?

Angus McGregor and Simone Maddison attend SRC council.

Kicking off at 6:22pm, this month's Students' Representative Council (SRC) meeting was in no way timely or efficient from the outset — and it would remain that way until quorum was declared ‘lost’ at 9:59pm.

On this month's agenda were discussions around next steps for the Palestinian liberation campaign, support for the Trans Day of Visibility 2024, the role of police at Mardi Gras and solidarity with the Tiwi Traditional Owners engaged in a legal battle with Santos in the Federal Court. For these three and a half hours, Honi Soit watched on with shock, horror and some admiration for the 37 councillors gathered in New Law Lecture Theatre 026.

But before all of this fun, the meeting began with a series of resignations. Jacklyn Scanlan (NLS) resigned as General Secretary, Daniel Holland (NLS) as Refugee Officer, Annabelle Jones (NLS) and Deaglan Godwin (SAlt) as Vice Presidents, Jack Lockhart (NLS) as Environmental Officer, and Jasmine Donnelly (NLS) from the General Executive.

The resignations were triggered by an internal Labor Left (NLS) dispute which saw Jacklyn Scanlan removed from NLS, causing a broader factional reshuffle in multiple positions. Most of the members who initially resigned renominated, and were elected unopposed to their original positions. Rose Donnelly (NLS) replaced Jacklyn Scanlan as the new General Secretary.

The meeting then turned to motions, starting with Jasmine Al-Rawi (SAlt) speaking to motion P4, which called on members to debate the future of student activism for Palestine and the upcoming protest on March 15. Al Rawi called on every faction “that calls themselves left wing [to show] what they are doing to build for the movement.” Lucas Pierce (SAlt) concurred, quoting the last words of Aaron Bushnell, who recently immolated himself in protest outside the Israeli embassy in Washington, as a call to arms for students to do more to face the ongoing genocide. Ethan Floyd (Grassroots) pointed out that the University has consistently silenced pro-Palestinian activism on campus and that Indigenous-Palestinian solidarity “is stronger than it has ever been.”

Many speakers, including SRC President Harrison Brennan (Grassroots), argued that the millions of dollars worth of military aid being sent to Israel was evidence that the Australian government is directly complicit in the genocide.

SAlt speakers targeted Grassroots and NLS across the debate, arguing their activist stance was insufficient and not radical enough. In response,

Holland argued that recent protests led by SAlt have created a “hostile environment for no other reason than showing your credentials.” Grassroots speakers pointed to their own leafleting in the first weeks of semester and their support bringing collectives to rallies.

In response to SAlt's claims that the SRC should not run any other campaigns beyond those fighting for a free Palestine — an argument we heard a lot about during last month's Council — Rav Grewal (Grassroots) called out the faction's attempts to build for their annual Marxism Conference in recent weeks. Despite Deaglan Godwin's (SAlt) heckles, Grewal pointed out that “campaigns can build off each other”, and that “SAlt agrees with me.” He also noted that there will only be one forum on the history of the Palestinian left, and that it is also “in the last time slot.”

Without skipping a beat, Deaglan told councillors that “I am proud to build the Marxism conference. Student unionism in this country is in dire straits. It is in dire straits because of the politics of the Labor factions, and the politics of factions like Grassroots.”



After the P4 motion was carried, Shovan Bhattarai (SAlt) moved motion Q1: “The Higher Education Accords Have Always Been Shit.” Maddie Clark (SAlt) argued that engaging in the Accord process was not going to help further the goal of free education. “The government should spend more money helping students,” said Clark, “the Accords process is not going to help with that.” Activism on the street, Clark argued, was the only tenable path. Other SAlt speakers condemned the Accords as an inherently capitalist process.

Brennan defended the Grassroots submission to the Accords, arguing it was “actually quite radical.” Brennan then called on the government to provide free education and end sexual violence on campus. Brennan also pointed out that SAlt has refused to engage with a campaign on education this year.

Gerard Buttgieg (NLS) defended aspects of the Accord final report, saying it “made very important

recommendations” such as the establishment of a National Student Ombudsman, increased Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) payments, and paid placements. “If you're not at the table, you're on the menu,” Buttgieg said.

After a ten minute break, the third motion moved, P1: “Oppose changes to the Confirmation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identity Policy” was discussed. Floyd condemned the policy as an attack on First Nations students by making it harder for them to get the support they need while on campus. Grace Street (Grassroots) pointed out that the policy was already causing some First Nations students to lose their scholarships during a cost of living crisis.

More heckling between SAlt and Grassroots about the nature of activism consumed the room before the motion was carried without opposition.

The next motion, P2: “The SRC supports the Tiwi Traditional Owners who took on Santos in the Federal Court,” responded to a ruling in favour of Santos after the Tiwi Traditional Owners sued the mining corporation

over the approval of plans to drill the Barossa gas field. Environment Officer Jordan Anderson (Grassroots) summarised the intent of the motion, “our aim must be to push for Enviro justice and First Nations justice and [be] in opposition to Santos and the Labor government.” Floyd agreed, arguing that the case proves that “fossil fuel companies are deeply embedded within our institutions.”

Buttgieg condemned those in the Labor movement who supported the Santos project calling for an “end [of] the fossil fuel industry,” and the motion was carried shortly after without opposition.

The council then discussed accessibility in student unions. Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) Officer Olivia Lee (Unity) said it is “not controversial” and Disabilities Officer Victor Zhang (Engineers) seconded the motion, saying it aligned with the goals of the Disabilities Collective.

The conversations derailed into a fight about the events at NatCon earlier this year, with SAlt accusing NLS of

conspiring with Unity to block actions on Palestine. NLS responded, blaming a “right wing” faction of Unity for the lack of action on Palestine. NLS then blamed the Victorian faction of SAlt for giving support to Unity during NatCon. The motion was then carried.

Esther Whitehead (SLA) then spoke to P5: “Endorse Trans Day of Visibility.” Whitehead condemned the pinkwashing occurring in Gaza and emphatically attacked the police for their continued violence against the Queer community.

Jamie Bridge (SLA) read a submission from a queer student who raised concerns that their ability to receive gender affirming care is crushed by “needless bureaucracy that forces our identities into boxes.” Strong applause followed the speech and the motion was carried.

Tim Duff (SLA) moved the next motion, P6: “No Cops at Pride - Disarm, Defund, Dismantle the police.” They said “it is abhorrent that the Mardi Gras board wields their corporate interests through queer issues” and pointed to recent victories like the ‘No Cops, No Bigots’ snap rally on March 1 and the tearing up of the Police Accords.

Shovan Bhattarai (SAlt) defended their amendment to the motion which called on the SRC to not engage with the Mardi Gras board or with any corporate institution. Yasmine Johnson (SAlt) said “Mardi Gras is a total farce... fucking glampol. It is a corporate party.”

Bridge defended the original wording of the motion, arguing their strategy has gotten thousands of people into the streets to fight for queer rights, “this is not about just getting enough left-wing people onto the Board... this is about building a left-wing movement.”

Anderson also spoke in favour of the original motion, questioning the pro-police narrative that is still dominant in the Australian media. They reminded the Council that “as activists, we must recognise that the police are a pro-capitalist, pro-colonial and anti-queer force.” Whitehead went on to highlight the “visibility of this campaign”, asking “are we not allowed to claim what we have left?”

Bridge's claim that SAlt only “show up to our rallies to sell your magazines” caused the room to erupt in shouting and heckling yet again, with Maddie Clark (SAlt) attempting to settle scores by holding up an edition of her faction's publication Red Flag — which ironically had flipped to a page advertising the aforementioned Marxism Conference. In the end, the motion passed despite SAlt's decision to abstain from voting.

And with that, the second meeting of the 96th SRC meeting came to a close as Grassroots and NLS quickly pulled quorum. The thermostat may have read 27°C and our eardrums may never recover, but at least we got out before midnight (the bar is impossibly low). Stay tuned for more Council next month!



## A monopoly on violence: Police firearms in Australia

Angus McGregor reflects.

The alleged murder of Jesse Baird and Luke Davies by Constable Beau Lamarre-Condon over three weeks ago has become an obsession in the Australian media. The Sydney Morning Herald alone has run over a hundred stories digging into every possible detail in a way reminiscent of how the media covered the disappearance of William Tyrrell.

The oversaturated coverage of this situation contrasts with the absence of media attention and ongoing public silence regarding the many other deaths caused by police officers. There were over 110 deaths in police custody last year. 31 of the victims were Indigenous. While most in Sydney could name Jesse or Luke, almost no one could even name one of those victims.

Discussing the murders in the context of policing towards the queer community is important, especially when the police continue to march in Mardi Gras despite opposition from queer groups. How police commissioner Karen Webb handled criticism, quoting Taylor Swift's "Shake it Off", was dismissive and arrogant. However, perhaps the more important story is how an off-duty officer could use his service weapon in a crime.

The NSW police force carries the

highest-powered handgun available in the country, the Glock semi-automatic. Shockingly, the law allows police officers to carry their service weapons while off duty. The only restrictions are guidelines written by the Police Commissioner which are not open to the public.

The lack of transparency surrounding firearms has caused issues before. An audit in 2007 commissioned by then Deputy Commissioner Terry Collins found that between 1996 and 2007, 14 police Glockes had been stolen, seven of which were stolen from police cars. Only five of the 14 were recovered, meaning nine dangerous weapons entered the community because the police did not do their jobs. Disturbingly, there has not been another audit since, even though the underlying policies have not changed. It's reasonable to assume more guns have been lost or taken.

When you look at the alleged murders of Baird and Davies in the context of what they were, victims of domestic violence, the poor regulation of service weapons warrants even more scrutiny.

A 2023 Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) report into police responses to family and

domestic violence found that when a police officer has been subject to an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO), a form of restraining order, there has been almost no record of action to make sure they no longer have access to their service weapons.

The law theoretically requires any allegation of domestic violence to be followed up with a suspension of that officer's firearms license and the securing of their weapons. However, in practice, of the 39 AVO cases investigated, 36 included no information as to whether the weapons were secured. Some of those reports mention victims being afraid of the officers and report direct instances of verbal or physical aggression. The recent alleged murders are no longer surprising when community safety from the police is disregarded like this.

In response to the LECC report, the NSW police admitted that "there is no formal process for how local Commands record securing the service firearms of involved officers." They claimed it was up to "Individual Commanders" to decide about protocols. The LECC recommended the police keep records of when a risk assessment is completed and a record of who completes it, but NSW police rejected both ideas.

Australia has the means to crack down on the misuse of firearms. After the 1996 Port Arthur massacre, Parliament passed the National Firearms Agreement which brought back over 650,000 guns from the public and created a national firearm registry to track legally owned guns. Before any Australian can even own a handgun, a 28-day waiting time and complex background checks have to be passed. If the police are given a monopoly on violence to enforce stringent gun regulations on citizens, the least they could do is hold themselves to a similar standard.

Greens MP Sue Higginson asked Commissioner Webb in a parliamentary hearing if the alleged murders would spark a review into how the police monitor service weapons. Webb claimed there would be an internal review but as of writing, there is no indication there will be any independent inquiry.

The shameful response is unsurprising. The media coverage has bought into the myth that Lamarre-Condon is a bad apple in a largely good system. We still live in a country where the police are given the benefit of the doubt despite decades of violence and brutalization of queer and First Nations communities.

## Medicare's betrayal of the '1 in 9'

Lotte Weber wants answers.

Despite increased funding and efforts to meet the rising cost of care, Medicare continues to fail people living with endometriosis. Endometriosis, a disease where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows in other parts of the body, brings chronic pain to 1 in 9 women and those assigned female at birth (AFAB). Annually, endometriosis costs Australia \$9.7 billion, and over \$30,000 per person. In my case, it took a \$5,000 surgery just to learn I was part of that '1 in 9'.

In July and November last year, the Albanese government delivered the largest investment in bulk billing in Medicare's 40-year history. The Prime Minister claimed this change would "make it easier, and cheaper for more than 11 million Australians to visit a doctor." This came after calls for significant repair from the Australian Medical



Association, citing Medicare's failure to meet the rising cost of healthcare. However, patients with chronic conditions such as endometriosis are yet to experience a substantial increase in care.

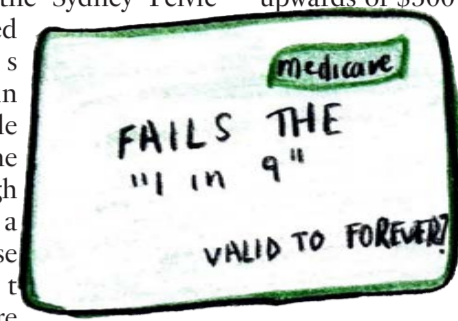
Milli Weaver, founder of the non-profit organisation Endo Articles told me, "the financial burden experienced by someone with endometriosis is beyond substantial. Until there is a cure, Medicare needs to step up." Members of the non-profit support group have suggested an appointment with a sought-after specialist may last just 10-15 minutes and cost upwards of \$200 after the Medicare rebate. According to Endo Articles, the need for "patient-centred care developed with input from the patient community" is drastic. A lack of access to medical advice and treatment has pushed thousands to flock to social media for support. Across platforms, advocate groups champion March as endometriosis awareness month and beg for increased funding. One such effort is the About Bloody Time campaign, pushing for longer specialist consultations to be covered by Medicare.

Last Thursday night, the University of Sydney hosted a panel of health experts following a screening of the 'Below the Belt' documentary at the Charles Perkins Centre Auditorium.

Dr Angela James, a leading professional from the Sydney Pelvic Clinic, highlighted Medicare's shortcomings in supporting people living with the disease. Although Medicare offers a Chronic Disease Management Plan, patients are entitled to just five appointments, which Dr James told Honi Soit lays good foundations but is "often not enough." Milli Weaver, also present at the panel, explained that "when someone has an acute injury they can be referred to a physiotherapist for upwards of 10+ sessions. Yet when someone has a chronic, incurable disease they are given 5 appointments all up." Inconsistency in the existing framework appears to be a key issue.

Additionally, Medicare fails to account for secondary expenses and broader symptom management. "There's lots of hidden costs," said Dr I-Ferre Tan, a fertility specialist who addressed students at the panel. Costs not covered by Medicare can include specialist consultations, pain medication, specialised ultrasounds, absenteeism from work, and holistic recoveries such as physiotherapy and acupuncture. Specialised scans like

Art: Simone Maddison



the transvaginal ultrasound can cost upwards of \$300 per scan in the hope of detecting lesions of disease growth. One member of the University's SRC Women's Collective, Sofija Filipovic, spoke to Honi Soit about Medicare's negligent attitude toward pain management. In particular, she pointed out that "non-pharmacological pain relief products like heat packs or TMS machines which have been proven to be revolutionary in symptom relief" are also unsubsidised.

One student at the university shared throwing \$1,200 towards her first surgery, followed by a shocking \$4000 out-of-pocket on the second. That's not including annual ultrasound fees close to \$400. Coupled with the routine student anxieties of accumulating HECS debts and the rental crisis, it seems something has to give. Will it be student mental health, or our already dwindling trust in government initiatives? Sofija Filipovic suggests that while the government has committed significant funds to endometriosis research, "it's very hard to access." With few new promises on the horizon, it seems all one can do is demand: do better Medicare.

## Anti-racism: Is the Department of Education listening to our children?

Alicia Lee asks why not.

When many of us reflect on our childhood, there is at least one unforgettable incident where we have seen, or been subject to, casual racism at school.

I can recall many instances. In primary school, I felt prejudice from the shape of my eyes and the smell of my food. Then towards the end of high school, the eruption of COVID-19 came with a resurgence of comments usually starting with "You Asians..." and "Go back to..."

As I got older, I became more equipped with the appropriate words to describe these microaggressions. I knew that derogatory comments based on ethnicity or nationality were 'racism', and that common preconceptions profiling a certain group of people were 'stereotypes'.

When younger children do not have the appropriate vocabulary to address instances of racist discrimination, their simple words may inadvertently diminish the gravity of their experiences. This widens the possibility of unreported racism, especially in early primary education.

The New South Wales Department of Education has attempted to effectively implement the Anti-Racism Policy since 2005, which sets out the Department's commitment to uphold their belief that "[n]o student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience racism within the school

environment." The policy applies to all New South Wales public school staff and students.

Although the policy sets progressive objectives to facilitate a less discriminatory environment for all children, there is little mention of the precise ways in which this will be achieved.

Amongst the few reformed methods of actively tackling racism, one of the notable changes implemented across NSW government schools was the establishment of an Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO). The Department of Education describes the role of the ARCO as a "teacher or executive member of the staff who has been nominated by the principal to support anti-racism education in school". Other than aiding the Principal in integrating Anti-Racism education into the curriculum of the students, their main purpose is to handle complaints.

To support the teachers who are stepping into this role, the Department of Education's ARCO online training course and its supplementary materials provide an opportunity for them to first develop the skills and knowledge required to adequately address complaints of racism and textbook situations. However, there is little material in teachers' resources and the body of policy itself to show that there is consistency in the application of this knowledge. Whilst

it is understandable for policymakers to leave room for flexibility in how individual schools want to handle cases of racism, there are no provisions that outline, nor specify what kind of actions constitute racism, classify their severity, and overall ensure consistency in the approaches of the ARCO towards complaints of racist discrimination.

This vagueness that shrouds the process of identifying and validating complaints of racism leads to inconsistent reporting across schools subject to this policy framework. On a larger scale, such an issue raises the possibility that the Anti-Racism Policy takes on a more tokenistic role in progressive education.

The keyword 'monitoring' is used often in the Department of Education's assertion that there are mechanisms in place to ensure the effective implementation of procedures to actively tackle cases of racism in schools. This word appears when assuring that "senior executive officers - monitor department practices and processes to ensure they are consistent with the policy..." and when providing that "the Leader, 'Multicultural Education' monitors the implementation of this policy, regularly reviews its contents... and updates it as needed."

However, the policy does not specify the established procedures that are within the definition of 'monitoring'. Nor does 'monitoring' ever coincide with the productivity of the ARCOs.

Rather, the policy seems to prescribe the overseeing of practice on a more macro scale.

So if there is no external body overseeing the efficacy of the policy enacted through the ARCOs, is it in mere good faith that government schools promise to address all cases of racism in compliance with the object and purpose of the policy?

None of the mechanisms provided by the Anti-Racism Policy can work to provide justice for ethno-cultural and linguistically diverse individuals within the school community if the ARCO does not report the issue in the first place. To report the issue, the ARCO must first identify and validate an instance of racism. The policy does not set out uniform criteria nor a set of features that apply in this stage of the process. If the simple words of conveying the gravity of the situation, and this is dismissed by the ARCO, silent racism will continue to be something witnessed and suffered by young children.

To bolster this, education policies need not be simply "updated" every few years but should instead address stagnant structures and reassess Anti-Racism officer roles, building enactable tools that listen to these young voices.

## A tough pill to swallow

Simone Maddison weighs up her options.

In my spare moments, I scroll through TikTok to find thrift shop inspiration and Sydney's best bagel spots — not to be told that the oral contraceptive pill I take every night is going to kill me. As much as I have tried to rid my feed of the minute-long videos telling me just that, they continue to wriggle their way back when I least expect them. Like many others, I experience frustration at seeing the same information repackaged and spoken about by people who are not healthcare professionals. But as someone living with polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), this content consistently leaves me feeling vulnerable and scared.

Combination birth control pills are widely accepted as the only way to manage PCOS on a daily basis. Given that PCOS is a hormonal condition caused by increased levels of androgens and insulin in the body, the pill provides an effective way to regulate these imbalances. As well as reducing the risk of developing ovarian or endometrial cancer, the pill can manage other symptoms of PCOS including excess body hair, irregular periods and acne. Notably, the increased risk of diabetes and infertility caused by PCOS should be treated through other medications and lifestyle changes.

When I was diagnosed with PCOS at the age of 18, these details were

very similar to those my gynaecologist gave to me. Consequently, the pill has provided me with a sense of agency and independence which would simply not exist if I continued to struggle with debilitatingly heavy periods and painful cystic acne each month.

So why now, at 21, do I feel that being taken away from me?

The answer lies in the countless videos of women speaking about "the pill's side effects I wish I knew about" or "why I'm terrified of the pill" currently circulating on social media. In addition to unsubstantiated claims that "the pill changes your brain" or "will smash all of your nutrients", Dr. Sara E. Hill's 2019 book *How The Pill Changes Everything* has also become a #booktok review trend. The book itself is not 'anti-pill', and instead raises some important concerns around the lack of research into female reproductive health. However, the way it is discussed in popular discourses has made some users "never want to take birth control again".

Of course, TikTok and other social media platforms provide an important space for women to share their negative experiences of birth control and build supportive communities. Furthermore, the pill does have an outrageously long and dangerous list of side effects, including deep vein thrombosis, heart

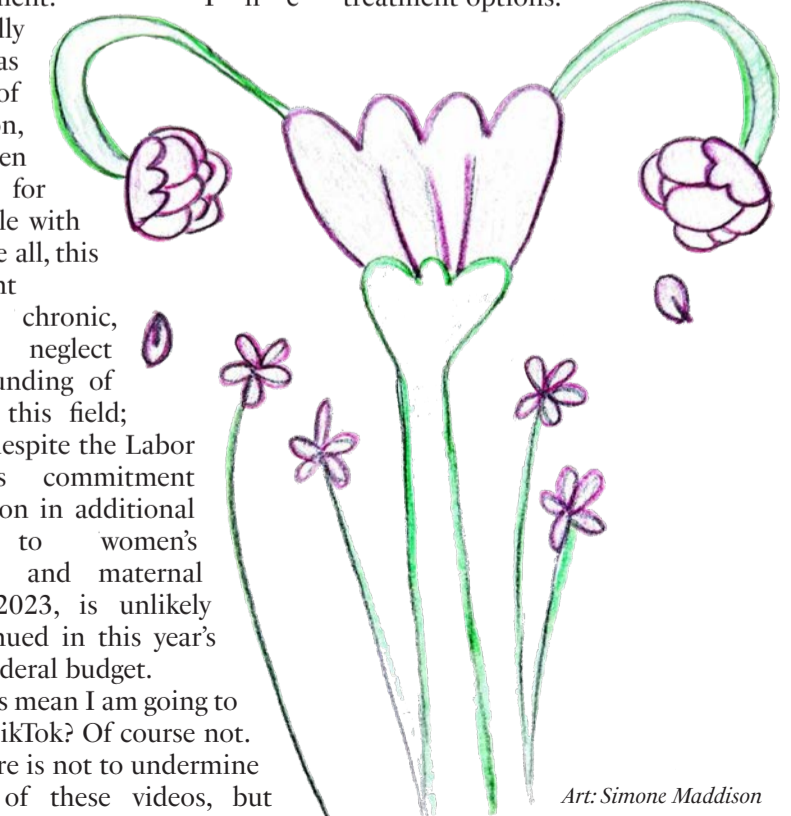
attack, stroke, breast cancer and liver tumours. To deny these two things would be to deny women's experiences and the risks they take while trying to care for themselves.

So herein lies my anger: I am constantly receiving conflicting information about the safety of the pill, and yet I do not have any other options for treatment.

The pill, initially created as a form of contraception, was never even intended for use by people with PCOS. Above all, this is a testament to the chronic, structural neglect and underfunding of research in this field; one which, despite the Labor government's commitment to \$70 million in additional spending to women's reproductive and maternal health in 2023, is unlikely to be continued in this year's upcoming federal budget.

Does this mean I am going to stop using TikTok? Of course not. My point here is not to undermine the utility of these videos, but

to instead address them from a perspective where one's wellbeing is at risk either way. In a decision that feels like choosing between bad and worse, perhaps what we need is a third, healthier alternative — not only for the way we talk about the pill and PCOS, but how we transform this discourse into safe treatment options.



Art: Simone Maddison



# Why is USyd burying its past?

Ella McGrath digs underground.

*This article does not uncover some hitherto unknown story about our colonial past. It merely reaffirms what local First Nations communities have known for centuries: the Great Hall is built over not only stolen land, but a sacred burial ground.*

Gai-mariagal man and academic Dennis Foley, who worked at the Koori (now Gadigal) Centre in the 1990s, presented an oral history as told by Foley's grandmother, Clarice Lougher, her half-sister Eunice Watson, and their cousin Willie De Serve. "My mother's family knew that area... and my father is a Glebe boy, so I have knowledge on both sides of the family about the different Aboriginal stories of the place," Foley said in a February interview with *Honi Soit*.

Their account attests to the deep cultural and spiritual importance of the land, but its greatest revelation is that the Great Hall stands on a "sorry site" — a once ancient angophora forest, and a burial ground within: "after cremation, wrapped bones were placed in... the hollow trees... perhaps that is why it is so cold there?"

Before my conversation with Foley, I presumed that the existence of the burial ground was not widely known in scholarly circles here at the University of Sydney.

Certainly, I had not encountered the story of the Wiradjuri labourers involved in the Great Hall's construction — Foley's patrilineal ancestors. Several died during construction. The remaining workers "walked off the job" and "refused to go back there."

"They said it was cursed."  
This is how the story resurfaced,

decades after the angophora were deforested to make way for a colonial military encampment and, later farmland, in the 1820s and 1830s. According to Foley, the colonists left a paper trail behind them, detailing their destruction: when the trees were felled, the human remains within were revealed. This knowledge has not been published or made public or accessible by the University, but, as Foley affirmed, the story "should be well-recorded," languishing in the archives as latent and untapped evidence.

While the University has continually voiced its commitment to makarrata and truth-telling, it is surprising that there has been no public statement, and so no acknowledgement, of this history. When the University commissions works by Indigenous artists, it comes across as virtue-signalling, and when it delivers acknowledgements of country this is merely paying lip service, if these acts are not matched with genuine attempts to recognise, recover, and honour the Aboriginal history of the land on which the University stands.

However, this is not to say that there have been no attempts within the University to reckon with its colonial past. Foley conceded that "the university made a concerted effort to uncover the sites" some time ago, when Billy Griffiths, now a historian at Deakin University, wrote a paper titled *The Aboriginal History of the University of Sydney*. This truth-telling project, the remnants of which I found floating, unmoored, on the internet, does not appear to have been concluded, let alone embraced. According to Foley, the University caved to pressure from lobbyists affiliated with external

institutions, including the Australian Museum and the land council, who "sought to discredit the oral history."

"That's the world of anthropology and archaeology. It's driven by white knowledge."

Foley said. "They say 'well, unless it's written down, we don't believe it!' Well — hang on — we didn't write things down! And that's the trouble! We have a vast, rich oral tradition. We're an oral culture."

This is a common criticism of Australian history in our 'history wars'. However, as my interview with Foley demonstrates, in this case it is wholly inapplicable. Because there is written, documentary evidence. And yet, in Foley's words, it is "evidence that they've denied."

It must be said that, long before the University's frustrated efforts, local First Nations communities campaigned for the recognition of these histories. Foley said that "Darug people, Wiradjuri people, and some Wangal elders too. They knew about it all."

Foley emphasised the importance of continuing the campaign, to foster cultural sensitivity and respect for First Nations staff and students.

In Aboriginal cultures, the disturbance of burial sites amounts to desecration, and this is now recognised by Australian statute law.

"It's a totally destroyed site," Foley said of the burial ground, "if the University excavated, dug it up again, they wouldn't find anything... so really what we've got is just the odd spirit."

"We're a pretty superstitious mob at the best of times," Foley remarked. Of once being allocated a classroom to teach in what was once the "old

morgue", he said he "chucked a u-ey, said 'no way' ... you just don't want to put yourself in that position, whether you believe it or not."

Truth-telling aside, Foley emphasised that there further is potential for healing. He suggests that there should be a designated 'healing site' where there was once a creek: "something should be done there, to show its [the land's] importance... You know I used to do lectures out there in the open because of that feeling of goodness."

This land was once a wellspring of spirituality, a place of lively cultural and commercial exchange, initiation and knowledge. Though, as Foley says, the University has "got this incredible checkered history", it remains a place of knowledge-sharing "on very, very special grounds".

It is past time that these two histories are reconciled. But this can only happen if the University of Sydney ceases to bury its past.

This is an ongoing investigation. Foley's oral history cannot stand alone, without corroboration from colonial, archival sources (as this article has demonstrated) to be seen as legitimate. In the coming weeks, *Honi* will uncover the evidence, doing research that the University endorsed but failed to realise.

If you have any information on this subject or wish to contribute, please contact editors@honisoit.com.

# A room of one's own? It's less likely than you think.

Ariana Haghighi goes searching...

The University of Sydney's Camperdown/Darlington campus sprawls widely, infiltrating a span of inner-west and inner-city suburbs. Within its many buildings are rooms upon rooms upon rooms, just waiting for students to fill them with incessant chatter and mutterings. Whilst some rooms are filled and emptied throughout the day like a bank account, others remain bankrupt, bereft of individuals inside their walls.

Of course, you'd expect this "world-class institution" to support the student experience and open its doors to students. In reality, students looking to book a room have door after door slammed in their face.

## First stop: Resourcebooker

A student searching desperately for a space to call their club or society's own (for a few hours) first turns to Resourcebooker. The name itself escapes sense, given that few would label a room a "resource", and that is simply the first rung as the student descends a ladder of insanity. As 2024 Law Revue Producer Martha Barlow puts it, "Resourcebooker is quite frankly the bane of my existence."

Resourcebooker has an impossibly labyrinthine interface, fusing the slowness of Goodreads with the pallor of Canvas. Students are directed to a page with a list of lecture theatres and seminar rooms, most of which are concentrated in the asbestos-side of campus. Bookings also need to be made on a case-by-case basis, so students have to painfully resubmit forms for bookings over multiple days. Rooms which are not listed often need to be booked via emails to the relevant faculty, a process which often reaps

little reward.

This treacherous service lays multiple mouse traps that inadvertently snap a student's room booking plans.

Firstly, bookings need to be submitted at least ten business days before the event. This necessitates significant pre-planning and foresight, often missing from student society executives as they juggle many other responsibilities.

A highly-organised student who lodges a booking early may be in for a rude awakening if they'd like to occupy a space on campus on the weekend. Resourcebooker has a fine print note that, "Any booking made on a weekend will incur a cleaning charge." A student may not be deterred, assuming they have to throw a couple of dollars the university's way given no cost is clearly stated. But make no mistake, the cleaning charge is a fixed rate of around \$250 per day, meaning a society that wants to hold a weekend conference or rehearsal period is expected to cough up half a thousand just to sit in rooms collecting dust.

Escaping the ridiculous charge, perhaps a student settles for a midweek meeting. But Resourcebooker sinisterly devises new obstacles that evade reason and anticipation. Many of the rooms listed are booked out from 9am-6pm blankly, even though they are empty if you dare knock on the door. To book a room on the platform, you need to be from a registered club or society — a requirement that an administrative agent diligently confirms. On two occasions this year, *Honi Soit* has had their event bookings cancelled on account that *Honi* is not a club or society, even though we are affiliated

with the Students' Representatives Council and serve students.

## Next: ClubSuite

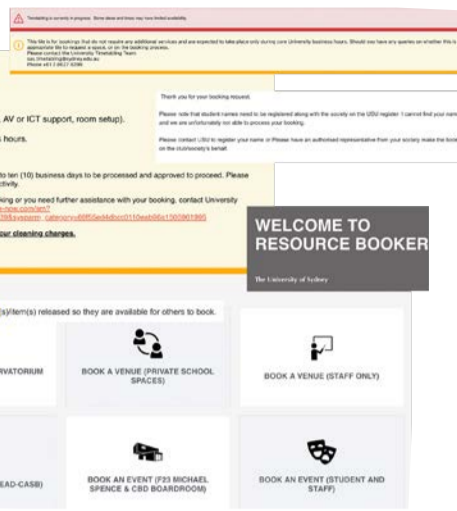
As every campus life-wearied hack knows, many university spaces are owned by the University of Sydney Union (USU) rather than USyd, and therefore need to be booked via that route.

Some USU rooms can be booked with less than two days' notice via the society executive platform ClubSuite, but this also provides a host of issues for the room booker. The site was nonfunctional for significant portions of last year, and also caps booking times to two hours.

Many dance and movement societies were disappointed by the conversion of USU-owned dance studio Elliot Miller to a theatre for Conservatorium students; its underground replacement is inadequate for the needs of these societies due to its high insulation and stuffy atmosphere. Once the Footbridge theatre is fully renovated, there is suggestion it could be booked by students, but it remains engulfed in scaffolding for the foreseeable future.

## Getting: desperate?

There are some slivers of hope for society executives who do not find success from the room booking platforms. The Sydney University Drama Society's (SUDS) Cellar Theatre, tucked away under the Holme Building, can be booked for up to ten hours for no charge by USyd and external performing arts societies via a



booking form. Of course, the ability to book is dependent on whether a SUDS show is active that requires the space.

Resigned and defeatist students in the past who have needed a large space for performing arts rehearsals (read: myself, unfortunately), have had to beg friends who live in nearby sharehouses to use their living rooms, or contact the affordable housing co-op Stucco to borrow their hall.

At one point, at the end of my rope, I neared close to booking a nearby Airbnb for a night, considering it would be cheaper than paying a weekend of USyd's booking fees.

The ability for a student society executive to successfully nab a room is dependent on power and connections with contacts in the university, rendering it difficult for smaller societies to flourish. Famed USU clubs such as the Debating Society and some Revues are engaged personally with USU employees to organise their room bookings, relieving their executives of the discovery burden. For students who don't have such contacts, their best bet is to occupy a space without a booking (and risk incurring a fee) or mingle among the public Courtyard rumpus. Grim!

# Policing the uniform at Mardi Gras

Holly Gerrard and Victoria Gillespie undress the situation.

The presence of the New South Wales (NSW) police and their uniformed participation at this year's Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras was rightfully contested following the alleged murder of Jesse Baird and his partner Luke Davies by Senior Constable Beau Lamarre-Condon. Initially, the Mardi Gras Board withdrew the police force's invitation to participate, but an agreement was later struck enabling them to march in plain clothes. This reversal faced wide criticism and the police further ignored the compromise, marching in police insignia.

arrested 53 people and beat many others. Many of those arrested lost their jobs, homes and even took their lives as the police offered names and addresses to the media. NSW police did not apologise to the original 1978 marchers until 2016.

Then, in 1998 the police marched in the parade for the first time, despite backlash from the queer community. This opposition has continued and gained momentum, with many activist groups continuing to fight for the exclusion of the police from Mardi Gras. Last year, former Greens senator and activist Lidia Thorpe yelled "f\*\*\* the police" and laid in front of the police float, temporarily

halting the protest.

In the wake of the murder of Baird and Davies, tensions between protestors and police have flared once again. It's telling that the catalyst of the Mardi Gras Board's decision was not the increasing deaths in custody, police violence against First Nations or consistent First Nations protest against police presence.

Hostilities between the police and queer community culminated on the eve of Mardi Gras with a protest in Taylor Square. The organiser of the demonstration, queer activist group Pride in Protest, posted videos

of police assaulting protestors and reiterated that the inaugural Mardi Gras was a protest. The police's force brutal police violence of 1978 cannot be separated from this year's.

Despite this community outcry, blue uniforms stained Saturday's parade. During the Parade, booing from the crowd ricocheted through Oxford Street as the police force began their march. The police contravened the compromise request to march in plain clothes; the marching police wore an alternate uniform to field dress — blue polo shirts, inscribed with the Progress Pride flag, the police force logo and NSW Government logo. Many onlookers were shocked to notice uniformed riot squad officers flanking their police colleagues who marched in matching navy blue shirts.

Beyond this, uniformed police occupied Oxford St and surrounds, under their "highly visibility operation [sic]" entitled 'Operation Mardi Gras'. These officers pushed the dark irony



Marching police in 'plain clothes'. Source: NSW Police Instagram

of the situation further, forcefully arresting pro-Palestinian protestors. Under their banner "Queers in Solidarity with Palestine", activists intervened in the Labor float with chants and red, green, black smoke flares. Photos of the situation depict a mass of Riot Squad and field dress officers descending on these individuals. Eight protestors were

arrested and charged with "more than three people use violence to cause fear".

This situation makes sense in the legacy of police brutality of queer and marginalised communities. The police marching in an alternate uniform does not negate years of traumatic history between the community and the police. Pride in Protest illuminated this, stating, "we have watched our friends be brutalised by them. No cops at Mardi Gras, this year, or ever again."

To marginalised communities, the police uniform has become synonymous with excessive force, mistreatment and discriminatory behaviour. The decision to allow police to march in plain clothes ironically recognises the symbolic nature of the uniform as a display of power, particularly as full uniform includes a police-issued gun, alleged to be Lamarre-Condon's murder weapon. Uniforms represent colonial and political authority, and their ease of recognition thus visually legitimises discretionary and excessive force.



Police forcefully arresting pro-Palestine protestors. Source: NCA Newswire

In recent years however, this 'social skin' of disciplinary power has extended into the colour blue itself, with the countermovement 'Blue Lives Matter' emerging in 2014 in opposition to the Black Lives Matter movement. The power of the police uniform itself is acknowledged by the existence of laws penalising the misuse of police insignia.

It therefore becomes difficult to ignore the decision of officers to don an alternate uniform of matching navy blue shirts as their choice of 'plain clothing'.

Anti-police protesters argue safe spaces are intentionally exclusionary towards groups that the space was not

intended for. The police's presence at Mardi Gras, whether uniformed or in plain clothes, will remain highly contested while the police meter out injustices and violence to queer communities.

This political situation brings history onto our confetti-lined inner city streets. And so, Prime Minister Albanese's statement, "Australia has moved on from [police violence towards queer people]", is proven false. Ultimately, many members of the community, both queer-identifying and allies, are left convinced that police participation during Mardi Gras did nothing to hide the presence of pigs in sheep's clothing.



# Leaked documents reveal how AUJS lobbies for Zionism

*Anonymous reports.*

Leaked documents, screenshots and email communication chains reveal that the Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS) lobbies on behalf of the Israeli government and its Zionist policies across Australian university campuses.

These written sources are compiled in a folder, dating between 2015 and 2017, which includes documents stipulating AUJS’ constitution, its members’ code of conduct, and the state of support amongst student factions in Sydney for the Israeli government.

## AUJS on-campus

AUJS publicly presents itself as a “federation of Jewish student societies” to deliver “Jewish & Community Engagement, advocacy, leadership & development, international programs and social events”. It is primarily advertised to Jewish students as an ethnocultural space “to develop and strengthen their sense of Jewish identity and Jewish Leadership”.

At the University of Sydney Union (USU), AUJS is treated as a club due to its participation in “regular social events” and “educational events/leadership training.” Similar listings currently operate at the University of New South Wales, University of Technology Sydney, Macquarie University and the University of Wollongong.

Crucially, AUJS does not claim to be an apolitical organisation, nor does it deny any affiliations with Israel. In AUJS’ national constitution, it details “four pillars” upon which AUJS is founded, the last of which is Zionism, with the explicit aim “to promote a positive image of Israel on campus”. It is publicly connected to the World Zionist Organisation’s Jerusalem Program, which advocates “settling the country [Israel] as an expression of practical Zionism”. AUJS also endorses the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, which has been used to silence Palestinian advocacy and criticism of the State of Israel by conflating anti-Zionism with antisemitism.

In April 2023, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch signed a letter among over 100 human rights and civil rights organisations, raising concerns about the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) working definition of “antisemitism”.

The signatories said antisemitism “poses real harm to Jewish communities around the world” but that the IHRA’s use of the word could “inadvertently embolden or endorse policies and laws that undermine... the right to speak and organise in favour of Palestinian rights and to criticise Israeli government policies”. Since its adoption at five universities around Australia at the beginning of the year, staff and students have expressed concerns

over the intimidation and silencing of those who speak out publicly against Zionism.

### Anti-Zionist Students On-Campus

An anonymous Jewish student at the University of Sydney approached AUJS President Alissa Foster in an email on September 11, 2023 about “opening up to diverse views” — namely, to the “richness of Jewish life outside of Zionism”. In the email, the student makes their position clear as

In a leaked document from 2015 titled *Sydney University Political Landscape*, AUJS considers the history, strengths and weaknesses, leaders and stance on Israel of six student factions. Most factions are considered unworthy of approaching, with Sydney Labor Students (SLS) and Independents marked with a “don’t bother” label due to their “fluctuating influence and membership.”

Grassroots is criticised for being a “group of fundamentalist hard-left

### The National Union of Students (NUS)

The information pertaining to Student Unity is of particular interest following the National Union of Students’ 2023 National Conference (NatCon). While Unity voted to support a bloc of five motions standing in solidarity with a free Palestine at NatCon, the faction reportedly attempted to amend a platform to “recognise that Zionists can and have been used as a euphemism for Jewishness”, as well as to amend any mention of “the state of Israel” to “the Israeli government.”

## Interfaith events

Jewish students undoubtedly have a right to organise in ethnocultural and religious spaces. AUJS’ on-campus image represents an effort to conflate Judaism and Zionism. This rhetoric culminates in the weaponisation of antisemitism, expressed in the 2016 AUJS guide: *Responding to Anti-Semitism/Anti-Zionist Incidents*, where members were encouraged to report any incidents “even if you are unsure whether or not the incident was anti-Semitic in nature”.

In the same document, this advice aimed at conflating antisemitism with anti-Zionism was accompanied by an instruction to not “engage in an argument” with “the Socialist Alternative or other groups that protest AUJS events and hand out anti-Israel material”.

In the AUJS *Interfaith Guide* created in 2017, intended only for training Executive members, it is made clear that initiating interfaith networks “is not a public event, just a meeting between representatives.” The document includes a warning from the National Political Affairs Director to “approach the other faith clubs with the message that you want to primarily learn about their other club and their faith background, as opposed to teach them about AUJS”.

**“National Labor Students (NLS), identified as owing all their success to their “high proportion of attractive girls who are the best campaigners”, may also be supported “only if they are with more solidly pro-Israel factions.”**

The purpose of these interfaith events is primarily to grow support for AUJS on university campuses. This mostly occurs through AUJS’ National Political Affairs Committee (NPAC), advertised internally as a “new leadership scheme” to coordinate

“projects, campaigns and events” with “community and professional partners.”

However, in another document titled *The Interfaith Co-Ops on Campuses* dating back to 2017, these relationships were also perceived as important “as a pre-emptive defence for clubs if issues arise”, in particular if “Israel related harassment arises on campus.” In its 2017 *Document of Recognition Between Inter-Faith or Inter-Cultural Groups* at Macquarie University, AUJS also makes clear that other religious groups “will show (public) support in case of incidents.”

In addition to securing protection from other on-campus religious groups, AUJS’ primary concern as a Zionist group is to lobby local politics. While this is presented in the same leaked NPAC Meeting document from March 11, 2015 as getting “Jewish students [who are] active in politics [to become] more involved in AUJS”, it operates in practice as the inverse. The leaked minutes disclose plans for networking “cocktail/panel/mingling” events with the Young Liberals, Labor and Greens, as well as the long-term goal of having “at least one AUJS related/trained person on student representative bodies.”

Plans to “bring Israeli social activists to Australia to help with training and lobbying” during this meeting on March 11, 2015 provide further evidence of political cooperation.

**“The leaked minutes disclose plans for networking ‘cocktail/panel/mingling’ events with the Young Liberals, Labor and Greens, as well as the long-term goal of having ‘at least one AUJS related/trained person on student representative bodies.”**

## Anti-BDS Lobbying

AUJS’ pro-Israeli lobby is accompanied by explicit anti-Palestinianism. In a document published in 2015 by the same name, the primary purpose of the NPAC Campus Liaison Officer Role was to “defeat BDS and other anti-Israel motions passed by student organisations”. In the 2015 document titled *It’s Time To Update How We Deal With BDS*, AUJS referred to itself as a “pro-Israel group” that must “play the political game far more effectively” than its pro-BDS counterparts.

This document makes it clear that AUJS views pro-BDS motions as leading “the demonisation of Israel by Student Government representatives.” This is because the BDS motions “empower student politicians to feel like they are part of a “solution”, providing them

“with a strong sense of membership to the BDS movement” that will “influence their perspectives... into any future political careers.”

The final message in *It’s Time To Update How We Deal With BDS* is that these decisions “will one day influence policy on Israel” from “the



world’s future leaders”, meaning that pro-Israel students must “influence them from within”. Means to achieving this end include “cutting factions who support BDS out of major positions at university and NUS level”, maintaining a “state-wide group of supporters and campaigners that can be mobilised quickly to deal with threats and campaign for AUJS”, and “lobby state convenors... and inform them of the fallacies of BDS and other anti-Israel campaigns.”

Notably, thorough investigation has found that only two cases in AUJS’ history have prompted AUJS to condemn Israel’s actions. The first instance concerns Israel’s prolonged refusal to deport now-convicted sexual abuser Malka Leifer to Australia for trial. The second instance occurred in 2023, over bigoted intra-Jewish views held by Israel’s Minister For Diaspora Affairs Amichai Chalki. AUJS has never publicly criticised Israel’s actions towards Palestinian people.

## Impact on Academic Spaces

This folder of leaked documents also reveals that AUJS’ explicit ties to political parties on- and off-campus, its strong anti-BDS position and explicitly Zionist affiliations, exert significant influence in academic spaces.

One of the most high-profile examples is AUJS’ 2015 accusations of antisemitism against the University of Sydney’s Associate Professor Jake Lynch. Professor Lynch, a known pro-Palestinian academic, had attended a seminar by speaker Richard Kemp, hosted by AUJS at the University. While Lynch was sitting in the audience, a protest organised by Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) occupied the lecture hall.

When campus security became physical, Lynch began to film the incident. A woman standing behind Lynch informed him she did not

consent to being filmed and then attempted to force his camera phone from his hands. Claiming she kicked him in the groin, Lynch waved money in the woman’s face and told her “this is going to cost you a lot of money” before threatening to sue her. The details of this incident have been widely reported

evidence that Lynch had any prior knowledge of the protest or that he was involved in organising the sit-in. The woman he interacted with was middle-aged, and was not affiliated with AUJS or any other Jewish organisation.

When questioned on whether they could label Lynch as an antisemite without risk of defamation, more leaked screenshots from a private Facebook thread dated to March 15, 2015 reveal that the AUJS National Political Officer at the time, Julian Kowal, stated there is “no legal reason, but just that they agree using a hard-ish line. It’s a political move to use ‘antisemitism’ and we feel confident enough that the public would be on our side, in order for us to call him on it.”

When other members expressed hesitancy over staging a “flash protest” against Jake Lynch in the same Facebook thread, they were encouraged to “just counter by saying we are for multiculturalism and it isn’t about Israel.”

The University of Sydney commissioned an external investigation by an independent solicitor, which concluded that nothing Lynch had done or said was antisemitic. All allegations against Lynch were refuted and dropped in the same year.

**“When other members expressed hesitancy over staging a ‘flash protest’ against Jake Lynch in the same Facebook thread, they were encouraged to ‘just counter by saying we are for multiculturalism and it isn’t about Israel.”**

**“Means to achieving this end include ‘cutting factions who support BDS out of major positions at university and NUS level’, maintaining a ‘state-wide group of supporters and campaigners that can be mobilised quickly to deal with threats and campaign for AUJS’, and ‘lobby state convenors... and inform them of the fallacies of BDS and other anti-Israel campaigns.”**

Despite AUJS’ claims, there is no



# A “connective tissue”: Booker Magazine launches issue #002

Victoria Gillespie picks up a copy of Booker.

In the leadup to their issue #002 launch, *Honi Soit* sits down with Alexander Booker, writer, creator, former USyd student, and the central architect of *Booker Magazine*.

Like many publications, *Booker Magazine* initially arose out of identified gaps within the local print landscape. Alexander's friend had written a fantasy fiction piece and was struggling to find a publication interested in publishing it. Alexander explains existing publications are more angled toward conventional stories. And therein lies *Booker's* purpose: to get things out there especially “unusual stuff that doesn't fit in elsewhere”. It is a “flexible and reactive” project, adjusting and fitting the needs of various creatives, morphing into niches, and filling gaps. The aforementioned science fiction piece, 'Private I' lays across the first issue's first spread, acting as the “hero fiction” piece.

“Through creation, publication and circulation, *Booker* zooms into and uncovers what's within and beneath the inner west's seemingly socially-impenetrable spaces.”

at three “brick and mortar” stockists: Newtown music store Repressed Records, and bookstores Better Read Than Dead and Sappho's. Through creation, publication and circulation, *Booker* zooms into and uncovers what's within and beneath the inner west's seemingly socially impenetrable spaces.

As a former USyd student, Alexander sees their publication as a way to extend the folly, play of campus

publications, and creative spaces beyond the institution's walls and degree timespans. A formative moment in their magazine journey was laying up for *Growing Strong*, USyd Women's Collective's annual publication. This was their first editing and graphic design experience—attesting to the utility of student publications as a creative training ground. But *Booker* is not a student magazine, instead existing at the nexus of youth culture and alternative art across Sydney, and reminds us that student culture is not where our creativity should end. Opportunities to publish in magazines that are not tied to student organisations are beneficial for students and alumni, particularly

considering that these publications have more editorial freedom and are unchained to organisations seeking profit.

Alexander expands on the idea of their publication as a “connective tissue” reaching out amongst the often siloed worlds of local theatre, music, arts and culture. Issue #001 assembles community organisations like Fbi Radio and Sydney University Dramatic Society (SUDS), as well as local cinematic and artistic outputs. *Booker* maintains a close relationship

with Newtown artist-run space DRAW Space Gallery through artist features and write-ups. Theatre is another close relative, issue #001 included an interview with the director and writers of SUDS' recent sold-out show 'Screw!', directed by Mariika Mehigan and Eloise Aiken. Through thick questions and distorted images, Alexander dissects the original sex comedy and highlights the creative opportunities in student theatre organisations.

Extending beyond boundaries of form, playing within the unknown, *Booker* “finds specificity based on location rather than practice”. Their connective structure is enhanced by their social media presence, promoting MILK Arts Night, and others within the inner-west publication space, such as *Plinky Plonky Features*, *R.A.G. (Rough As Guts)* zine, and the recent release of the sparkly *Fling* magazine.

“Issue #002 promises to be a continuation of these collaged forms, including experimental fable storytelling, emerging artists features, and interviews with up and coming performers.”



Photography: TOHKYOH

Throughout our chat, Alexander mentions a plentitude of inner west gigs, magazines, exhibitions, and venues. These worlds rely on structures and networks of support—what *Booker* aims to be. Shared Instagram stories can only reach so many audiences, creative endeavours constantly need to reach beyond their own worlds to sustain their effectiveness and survival.

The magazine acts as a collage of creative mediums—original genre fiction, features, photography, interviews, reviews, and essays. Each piece traverses forms, with the genre fiction work and interviews including recommendations. Issue #002 promises to be a continuation of these collaged forms, including “experimental fable storytelling, emerging artists features, and interviews with up and coming performers”. The fictional inclusions are the magazine's defining strength,

showcasing unpublished works, with some pieces like 'Private I' serialised across multiple editions.

“Extending beyond boundaries of form, playing within the unknown, *Booker* finds specificity based on location rather than practice.”

Issue #002 has just been sent to the printers. *Booker* takes inspiration from grungy, street aesthetics, but clarifies them in a slick black and white visual style for accessibility. This “directness in style” draws from music posters, street posters, and bathroom stickers. Alexander referenced the Debaser event 'Pasted', an exhibition of recent poster art in the inner west as a source of inspiration. While its original print exclusivity is important, *Booker* is flirting with expanding functions to short film production and event assisting.

And what about the admin of it all? It's often missed that creative ventures require plentitudes of unpaid, and often boring administrative work. While Alexander spearheads this work, they are working within a team of loosely defined roles including proofreading, music correspondence, design layout, and promotional expertise.

*Booker* doesn't take itself too seriously. It reminds us that we should all write more, make more, go to more gigs, exhibitions, shows, and dance more.

*Booker Magazine* issue #002 launches at Red Rattler Theatre, Marrickville on 28 March at 7.30pm. The lineup includes local acts GRXCE, Gnocchi the Gnarist and Final Girls. Follow @bookermagazine on Instagram to keep in touch for the latest updates and contributor callouts.



# Student media spotlight: Hatchet

Zeina Khochaiche jumps timezones.

On a crisp October afternoon in 2023, two friends of the closest kind knocked on the door of George Washington University's newspaper office. Not taking no for an answer, they quickly made friends with a industrious student editor getting some extra work done.

Unknowingly, the pair—notorious for their undying devotion to student journalism and writing at large—had been the first domino falling in what would lead us here. The fourth instalment of student media spotlight, where I connect with and platform Australian student publications.

Except this publication is not Australian. This paper hails from Washington D.C. to be exact. And this paper's name is *The GW Hatchet*. So, consider this a special instalment just for you.

“Thank you's are also in order to fellow editor, Ariana Haghghi and *Honi Soit* alumni, Marlow Hurst, for stumbling into and then introducing me, over Instagram, to Ianne Salvosa.

*The GW Hatchet* is an independent, non-profit student newspaper that has been in circulation since 1904. A George Washington namesake (one of the founding fathers of the University), the paper is said to be inspired by a tale where Washington was chopping down a cherry tree with a hatchet.

The paper is the second-oldest running publication in Washington, second to *The Washington Post*, and continues to receive praise as one of

the best student papers in the United States with many notable alumni.

Earlier this week I dialled into a timezone-aligned Zoom meeting with one of this year's news editors, Ianne Salvosa to chat about all things student journalism, writing aspirations and our respective student communities.

Salvosa began writing for *The Hatchet* in her Freshman year of college but her writing career started long before that when she followed in her sister's footsteps as a prolific contributor to her high school publication. Salvosa started off as an academics reporter but by the end of her Freshman year became an editor. Today, Salvosa is the administrative and finance editor, responsible for reporting on any sort of administrative happenings, executive or non-executive staff issues, scholarships and any financial or budgetary news.

Now, Salvosa is fighting to take her passion for news writing journalism and convert it into a career she's proud of. When asked why she set her eyes on *The Hatchet* to achieve this Salvosa said, “we serve the whole GW community” and “use fact-based reporting to be a true scribe for our students.”

*The Hatchet* prides itself in covering all issues pertaining to students, staff, the newspaper alumni and the wider surrounds of Foggy Bottom—the fond, colloquial name for the University area. Likewise, the paper endeavours to keep up with

the evolution of technology and first started their website in 1998, well ahead of the student media standard by maintaining a prolific online presence.

Like *Honi*, *The Hatchet* is a weekly student newspaper but is formatted as a broadsheet paper characterised by its long vertical edges (approximately 57 centimetres). Unlike *Honi*, Ianne and the team of approximately 40 staff volunteer for the paper and do not receive a stipend which she says is standard for the college student media scene. The paper is both financially and editorially independent from the University but pays rent to maintain their office on campus.

Other notable student papers that Salvosa says exists in their immediate landscape include *The Daily Northwestern* (Northwestern University's paper since 1881) and *The Columbia Spectator* (Columbia University's paper since 1877). The US also boasts being the birthplace of other historic student journalism precedents with *The Harvard Crimson* (Harvard University's paper since 1873) and the nation's oldest daily student newspaper, *The Dartmouth or Dartmouth Gazette* (Dartmouth College's paper since 1799).

Interestingly, *The Hatchet* harbours alumni like L. Ron. Hubbard, an American author and founder of Scientology. The paper has been a fascinating breeding ground for generations of academics and award-

winning journalists like Deborah Solomon who won the 2002 Pulitzer prize with the *Wall Street Journal* for her work in ‘explainer reporting’ or Jake Sherman who recently founded *Punchbowl News*—an online political news daily dedicated to interrogating the figures “who power the US legislature.”

Salvosa compared the experience of editing the paper to a “student community” built on a shared passion for platforming stories that matter and said her paper's community of approximately 100 members including reporters is a key part of her university experience.

It seems that the paper's ethos is deeply rooted in student interest and the desire for truth. Salvosa's pride for the historic impact of her paper extends into a recognition that it “has a distinct function in our community to be a space for student voices to amplify their concerns.”

This year *The Hatchet* is celebrating its 120th year in circulation and continues to “uphold the presence it has in the community by using its history as an incentive to improve on journalistic standard.”

Making the Zoom call feel less like a product of being 15,000 kilometres apart, Salvosa and I shared an adoration for our respective papers and an excitement for what independent student journalism has in store ahead.

## Et tu, party planner?

Sandra Kallarakal marches through celebrations for the Ides.

On March 15, 44 BCE a guy named

Julius Caesar was assassinated by way of stabbing. As far as political assassinations go this was a pretty big deal, since Caesar's death heralded the end of the Roman Republic and slowly ushered in the beginnings of the Roman Empire.

A few hundred years after Caesar's death, another guy named William Shakespeare wrote a little play about him, aptly named Julius Caesar (Shakespeare had a way with titles), in which a soothsayer warns Caesar to “Beware the Ides of March.” Not only did good ol' Shakespeare's words stick, but they also branded the phrase and the date with a pretty dire connotation.

Historically however, the Ides were a day of celebration: one of three ‘landmark’ days—the others being the Nones and the Kalends—present in each month of the ancient Roman calendar. Following lunar phases, the Ides referred to the first full moon of any particular month, which usually

fell on either the thirteenth or fifteenth day. Interestingly, in the years before 45 BCE, which was when Caesar instigated some pretty big changes to the calendar (and was one of the potential reasons why he got murdered), the Ides of March marked the Roman New Year. While the introduction of the Julian calendar changed when the new year would take place, the assassination of Caesar did not change how people celebrated the Ides as it continued to be an auspicious day of ritual and enjoyment.

The Ides of each month were sacred to Jupiter or Jove, the chief deity in the Roman pantheon. A key ritual in celebrating the Ides was the sacrifice of the ovis Idulis, or the ‘Ides sheep’. This involved the Flamen Dialis, Jupiter's high priest, leading the sheep in procession down the Via Sacra, the main street of ancient Rome, to the citadel on Capitoline Hill where it was sacrificed.

In addition to the monthly sacrifice, the Ides of March was also associated with the festival of Anna Perenna, a goddess who was considered to be the embodiment of the cycle of the year. According to the Roman poet Ovid,

the festival was celebrated mainly amongst commoners, who would gather at the Campus Martius, a large field outside the walls of Rome, to lay about on the grass, pitch tents out of branches and togas, and spend the day drinking, dancing and singing. They would only return to the city late at night and would pray to Anna Perenna to let them live for as many years as the number of cups of wine they had drunk. Roman provincial Macrobius also records that offerings were made to the goddess to ensure that the “circle of the year may be completed happily”.

In the late Roman Imperial period, the March Ides also marked the first day of a week-long festival celebrating the Anatolian mother goddess Cybele and her son and consort Attis, on which Attis was born and found by Cybele in the reeds of the Phrygian river Gallus. The celebrations turned into solemn commemorations on March 22, the day of Attis' death under a pine tree where a college of priests, the dendrophoroi or tree bearers, cut down a tree, hung a picture of Attis from it and carried it to the temple of Cybele while lamenting. Following a three-day mourning period, the rebirth of Attis

was celebrated on March 25, the day of the spring equinox in the Northern Hemisphere as per the Julian calendar.

Byzantine administrator and antiquarian writer Joannes Lydus also claims that the Mamuralia was held on the Ides of March, though other sources place it on March 14. Sharing similarities to ancient Greek pharmakos rituals and scapegoating ceremonies, this particular observance involved leading an old man dressed in animal skins down the streets of Rome while beating with sticks, and eventually driving him away from the city. As this is technically a new year ceremony, it is thought that the ritual symbolised the transition from an old year to the new.

While the Ides of March will forever be remembered as the date of Caesar's assassination, there is a lot more history to the day than some important guy's death. Maybe watch your back on March 15, but maybe also make some celebratory plans. It's what the Romans would've wanted.



Art: Veronica Lenard



## I think your accent is cool, actually!

Lisa Gronich loves your accent.

We all have an accent. Whether it's something we're conscious of or not, we are all influenced by the people who spoke around us growing up. It's incredibly personal to us: our accent often signals where we and our loved ones grew up, and where we had our formative experiences. Carrying this around with us wherever we go means that accents mean a lot to many people, even if they aren't aware of it.

One of the best ways of showing how important they are to us is in our response to other people putting accents on, especially when they get it wrong. A badly represented accent in film and TV can take many viewers out of the storyline, something you've likely experienced if you have seen the exaggerated, overly stereotypical Australian accent put on by the character Simone in American sitcom 'The Good Place'. Whether this exaggerated accent, put on by a British actor, was intentional or not, alongside the show's simultaneous cheap

jokes about stereotypical symbols of Australian culture, at times it can feel less like a gag and more like a surface-level representation of a real community and culture that many people feel very connected to.

So, accents are strongly linked to belonging — they show that we are part of a group, that we have a shared history or culture that corresponds with that group (at least in part), and we don't like it when this part of belonging is misrepresented in media.

In the same way that we have assumptions about people we see wherever we go, we also assume things about the people we hear. When someone speaks, your brain is probably picking up several bits of information about this person and their background, despite none of it being explicitly mentioned or even suggested by the person themselves. You could pick up on another language that the person speaks, the area of the country they live in, their gender,

sexuality, or even class background.

These assumptions can lead to racism and discrimination at worst, but in other scenarios, they are simply used to subconsciously build knowledge about someone we interact with. It's incredibly hard to stop these assumptions from occurring, but instead we can be aware of the fact that they are happening, and be able to take them with a grain of salt. Even though you may pick up on someone "sounding gay" (for example, if they have a lot of features of the studied dialect of Gay Male Speech), correlation does not include causation, and you can't automatically deduce their sexuality from their speech.

However, these assumptions we have about people's voices often push people to try to change their voice or accent. We put on a voice when switching into customer-service mode at work, based on what we expect customers to want an employee to sound like. Some trans people train

their voices in a way that makes their gender more present to other people. Dealing with assumptions is why we try, so hard, to get the perfect accent when learning a new language — we crave the satisfaction of being part of the in-group that native speakers of that language are part of, whether we do indeed share the same history and culture as them or not. It's hard not to be self-conscious of your accent in these scenarios, because it can be incredibly isolating to sound different to the group that you want to fit in with.

In the end, it's your voice, and you can keep it or change it how you want. I'm not saying there won't be any judging or assumptions about you based on your accent, but I will say, we linguistics enjoyers are out there as well, gasping at a unique vowel sound; secret admirers all in all steadily but quietly adoring how you speak.



## Fagazine: The queer history of zine culture

X Ballantyne digs through the zine archives.

I made my first ever zine years before I knew what a zine was. Whilst the word zine may not be familiar to many, the practice of making them is. 'Growing up trans' was a zine I made for my year 7 English class, decorated on now-washed-out pink pages with images of queer people stuck throughout it printed with my shitty Kmart printer. That zine, despite the embarrassment it now gives me, is a perfect example of what a zine can be in its most basic form — a few A4 pages messily glued together, filled with various drawings and writing. **Unedited, unmoderated, self-published.**

Years later, when I traipsed down the aisles of the Other Worlds zine fair, I realised that even in the chaos of it all, I still felt the deep sense of safety and connection that I usually only experience in queer spaces.

It can be difficult to describe zines to someone who has never seen one because a zine can be almost anything. Zines come in a seemingly infinite number of forms, with one of the only commonalities being the book-adjacent style and their self-published nature. I spoke to fellow zine maker and queer zine enthusiast Salem (@uhhsaleam) who connected his love of zines to their creative messiness and versatility. Salem mentioned how a person could make a zine that's a collage of their favourite bugs, and then a zine about something important, like political action, because zines are a visual and physical representation of personal identity.

Zines are an art form that grew out of the pamphlet, which was another early form of radical and/or informational work. Early pamphlets such as Thomas Paine's 1775 pamphlet "Common Sense" argued for American Independence while Magnus Hirschfeld's 1896

Pamphlet "Sappho and Socrates" argued that homosexuality was not an illness. Zines follow on from this radical nature of pamphlets, except they often include creative mediums such as poetry, creative writing, or artworks.

Spaces such as the dedicated zine shop 'The Sticky Institute' in Melbourne are keeping zine culture alive. I spoke to Liz Egan, a queer zine maker and volunteer at the Institute, who expressed the intrinsically radical, anarchist nature of zines through their use at protests and pickets. Egan mentioned that zines circulate Pro-Palestine rallies, filled with free information about keeping people safe during political action.

'Little magazines' in the 1920s such as "FIRE" — a zine about empowering young Black artists — and Sci-fi fanzines from the 1940s were some of the earliest zines to circulate that were more distinct from pamphlets — often by being self-published.

From the beginning, zines gave space to various minorities by allowing these oppressed groups to give themselves the representation that they were denied in general society. Queer zines from the 1970s-1990s emerged from the long standing political legacy of pamphlets and the artistic and radical emerging zine culture. Queer zines were not just a creative outlet, nor an informational resource, but a revolutionary way of connecting and uniting queers in a time when queerness was heavily politicised and censored.

As queerness today is still heavily politicised, modern Queer zines continue the decades-long fight against the

censorship of queerness by portraying authentic and radical queerness through an art form that undeniably centres radical action, as Egan writes:

"[In the zine community] We're all outliers. Queer, disabled, neuro-divergent, anarchist punks who are reaching out, buying, and sharing zines in this giant community of creative 'others'"

Queer spaces today continue to embrace zine culture by including zines as resources in their spaces and hosting queer zine events. Last year the Packing Room Gallery, then operating from within Sock Drawer Heroes, hosted a group show titled "Zines for zines: celebrate the radical roots of zine publications within transgender communities". Queer zines hold an integral place in our community as a primary form of expression amongst queer people.

Searching through many online queer zine archives (notably QZAP), it is so clear from the zines in the early 2000s and prior that this was a revolutionary art form for the queer community. Salem expressed the important role of zines in the queer

community by connecting one another. Trans zines allowed Salem to connect with his community, either through relating to one another or learning about other trans experiences. This is a familiar sentiment shared amongst many queer people who get a chance to connect with their community through zine making and reading.

Queer zines are inherently radical by portraying uncensored, unapologetic Queerness. According to Egan, the zine community means "being able to connect with someone else's lived experiences, learn from them, see yourself reflected."

Zines from my collection, such as "the sapphic book of feminism", "memories of girlhood", "scene qweenz" and "together we can break these chains" all display unapologetic queerness in various ways: political avocation, artworks made by trans prisoners, uncensored photos of queer and trans bodies, and writing about experience. These zines are a few of the hundreds of thousands of queer zines out there continuing the radical art of authentic queer representation.



Zines (from L to R): Unknown, A. Aphelion, X Ballantyne

## Modern History student interviews Ancient History teacher

Valerie Chidiac ditches the Old Teachers College to interview her high school History teacher.

In celebration of the ancient Ides of March, inspiration struck when I, a Modern History student, decided to interview one of my high school teachers, and Ancient History connoisseur, Susan Kadib. This is the day I get to argue history in print, only with more coherent arguments and a host of history students and staff watching closely.

**Valerie Chidiac: Please introduce yourself to the humble subjects of *Honi Soit*.**

**Susan Kadib:** I am a high school teacher and Ancient History fan. I studied Education at Macquarie University, majoring in History and a minor in English. I also completed a Certificate in Faith Education at ACU.

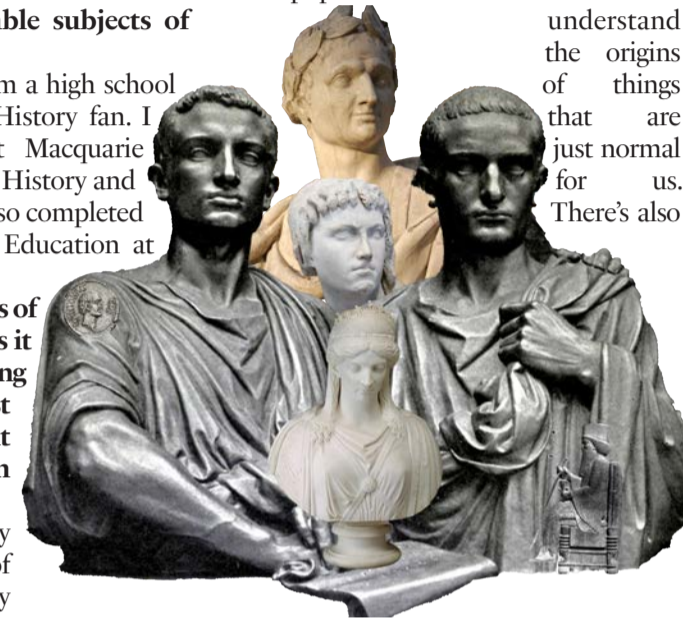
**VC: What does Ides of March mean to you? Is it Gretchen Wieners saying "we should totally just stab Caesar" or is it merely the 74th day in the Roman calendar?**

**SK:** I actually always think of Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar because the warning to "Beware the Ides of March" originated there. Julius Caesar ignores the advice and Shakespeare uses this moment to suggest that Caesar's hubris contributed to his downfall. I see Caesar's death as a pivotal moment in history forging a dangerous political alliance that ultimately kills the Roman Republic that Caesar's assassins claimed to be protecting.

**VC: You are well aware that**

**I studied Modern History and advocate its benefits. The floor is yours to argue, unopposed, about the infinitude of Ancient History.**

**SK:** I always say to my students that 'Ancient History is everywhere.' It's in our language and in some of our common sayings, our politics, our solar system, our art and architecture, our memes and all over popular culture. It's such a treat to



understand the origins of things that are just normal for us. There's also

something in Ancient History for everyone — political rivalries, devastating conflicts, social and legal reforms, philosophy, scandals, romances, tragedies and just drama, drama, drama. It also teaches us all about the human condition. The world around us has changed so dramatically over the centuries, but we can still relate so much to the individuals we learn about in Ancient History. I always feel so

connected to the personalities.

**VC:** I remember you trying to convince me to study Ancient History because of all the scandals. What is the most scandalous story that has actually made its way into the NSW curriculum? And how is that not gossip?

**SK:** There are scandalous stories behind almost every Ancient personality. Nero and his mother, Agrippina, are never short of scandal. A lot of what we know probably was gossip!

**VC: In one of my units of study — students can guess — The History of the Peloponnesian War by Thucydides was invoked many times when studying Realism. Have you read Thucydides' book, and if so, can you sift out the juicy details?**

**SK:** I actually refer quite a bit to Thucydides in my Ancient History lessons. The rivalry between Athens and Sparta is so interesting and really created quite the divide in Greece — Thucydides places a lot of it in context. I thank Thucydides for all the memes people have created about Athens and Sparta.

**VC: When studying the 'classics' like Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, they are romanticised as bastions of 'Western' civilisation and European values. How do you as a teacher view this constructed narrative?**

**SK:** They are only one part of the history of Western civilisation, and in many ways, stood in opposition to contemporary Western ideals and values. The romanticised vision is one that is largely selective. You can't just pick and

choose the parts that you like most, and I think that is what has happened.

**VC: And for the final question, do you recommend students study either History at a university level, regardless of the conversations surrounding employment?**

**SK:** Definitely. The skills are so valuable in so many fields. We are inundated with information in this digital age, so it's become more and more important to learn how to deconstruct information and analyse perspectives.

**This is Sparta!:**

**Q:** Favourite Year 12 Ancient History unit to teach?

**A:** The Personality study - Xerxes

**Q:** Favourite Year 12 Modern history unit if had the opportunity to teach it?

**A:** Change in the Modern World — Civil Rights in the USA

**Q:** Underrated ancient period and/or figure?

**A:** The Gracchi brothers. I don't think they were underrated in their time, or by modern historians, but most people haven't heard of them.

**Q:** Favourite method of historical investigation?

**A:** Any kind of source analysis.

**Q:** Cleopatra and Julius Caesar, or Cleopatra and Mark Antony?

**A:** Cleopatra and Mark Antony.

**Q:** And finally, the mother of all questions, Pride and Prejudice 1995 or Pride + Prejudice 2005?

**A:** Definitely 1995.

*Read the full interview online.*

## Sarah J. Maas: A feminist fraud

Jess Watson wants you to read better books.

In a world of faeries and beasts, the abuse and manipulation of women is okay, right? Celebrated author Sarah J. Maas certainly uses this sentiment to paint her male characters as feminists by sweeping their misogynistic actions under the rug.

Over ten years since her first publication, Sarah J. Maas has sold more than 38 million copies of her young adult fantasy books. Young adult fiction readers are no stranger to deeply sexist novels. Most of us are familiar with the Twilight saga, in which the bruised body of the protagonist after sex with her vampire boyfriend is framed so beautifully that many readers don't bat an eye. Similarly, the controlling personality of the male love interest of popular teen series After is somehow portrayed as seductive rather than sexist.

Sarah J. Maas falls back on these tired tropes and more. Yet what differentiates her from other sexist authors is that she sells herself and her characters as feminist — and betrays the movement in the same breath.

In an interview with Booktopia, Maas claimed that writing "complex, dynamic" female characters is one of her main motivations for writing. Despite

this, she exclusively writes protagonists that are 'conventionally' beautiful, white women. They can be feisty and strong but are sexually submissive in the bedroom. From merely a visual standpoint, the description of Nesta's "long bare legs", "tapered, thin waist" and "full inviting breasts" in *A Court of Thorns and Roses* series (*ACoTaR*) seems to more closely resemble the wet dreams of a twelve-year-old boy than a feminist author.

But the real nail in the coffin of Maas's feminist image is her novels' **normalisation of abuse.**

In her first *Throne of Glass* series, the male love interest nonconsensually bites the female lead. However this occurs only once, because as a respectable man he does not, in his own words, "bite the women of other males." The protagonist later falls in love with him and this moment is framed as positive because it helped her become a stronger woman. In writing this, Maas not only plays into ideas of male ownership over women but actually suggests that the abuse of women can be beneficial for them if the perpetrator has good intentions.

According to fans, the most beloved fae male love interest, Rhysand, from

*ACoTaR* gets off to an equally strong start when he drugs the female protagonist of the series, Feyre, with faerie wine to suppress her memory. He then forces her to sexually dance for him in public until she vomits. So in addition to Maas giving readers complex female representation she gives them... sexual assault made sexy?

By the middle of the second book we have heard hurried excuses for this act. Rhysand has become a feminist king declaring that Feyre is his "equal in every way" and will never be designated to "breeding, child rearing and parties."

Sold as a selfless, handsome man, Rhysand carries a strong appeal to young readers. He is the subject of fan art, fanfiction and stories, as well as glowing praise. Rhysand's 'pretty' words seal his position as a feminist and then young readers idolise him for it.

Patterns of sexual abuse are excused by Maas's explanation that faeries are a hormonally-driven species separate from humans. While this is a creative attempt from Maas to conceal the sexism of her work, excusing harmful male behaviour on the basis of biology remains a damaging message for readers.

By defending Rhysand's past behaviour Maas justifies an abusive relationship to a young and susceptible readerbase. Is the take-away message of her novels that abuse is okay as long as they love you? Not to mention Rhysand's continuing sexist behaviour throughout the series — take his weird, overbearing protectiveness towards Feyre or his lack of action to protect the many women who are literally tortured by men in the court that he rules over.

Feminism is a complex movement with many, varied and diverse branches and ideas. It is hard to imagine that there is one in which abuse is accepted as love. The toxic tropes of masculinity and abuse of women in her books should revoke Sarah J. Maas' entitlement to market herself and her novels as feminist. With the media's formative role in shaping individual ideals widely recognised it is time for authors to stop selling sexist as sexy.

If you want diverse, feminist and inclusive young adult fiction, and alternatives to Sarah J. Maas, read the *Priory of the Orange Tree* by Samantha Shammion or the *Six of Crows* duology by Leigh Bardugo.



# Denis, you've *Dune* it again!

Valerie Chidiac buys one ticket to *Dune*.

*Note: According to the SWANA alliance, SWANA, instead of Middle Eastern or Middle Eastern and North Africa (MENA), is a more appropriate label because it serves a decolonial purpose. It forgoes the generalisations of "Near Eastern, Arab World or Islamic World" which uphold the Eurocentric and Orientalist values used "to conflate, contain and dehumanise" people of the region. I will be using this term throughout this article.*

My thoughts about *Dune Part: II* were perfectly articulated when Timothee Chalamet's character, Paul Atreides, struggles with the spice in Fremen food, and Chani (Zendaya) mockingly says, "too spicy for the foreigner?"

There is no doubt that *Dune* (1965) by Frank Herbert is a seminal text. Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* (2021) and *Dune: Part II* (2024) can also be objectively described as exercises in aesthetic and technical achievement. However, the world of *Dune* being stripped of its South West/Asian North African (SWANA) influence, and then witnessing this conversation deliberately circumvented, has marred my cinema-going experience. This piece is not intended to convince anyone to dislike *Dune* but it must be recognised that there are deep-seated issues with the filmmaker's choices.

I remember listening to a podcast by The Middle Geeks Episode 31: 'Dune' Review in 2021 and unfortunately, the discussion remains the same.

In a story known for its dismantling **"A *Dune* adaptation in 2024 cannot be oblivious to the representation discourse surrounding it."**

of the hero's journey and concept of the religious (white) saviour, *Dune* also perpetuates it with the Fremen people being descendants of Muslims. Rather than it being a tale of oppressed — Fremen — and oppressor — all the Houses, not just Harkonnen — Paul is motivated by revenge for his father's death, and the Fremen only become relevant to his quest under the guise that he is liberating them.

From the mention of jinn as a joke, to the manner of prayer being similar to sujud or sajdah in Islam, guerrilla warfare similar to that of anti-colonial tactics, Timothee Chalamet being nicknamed "Usul", and the reference to Fremen as "rats", I genuinely felt uncomfortable in the cinema. The Fremen identity is not adequately developed, and instead is an amalgamation of SWANA cultures as if they are a monolith.

Instead of being situated in Paul's outsider perspective, the film could have

been framed through the perspective of the Fremen, namely Chani. This was a missed opportunity because Villeneuve shifts her characterisation from unquestioning concubine to someone who simultaneously doubts the prophecy calling him the awaited messiah. While her trajectory in the film felt a bit one-note, Zendaya played her with conviction and the final scene rang true to Chani's earlier statement, "we believe in Fremen."

Stilgar's (Javier Bardem) 'Middle Eastern' accent compared to the American voices around him was ridiculously justified that "he is from the South". At one point, the South is also deemed as "uninhabitable", a statement which felt especially jarring considering how this rings true for the south and all of Gaza, Palestine experiencing dehumanisation and genocide.

There is only one Arab in the cast, with Souheila Yacoub playing Shishakli, Chani's friend. Her purpose in the film was to mock Paul, then suddenly believe in his mission, and heroically die (off-screen) at the hands of the psychotic Feyd-Rautha (Austin Butler).

In somewhat of more comforting news, the film employed Arabic-speaking extras and crew because it was shot in Jordan and Abu Dhabi.

Anya Taylor-Joy, has been cast as Alia Atreides, one of the most important characters in the entire franchise. Besides the fact that Alia is not going to be pronounced correctly, but instead as Ah-li-y-a, why was this not an opportunity for an unknown or established SWANA actress? Oscar Isaac can be cast as Duke Atreides because he is the go-to actor for ethnically ambiguous roles, but an actor like Tony Shalhoub, Tahar Rahim or Khaled El Nabawy cannot be considered. What about actresses like Hiam Abbass, Yasmine Al Massri, Yara Shahidi, Alia Shawkat? Even Salma Hayek would have been somewhat sufficient.

As for the Fremen language, "Chakobsa", it was created from scratch by David J. Peterson. This New Yorker article quoted Peterson's Reddit comment where he confidently claimed that "the time depth of the *Dune* books makes the amount of recognisable Arabic that survived completely (and I mean COMPLETELY) impossible."

Because of that unnecessary logic, mispronunciation of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words was rampant from "Mu'addib" (teacher), "Mahdi" (expected messiah in Islam) to "Lisan Al-Gaib" (tongue of the unseen).

I, like Paterson, could not recognise some of the Arabic words anymore.

In an interview with Stephen Colbert, Villeneuve talked about a dialect coach whose role was to ensure accuracy in pronunciation. After shooting a complex scene, Villeneuve was happy with the take and ready



**"However, the world of *Dune* being stripped of its South West/Asian North African (SWANA) influence, and then witnessing this conversation deliberately circumvented, has marred my cinema-going experience."**

myself have had their requests denied. I was told there wasn't enough time to speak to Denis for an interview I had been commissioned by the BBC to undertake. If I hadn't been such an outspoken critic of the cultural appropriation and Erasure of MENA actors, maybe that request would have been fulfilled," Flint said.

She also spoke to the rife anti-Arab and Islamophobic sentiment, and that it is not unusual for MENA voices to be silenced or sidelined.

"This discrimination is more than apparent in a Hollywood system that takes from MENA culture but rarely allows talent or artists to have control or input on those narratives. That *Dune* is a sci-fi franchise makes it more difficult to convince people of the theft and erasure but there are voices like myself who will continue to interrogate cinematic representations and malignment of the Arab world and its diaspora."

A *Dune* adaptation in 2024 cannot be oblivious to the representation discourse surrounding it. Even Herbert did not play coy about his authorial intentions when writing *Dune* in the 1960s, as revealed in the biography *Dreamer of Dune* (2003). If I wanted to watch a dystopian science-fiction without any overt SWANA influence, there is *Star Wars*, and when I want a more comprehensive portrayal of the oppressed rising up against the oppressor, I will resort to *The Battle of Algiers* (1966).

I will tune into the next instalment, *Dune: Messiah*, hoping that Villeneuve and his team are listening because they have the resources to address these valid concerns. I, and many SWANA viewers, do not want to keep discussing what is omitted from the storytelling, and there is time for improvements.

In the meantime, I will listen to *The Middle Geeks Episode 63: 'Dune: Part Two' Review*.

"Where mostly white interviewers and influencers get time with the director, writer and cast, those like

# Guy Williams on New Zealand, comedy and music

Aidan Elwig Pollock interviews.

*For anyone with their finger on the Kivi pulse, Guy Williams would be a familiar name. And why should it not be? Aotearoa/New Zealand is Australia's socio-historical sibling, a country we can learn a lot from. If Australians should pay attention to Kiwi politics and Kiwi history, we should also pay attention to Kiwi comedians.*

*I was delighted to hear that the host of satirical news show New Zealand Today, was embarking on a 2024 stand-up comedy tour of Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Guy will perform in Sydney in April this year for the Sydney Comedy Festival.*

*I racked his brain for insight into what goes behind such an esoteric blend of journalism and comedy, his thoughts on student journalism, and what he thinks about Australian audiences. Here are the highlights from a strikingly anarchic one-hour-and-forty-five-minute interview.*

**I asked Guy how similar New Zealand Today — with its blend of comedy and investigation — is to conventional journalism.**

Guy Williams: "I never studied journalism, so I don't actually know, but I'd say a lot of it is quite similar. I'm kind of obsessed with journalism a little bit myself. There's nothing more satisfying than when you do start scratching away at a story, and you start to pull back the layers."

"We normally start with an article that's already been written, and then we go deeper. But there's been quite a few times where journalists will just write stories based on a court report, or just a wire, where the story will appear very funny and shallow. But then when we research it, it's actually very serious and it goes dark real quick. And we can't cover it."

**This reminded me of my prepared question about ethical considerations, which I sheepishly wheeled out. I was fairly sure Guy gets asked "what sort of ethical considerations go into making a show like New Zealand Today?" often, but I had to bite. For a comedian who proclaimed himself "just fucked in the head," his answer became markedly philosophical.**

GW: "Yeah, Yeah; Major ethical considerations. I've received criticism for putting people drunk on camera and stuff like that. I genuinely don't have a problem with that. We normally check in the next day to make sure that the person is okay."

But there's a weird divide — and I think New Zealand Today kind of shows that — in society; the easiest way to split it would be city versus country. You can see in a show like New Zealand Today how a guy like Donald Trump is successful. I mean, this sounds ludicrous but hear me out. The standard of decency and what you talk and joke about can be so much different in the city versus the country or small towns. As a comedian who

tours around, I shuttle both lines. I'm an inner city, woke hipster. Well, I don't think I'm hipster, but I'm from the inner city, the liberal elite or whatever... But I go out into the country, into these rough as guts areas. And that's part of the charm of New Zealand Today. It's a fish out of water.

Some people live in the city, and have an idea of politeness, or how you'll come across on TV. But then you meet people in the country who are just loose as a goose, and just genuinely live a better life; a more carefree existence and I fucking love that. That's one of the things I love about New Zealand Today: we show that there are different ways of living.

The show is rooted in love. In the end, no matter what's happened in eleven minutes, I like to think it finishes in a place of love. And you go,

**"Socio-economic privilege, just as in everything, is key."**

'even though I don't agree with that person, I still enjoy them and can see their perspective, or why they're the way they are.'

Guy went on to give me some insight into how a person becomes a famous — or at the very least professional — comedian. The first ingredient, apparently, is "delusional confidence."

GW: I have this weird thing; you'll notice that people have it. I'm calling it delusional confidence... or a better name would be 'James Corden disease.' James Corden shouldn't have hosted a major American late-night show. That's not to say James Corden isn't talented or amazing, but James Corden just does not have the talent to do an American late-night show.

And I have that same disease. I don't know why. There's much more talented comedians who haven't made it as far as me because they don't have this delusional self-belief. And often comedians will use drugs and alcohol — I don't, I'm just fucked in the head.

**But according to Guy, 'James Corden disease' will only get you so far. Socio-economic privilege, just as in everything, is key.**

GW: Comedy is now dominated by rich kids. I come from a privileged background, my brother and sister are comedians. To be able to be a comedian now, you basically have to live in a big city and you need to be able to afford rent and not have to work. People in small towns are naturally hilarious, genius comedians. The number of people I interview where I'm like, 'fuck bro, if you'd had the background that I'd had, you'd be able to be a comedian 10 times better than me.' But that's where privilege comes into it.

University is an oft-overlooked part of that privilege.

GW: I wouldn't have even known

comedy was a potential job before I moved to Wellington and had five years experience in the world at Victoria University. Whereas most kids have to decide their career for the rest of their fucking life at 15, I got to get to like 21 or 22. Because I spent like fucking four or five years at university. Considering I only got a three year degree, it's quite funny. I did extra for experts. But having those extra years to see what was out there, was a privilege.

**Guy completed a politics degree at Victoria University of Wellington, in Aotearoa/New Zealand's capital. He explained to me how ill-fated Labour Prime Minister David Lange led him away from quantitative research and participant ethnography to holding the mic to eccentricity across the country.**

GW: In university, I realised what interested me about politics was the comedy side of it. In 1980s New Zealand, we had a very funny politician called David Lange. He turned out to be a terrible prime minister, but he was very witty. He won a debate at the Oxford Union with an American guy who was in favour of nuclear arms. And he had a famous quip where — It's always misquoted — 'can you move away from me? I can smell the uranium on your breath.'

David Lange was more of a comedian than a politician. His political career was actually a disaster. He was a left-wing prime minister who ended up ushering in New Zealand's right-wing, Reaganomics/Thatcheronomics policies because he didn't look over what his treasurer was doing, and lost control of his own party. I liked him for his comedy and his speeches, not for his politics. So I learned that lesson.

**A vital artery of any University culture is its student journalism. So I asked Guy about his relationship with student media, and what it meant while he was in Wellington.**

"That was one of my favourite things, the high school newspaper, which lasted briefly, and then the university newspaper. And the comedy that was specific to my area; it's one of the real disasters of comedy becoming globalised. In the past local material worked really well, but because of the spread of comedy like that, Netflix and YouTube, and people making stuff that's global, you really sanitise to make it apply anywhere."

What I loved about my student newspaper at Victoria University — Salient, — was that the jokes were specific to Victoria University. That's a really nice thing, because it makes you feel like you're part of a club; like you have culture.

So I like that you guys are making something that has no commercial viability. No value outside of university. Nah, that's not true. I'm sure you guys do like proper journalism and stuff, but

if you're doing comedy most of your laughs will only appeal to a university audience.

**I told Guy about the controversy surrounding Honi's own comedy forays. He spoke to memories of controversies that embroiled friends involved with Salient during his time at university.**

GW: The lesson I learned was that sometimes when you have a controversy, you should apologise. I've definitely done jokes that people have gone, 'that's not okay,' and I'm like, 'yeah, you're right, that's not okay.'

But there's some times where I'm like, It's satire, it shouldn't be taken at face value. You're making fun of the problem, not making fun of the victim. So you can't always let the backlash cut you down. Sometimes, you should, and I've apologised. But sometimes you've got to stay steady.

**As a palette cleanser after all this university talk, I asked Guy whether there was such a thing as the oft-lauded Kiwi sense of humour, and whether this was different from our home brand Australian humour.**

GW: I don't know, because I haven't travelled around the world enough. But is there a New Zealand and an Australian comedy? I'm still figuring that out. Australia is the first country that I've come and done comedy regularly outside of New Zealand. New Zealand and Australia would be pretty similar, apart from the in-jokes and some of the words.

**Then Guy spoke to the difference between New Zealand Today and his stand up routine.**

GW: On stage, comedians look good because they trial their material. I'm in Adelaide right now doing hit and miss comedy, getting ready for the Melbourne Comedy Festival, which is the big daddy for comedians. So by the time I get to Melbourne, I will hopefully have a flawless hour, but the poor motherfuckers in Adelaide don't know that because they're seeing the creative process at work.

"Comedy is crazy. ' you write a hundred jokes and maybe only two or three are worthwhile, you try those on stage and maybe one out of three actually works. The strike rate is low. The good news about television is that you can edit it. People are often quite impressed by New Zealand Today, how quick I am or the locals are. the truth is we shoot hours and hours of footage and cut it down to the best 11 to 15 minutes. You don't see the amount of times I just eat shit, or really embarrass myself, comedy is pain."



## My grandma still exists in the metaverse.

Hanna Kwan *verse-jumps*.

My grandma Popo passed away 9 years ago, but I couldn't make it to her funeral in person. In lieu of this, I watched it over a skype call, in my room 7886 kms away. My interactions with Popo were largely online so it wasn't out of the ordinary that it turned out this way. My actions might imply that we weren't close; in fact I loved her dearly and would have wished the world to say goodbye in person. The geographical distance between us meant we had to make up for the physical absence in our relationship by any means.

In 2012, both Popo and I joined Facebook. It soon became our main way to connect. The posts on my wall were frequent and the messages seemingly unending, but what I valued the most were the mundane posts that Popo would share that felt intimate and personal. Simple snapshots of her garden triggered waves of homesickness and grief, but they were reminders that despite the physical distances separating us, our connection never faded.

It's also just a source of humour. My grandma was a big fan of Guatemala, and mentions of this South American nation were never lacking. In one post she implicitly admits to breaking biosecurity laws by planting grass she brought back from Guatemala.

“Guatemala から持って帰った日々草がそろそろ終わりです。”

The grass that I brought back from Guatemala is almost finished.

In another post she explains to her friends that she cannot speak Brazilian Portuguese, unprompted.

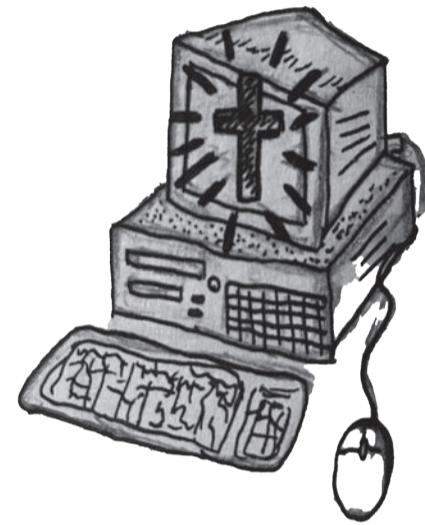
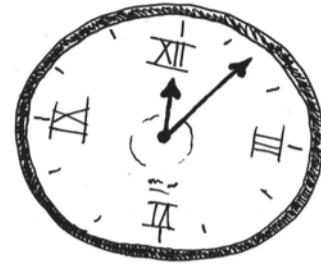
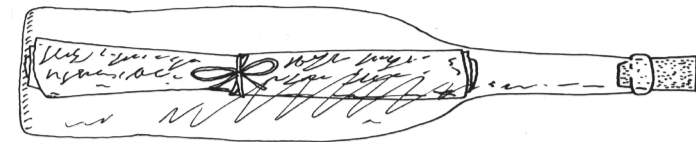
Like many 76 year olds Popo was unable to grasp the norms of the internet, frequently interacting with posts from my own friends who weren't connected to her in any way. Instances like this sparked conversations that went along the lines of:

“Hey, um I think your grandma shared a post about my dad yesterday” or “Some Japanese person liked my post and your friends with her on Facebook.”

This is endearing as a 24 year old, but was mortifying at 14. As a migrant in regional NSW, any extra focus on my Japanese-Chinese identity was an unwelcome stressor. From around this age, I actively hid my identity online and off. This I deeply regret, as it strained my relationship with Popo.

Popo passed away in 2015 but her Facebook account has remained an extension of her.

Like a Kamidana, (神棚) exists as an alter to visit and reminisce. A few years ago, a new Facebook feature came out, “On this day”.



It never piqued my interest until it seemingly revived Popo. She was back in my life again. This time in the form of a Facebook notification.

Even as I write this piece, Facebook alerts me to one.

On this day, 9 years ago, Popo posted on your wall:

February 27th, 2015  
“とても嬉しい毎日でした。有難うございました。”

It was a very fun day. Thank you very much.

Like our conversations never ceased, the dialogue between us was back again.

My grandma still exists in the metaverse.

## Requiem

Nessa Zhu *writes a poem*.

*Darling, were you at the park tonight?*

Did you know  
I took a walk, round the park today.  
Donned my Sunday morning best, buttons  
Up to my neck.  
You said, *Darling, come to our place*  
Where the wind catches a breath  
In the shadows  
Of our playground, true confess.

I must admit, I was never too  
bold with words. You didn't mind, but today I thought  
I'd nick a flower  
Or two, for you.  
It's spring after all, and the hibiscus  
is in bloom

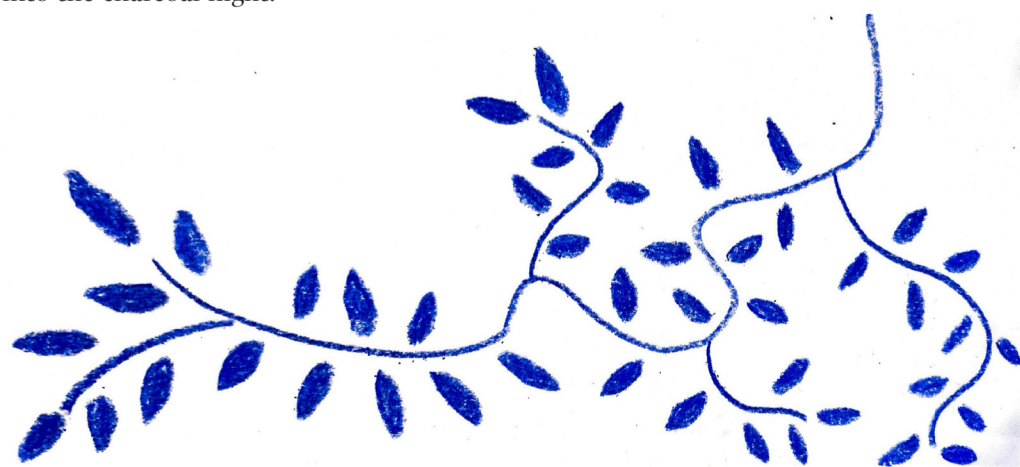
Where are you? little red has found her shoes  
golden beads fleeing the scene  
Do you see me? dreads of trees, awakening  
worrying, into the charcoal night.

Bush ablaze, sacred light  
I knew it was you  
Whispering my name.  
Come here, little child,  
*I know what you want.*

Dread river, hauling through  
Wailing masses.  
Fifth circles, fifth finger knotted in  
Tandem, oaths spat on,  
Stop biting the hand.

It chokes around us as we embrace

Your fingertips; mosaic of your colours aglow  
It's blue, it's white, it's yellow, it's red  
Come on now, show your hand  
The children were clapping, and behind their  
Bodies I could see  
Sewn smiles  
Girls in pigtails, boys offering their hand  
And I thanked you, even in the end  
Wet salt, searing against my cheeks  
As I sunk into the moss  
Torchred Stygian through  
Your footsteps gone, grass spry before I could ask,  
Hold my hand, just this once...



## Melanie Joosten's *Like Fire-Hearted Suns*

Faye Tang *dissects the anatomy of Suffragette literature*.

In the John Hopkins University's historical collection is a postcard, ca. 1910, of an anti-suffragist group consisting of women dressed supposedly unfashionably in large overalls, and men dressed in what the archivists call “suffrage drag”. Aside from the leering expressions on their faces, I'm delighted by what this image conjures. I see anti-suffragists sitting down and lettering “VOTES FOR WOMEN” onto posters; men squeezing themselves into puffy blouses and frilly skirts, feeling, even though they were determinedly unempathetic, the swaths and layers of fabric that were one manifestation of the burdens that weighed women down. Squint, and the mimicry flakes away, leaving behind all the motions of Suffragette communion.

Melanie Joosten's forthcoming novel, *Like Fire-Hearted Suns*, reimagines the Suffragette movement of England from the perspectives of young suffragettes, and the women who worked in Holloway, the prison where convicted suffragettes were sent. History classes cover the macroscopic: grand parades, militant protests, mass arrests, hunger strikes, and force-feeding; but in the act of novelisation, Joosten closely examines the personal and interpersonal. Beatrice, one of the protagonists, tries to resist this novelisation, embodying the revolutionary who lives, eats, and breathes in political ideals: a figure that belongs not in a novel, but in a

history textbook.

A college student who becomes embroiled in the infamously militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), Beatrice tries to shed any parts of her identity that are superfluous to her purpose. When made to introduce herself to her fellow suffragettes in prison, she thinks, “What do names matter?...need we be tied to them any longer? Are we not of a piece, part of a great machine bearing down on those complacent?”

Her insistent rejection of names — of individuality at large — speaks to an urge to aggrandise, to collectivise, to abstract, to reduce. Her identification with being and occupying a part of a machine reflects her impatience with semantics altogether. Machines have no need for words, only actions to be learned and repeated. Befittingly, “deeds not words” becomes Beatrice's machine-like credo.

In verbalising Beatrice's character, the novel argues against her. The very language that Beatrice uses is contradictory (being “part of a... machine”, no matter how great or revolutionary, is to be complacent). Despite her apparent contempt for words, Beatrice is affected by the discrepancy in her mother's language when talking about her versus when talking about her brother — “I suppose it's impossible for a boy to be spoiled... the way my mother talks, anyone would think I'm minutes away from turning, like a cut of meat left in the sun.” Yet

these are contradictions that Joosten leaves the reader to identify. Beatrice herself is stalwart in her mindset, impatient with pamphlets, articles, names, and words, gravitating instead to rampant militancy to propel the cause forward. In turning away from semantics, however, she loses the definition of ‘the cause’ altogether.

Since Joosten and we, the readers, retain the advantage of hindsight from a 21st century perspective, we are able to draw upon the anatomy of *écriture féminine*. It reminded me of reading the works of Susan Sontag and Annie Ernaux who obliterate the false barrier between language and the condition of the female body, and therefore, between the personal and the collective.

Ernaux, a French feminist memoirist at the turn of the millennium, wrote that her goal is “for my body, my sensations, and my thoughts to become writing... something intelligible and universal, causing my existence to merge into the lives and heads of other people.” Joosten's narrativising of Beatrice's experiences does the same.

On the day that the WSPU parade tries to push through the gates to the Houses of Parliament, Beatrice is within the group of women who are sectioned off, jostled, and physically assaulted by counter-protesters. The language describing this experience is disembodied: Beatrice is split into objectified parts of her body, like cuts

Source: ‘Real Photo Postcard: Votes for Women’, John Hopkins University



of meat — she becomes “arms and legs, torso, head”, “rough thumbs down her cheek”, and “spasms shooting through her shoulders.” This visceral, violent assault on Beatrice's body merges her experience with the experiences of women everywhere, of every age. This image reverberates today in the upsettingly high number of domestic violence cases, in the media through the objectifying male gaze, and in the newest technological ‘advancement’ where images of women's faces and bodies are stolen and pornographised with artificial intelligence.

Like the postcard, *Like Fire-Hearted Suns* is teeming with anti-suffragists: the reactionary, the incendiary, the wilfully ignorant, the tomato-throwers, the ones inclined to fetishise. Joosten also forces readers to don “suffrage drag”, by distilling the bodies, sensations, and thoughts of suffragettes into words—not for the purpose of mockery, but rather to elicit a violent empathy, and a sense that ‘the cause’ is not over, not yet, not until a board of women vote on abortion laws, and women alone govern their own bodies.

## Monument by Bonny Cassidy

Mariana Gouveia *reviews*.

“The Great Australian Silence” is a term popularised by historian W.E.H. Stanner to describe the ‘cult of forgetfulness’ that permeates through the whole Nation. This cultural amnesia comes from an excessive focus on narratives provided by settlers and dismissiveness around Indigenous people's suffering. He describes it as an ongoing practice amongst Australian Society that perpetuates the marginalisation and prejudice against the victims of colonisation. In her fourth book, Bonny Cassidy approaches the contemporary relevance, pointing out the enrooted presence of this disparity in our society.

“By highlighting the environment around her — monuments, street names, and landscape descriptions — the environment itself emerges as a central character in the narrative.

Described by Giramondo Publishing as a non-fictional “part poetry, part prose, microhistory,

memoir, travel writing and sometimes speculative imagination.” Cassidy's lyrical prose emotionally engages the reader with a mix of historical manuscripts, her own family and history, alongside reflections on Australian monuments. By highlighting the environment around her — monuments, street names, and landscape descriptions — the environment itself emerges as a central character in the narrative.

Cassidy first confronts this concept at the beginning of her fourth book *Monument* where she revisits her own family's story, rewriting it in a way more cohesive to reality. According to Bonny, to learn from the past it is necessary to dismiss the bedtime stories she was told by her grandmother (Nana) about their history. Instead, she must dive deeper into her history, uncovering the many lies she was told.

Traumatised by a shocking discovery about her father's life, Bonny

“More than a novel, this book touches on the author's feelings and vulnerability.”

is left questioning her image of her family. Looking for the truth, she takes us around the country: digging through old archives and trying to reconstruct her story truthfully. Driven by her personal frustration, the author is not afraid to speculate on the thoughts and prejudices of her ancestors, reflecting on the harm they caused and how that unfolds in the present. Her narrative encourages the reader to pursue further research on the contemporary artists that she passionately describes.

More than a novel, this book touches on the author's feelings and



BONNY CASSIDY

MONUMENT

GIRAMONDO

*Monument*, published by Giramondo, is available for \$32.95 at selected bookstores.



## Yussef dazes at the Sydney Opera House

Charlie Lancaster reviews and photographs.

It's heartening to arrive at a concert and see countless very fashionable people who all seem to be in great moods. Anticipation grows as they cloak bags, grab drinks, and sneak a peek at merch, all tugged along by an eager current.

Seated, everyone eagerly awaits the man who knows what to do with the giant metal sculpture on stage.

He emerges from the smoke, dressed in a striped yellow pyjama suit. He's wearing his signature bucket hat. His bandmates also got the matching set memo. He sits down, looking like he'll say something. He will. Just without words.

London-born Yussef Dayes has carved out a highly unique sound for himself, no small feat in jazz drumming. After many avant-garde collaborative projects, Dayes released his debut solo album, *Black Classical Music*, in 2023. The record celebrates eclectic musical influences, its features from family and friends speaking to the creator's intimate connections with, and through, jazz. It's on this record that Dayes masters his rapid but tasteful, chaotic but precise drumming style.

The concert opens with the album's titular song, a regal and atmospheric piece reminiscent of Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock's sprawling tracks. The former influence can be chalked up to Dayes' time learning under Billy Cobham, the legendary drummer who gave Miles

Davis' music much of its famed energy. Rapid cymbal work, creative drum fills and satisfying full-band hits make this punchy track a perfect opener.

The Opera House Concert Hall, with its towering ceilings and 3000-person capacity, risked blending Dayes' complex beats into a sonic mush. Potentially disastrous for YD, venues like these have historically been designed to enhance the swells of an orchestra, or the resonance of an operatic voice. But the sound engineers rose to the challenge. Dayes' highly contemporary fusion of jazz, reggae and Afrobeat was impeccably mixed, his drums tuned with intention and musicality.

Dayes' kit is at its most maximalist, yet nothing felt superfluous. Frequently he incorporates an arsenal of



sounds into a beat, for example in the Latin-inspired 'Chasing the Drum.'

A new generation of London musicians has reinvigorated jazz in recent years. Artists like Alfa Mist, Ezra

Collective and Tom Misch set high standards, experimenting with time signature, worldwide sounds and digital production. When Alfa Mist brought their cosmic jazz to Sydney last year for Vivid, each band member was stronger than the last.

This might be where the Yussef Dayes Experience falters.

His bandmates are not quite on his level. Dayes shines most alongside creatives who match his skill and confidence. He is, of course, touring a solo album, but without some key collaborative tracks, the show risks growing repetitive. Dayes himself seemed disillusioned at times; as songs ended, he would raise his sticks, expectantly looking around for a quick jam or trashcan ending. Rarely did the band play ball, and at one point Dayes let his sticks fall in a show of maybe-not-so-faux disappointment.

R o c c o Palladino's bass laid a solid foundation, his distortion regrettably cranked to eleven, and strums and harmonics in his 'Tioga Pass' solo intrigued. Elijah Fox, aka 'Mr. Octopus', flourished on the keyboard, with clear influences from '70s funk to dreamy arpeggios that sounded straight out of a Nintendo game. Guest guitarist Ivy Alexander rocked a few soaring solos;

her shredding was an unexpected, yet welcome, addition to the setlist. Her improvisations were hindered by being in complete darkness, though, thanks to a lighting oversight. Despite saxophonist Malik Venna's melodies growing a little homogenous, he played with beautiful dynamic range and sensitivity, his sound a distinctive element of Dayes' tranquil style. YD's breakneck chops rarely went overboard. Occasionally he drilled too many hi-hats into a trap-inspired beat, or tried to cover too much of his kit, but it was clear that Dayes was pushing himself. In doing so, however, he might be hitting the limits of common-time jazz drumming. By the performance's sixty-minute mark it was necessary to mix up the time signature or depart from the trademark sound.



I'm sure that exploring odd time signatures would be light work for Dayes, as his fantastically tight performance convinced me that he experiences time differently to us humans. That could be the only explanation for the otherworldly talent that is Yussef Dayes.

other, and it must have been sometime between 'Ibitsu' and 'Question 1' when I found myself thrust to the front of the crowd, where a thronging melee pushed, jumped, and crowd-surfed someone every two or three minutes. Let it not be said the mosh etiquette wasn't on point though. While Atsuo brandished a guitar pedal over his head, long hair flying as he screamed and gesticulated, the crowd parted and I spotted a loose shoelace on the floor. When everyone converged in a frenzy of jumps and shoves, one of my friends began to fall but was fortunately pulled up before reaching the ground.

A minute or two later I felt a tap on my shoulder, a man old enough to be my Dad offered in earnest to help crowdsurf me. "You're next mate!" While I mulled this over, the gong was struck, and the frenzy subsided as the band played 'Luna' from the dream

pop-influenced New Album (2011). For fear of losing the contents of my pockets, I — regrettably in hindsight — didn't take him up on the offer. The set returned to fever pitch for the final stretch and, for their encore, Atsuo crowd-surfed in silence with a wry smile, before stepping behind the drums for 'Farewell', the opener from 2005 shoegaze opus *Pink*. Boris was loud and proud, with perhaps the only letdown being that the crowd couldn't quite sustain the energy the band deserved for the whole show. Nevertheless, I truly cannot wait to see them again.



## Crowdsurfing, double-neck guitar, and shredded shoelaces

Patrick McKenzie reviews and photographs Boris at Manning Bar.

Japanese experimental act Boris has defied genre labels while touring and releasing new albums continuously since 1992, leaving a trail of doom, sludge, avant-garde, noise, and stoner-y designations in its wake, often united by the same suffix: rock.

This is to say that one does not merely 'listen' to Boris, rather, the band's punishingly loud music forces its way into your ears with humbling scale and improbable density. A friend remarked to me after the gig "I can't even imagine how you would try to get a guitar to sound like that". No more was this evident than when I began to ascend the stairs of Manning House, and briefly made a trip back down to pick up a pair of venue-supplied earplugs.

After spending ample time in the merch line, we proceeded to the venue proper, where opener Kiyoharu had already taken the stage and a prominently placed gong beckoned. His band kicked proceedings off on a smoother note, playing a short set of J-Rock songs, with the most notable parts being Kiyoharu's bellowing vocals and his band's penchant for instrument changing — specific

compliments to the saxophonist who swapped constantly between soprano and tenor instruments.

After a short break, earplugs went in and the lights shifted to a deep red. Smoke filled the room as Boris took the stage. All members wore black. While usually performing as a trio, the band has recently taken on support drummer Osamu. In exchange, usual drummer Atsuo set down the drumsticks and picked up the microphone on lead vocals.

"Fuck yeah", were the first words from the frontman's mouth as bandmates Wata (lead guitar) and Takeshi (double-neck bass and rhythm guitar hybrid) joined him on stage. Reverb and fuzz emanated from the amp stacks at a monstrous level and I felt the first chord of 'Anti-Gone' thrum in my chest.

With a catalogue of 29 albums and half again as many collaborative releases, a Boris show can head in any direction. While this tour is in support of 2022's *Heavy Rocks* — the third album of theirs with that name — the set spanned included plenty of earlier material too.

Songs easily melded into each

other, and it must have been sometime between 'Ibitsu' and 'Question 1' when I found myself thrust to the front of the crowd, where a thronging melee pushed, jumped, and crowd-surfed someone every two or three minutes. Let it not be said the mosh etiquette wasn't on point though. While Atsuo brandished a guitar pedal over his head, long hair flying as he screamed and gesticulated, the crowd parted and I spotted a loose shoelace on the floor. When everyone converged in a frenzy of jumps and shoves, one of my friends began to fall but was fortunately pulled up before reaching the ground.

A minute or two later I felt a tap on my shoulder, a man old enough to be my Dad offered in earnest to help crowdsurf me.

"You're next mate!" While I mulled this over, the gong was struck, and the frenzy subsided as the band played 'Luna' from the dream

## EVERYTHING IS SH\*T!: Finding humour within chaos

Luana Lima decides if everything is, indeed, sh\*t.

In the intimate confines of the Persian-carpeted stage, the rock cabaret EVERYTHING IS SH\*T! takes the audience on a mesmerising journey through writer, producer, and performer Andy Freeborn's personal history and creative process. This confessional cabaret proved to be a bittersweet exploration of family trauma and resilience, weaving a narrative of hope and healing through the medium of song.

From the moment Freeborn's fingers touch the keys of their contemplative keyboard, the audience is transported from heartstring-tugging ballads to raucous jams that reverberate the stage with energy. Their thoughtful, unscripted soliloquies struck a bittersweet chord.

Accompanied by a band that functioned like a living, breathing entity as they responded to Freeborn's every musical nuance, their glorious stage presence was elevated to new heights.

Their songs, infused with both humour and poignancy, received dynamic support from drummer

Austin Hall and bassoonist Dylan Roberts, who interjected with "bad-um-tss" joke punctuations and kazoo interruptions. Alec Steedman's violin and Ren McMeiken's vocals added layers of depth and emotion to each composition. The wooden pier at the centre of the stage served as a focal point, grounding the band as they accompanied Freeborn from musical rock songs to Irish trad sessions.

**"Everything is sh\*t, but it'll be okay".**

At the heart of EVERYTHING IS SH\*T! lies a deeply personal story of loss, reconciliation, and love. The cabaret unfolds as a genre-shifting, big-band spectacle, wherein Freeborn

recounts "the story of dreams", and how they fell apart with their parents' divorce at the tender age of 10. It unfurled like a tapestry of musical vignettes, from the 1920's New Orleans-inspired jazz,



'Paris', to the rock opera 'Wine' (a song, Freeborn confessed, about what helped him cope), to the poignant ballad, 'Lullaby for Victoria'. Each song was a testament to their resilience, a melody of healing that resonated long after the final note faded.

While there were echoes of familiar musical motifs within Freeborn's compositions — including, but not limited to, a five-second snippet of Billy Joel's 'My Life' — the underlying narrative remained refreshingly unique. Austin Hall's brilliant production and arrangement created an immersive experience, drawing the audience deeper into the heartfelt story. Through moments of vulnerability and introspection, Freeborn invited the audience to share in a communal catharsis that transcended the confines of the stage.

In a particularly poignant moment, Freeborn shared a glimpse of their next musical, "They Who Pray



to Mercury", teasing a tale set in a future where the colour blue is forgotten. The audience was left eagerly anticipating what promises to be another unmissable creation from Freeborn.

EVERYTHING IS SH\*T! concluded with an Irish trad-inspired ballad, as Freeborn announced that they will become a nomad over the beautiful violin accompaniment of Alec Steedman. As the band played the audience out, the songs lingered, resonating with the remnants of healing and resilience.

In their commitment to honesty and authenticity, Freeborn laid bare their soul for all to see. From unscripted banter to moments of introspective silence, they invited us to bear witness to their triumphs and tribulations. And amidst the darkness, they found solace in the simple truth: "Everything is sh\*t, but it'll be okay".

Photography: Old Fitz Theatre

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MORE INFORMATION AND ENTRY DETAILS



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Launch

# PULP Magazine Issue 13

Saturday @ Glebe Hotel 16 March

# Subs takeover

ercombe Hotel 21 March 9pm-3am





# SRC Reports



## President's Report

Harrison Brennan

A reminder that census date is APRIL 2ND, this is the LAST DAY TO DROP A UNIT OF STUDY.

Recently I learnt that the Vice Chancellor has written to the NSW Labor housing minister Rose Jackson, asking her to designate USyd student accommodation as "affordable housing" so as to "cut red tape" and speed up development approvals of new housing infrastructure on campus. The minimum prices of university-owned accommodation at USyd are as follows: Darlington House \$292, Queen Mary Building \$347, Regiment \$366 and Abercrombie \$477. This is amidst the ongoing housing sell-offs over the past decades, international house closed with 200 rooms left in limbo, and the universities approval of a 7-18% rent increase for residents at Sydney University Village. Although difficult to find, it is still CHEAPER for students to live in a sharehouse than to rent at USyd. The university has full control over the pricing of student accommodation that they own, and in this housing crisis decided to hike rents by 6%. The university is fully capable of reducing the cost of student accommodation, but shamefully chooses not to, making student housing unaffordable for the vast majority of students.

Israeli Apartheid Week has begun, spanning the entire month of March. At 12pm Tuesday the 12th of March there is a webinar on Australia's military ties with Israel, featuring David Shoebridge, Rawan Arraf, Nick Riemer and Lil Barto. On the 21st of March there is an online teach-in with Addameer, the Palestinian Prisoner Support Association. On Friday the 15th of March there is a Students for Palestine protest at the Labor Offices on Sussex Street at 4pm and a campus rally on Wednesday the 20th of March. On Friday the 29th of March at 7pm there is an exciting online political tour of Jerusalem from Grassroots Al-Quds - to learn more and register for this event visit @usydacar on Instagram.

## Education Officers' Report

Grace Street & Shovan Bhattarai

FREE PALESTINE & GET CONSERVATIVES OFF CAMPUS

Last week we protested the Conservative Club's event featuring Tony Abbott and Konstantin Kisin as guest speakers. We told them to go to hell and offered Tony some onions.

It's Israeli Apartheid Month and we're pulling out all the stops with postering, protests, film screenings, forums, and more to build awareness and a student movement against the genocide in Gaza. Check out events with the Autonomous Collective Against Racism, BDS Youth

Australia, and Students for Palestine.

Tuesday 12 March 12pm: Webinar - Cut Military Ties with Israel, Stop Arming Genocide

Friday 15 March 4pm: Protest Labor at their offices on Sussex Street

Wednesday 20 March: Next USyd rally for Palestine

Thursday 21 March: Online teach-in with Addameer, Palestinian Prisoner Support Association

Wednesday 27 March 12pm: Speak-out at USyd to cut ties with Israel before going to UTS to join UTS staff in their protest against the Defence Innovation Network university partnership

Friday 29 March 7pm: Online political tour of Jerusalem with Grassroots Al-Quds (reserve spots online)

## Women Officers' Report

Eliza & Rand

Women's liberation must include the liberation of Palestine, as it must include the liberation of all colonised, oppressed peoples. Women's liberation without liberation from colonisation is colonial feminism- so-called "equality", reserved only for the white and wealthy. As the WoCo, we know our duty in this space is to bring forward decolonisation as an important lens to our feminism.

WoCo helped flyer, build for and attended the NDA for Palestine on the 28th of February. We were also involved in Israeli Apartheid Week, with a panellist on the Intersectionality with Palestine forum. The forum highlighted the intersections between the Palestinian struggle for liberation and: women's rights, queer liberation, environmental justice, Blackfulla justice, and Jewish liberation from Zionism. We hope to continue this work throughout the semester, building a strong left in support of a broad pro-Palestine movement.

WoCo was also involved in the Abolish the Colleges forum and have been flyering for the Abolish the Colleges campaign. The colleges are sexist, elitist institutions that perpetuate violence on campus and beyond. It has been good to talk to students and community members about these archaic institutions.

We are also organising a student contingent to the International Working Women's Day rally and are in the process of organising the Day of the Unborn Child counter protest. Abortion is healthcare, and while decriminalised remains still inaccessible and stigmatised. In light of CLM's recent mobilisation it is important that we have a strong left to protest these attacks on women, trans and queer people.

On a fun note, Women's Honi is going to be in Week 8 and we are sending out our expressions of interest to be part of the editorial collective. Sign up, it's going to be a blast!

In love and rage,  
Eliza & Rand

## Ethnocultural Officers' Report

Rav Grewal & Sidra Ghanawi

By way of introduction, Rav and Sidra are your 2024 Ethnocultural officers, and co-convenors of ACAR (Autonomous Collective Against Racism). This year, our duty; as an anti-racist, anti-imperialist collective; is crystal clear. We will dedicate the platform we have towards tangible solidarity with Palestine. This will translate into activism and radical education through panels, contingents to rallies, teach-ins etc.

During Week 2, we held a screening of 'Gaza' (2019) which served as a reminder that every life lost in this genocide, was a life once lived.

With Palestine at the forefront of our activism, ACAR has been working collaboratively with BDS Youth in hosting Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) on campus. IAW is a BDS-led campaign mobilising grassroots support on a global scale for the Palestinian liberation struggle. In Week 3, we hosted a panel titled 'Intersectionality with Palestine', hearing from Blak, Jewish, Queer, and Palestinian speakers (and more!).

We have plenty of IAW events left in March! Including a 'Stop Arming Genocide' webinar on Australia's military ties with Israel on the 12th, a teach-in by Addameer on the state of Palestinian prisoners in Israel on the 21st, a virtual political tour of Jerusalem by Grassroots Al-Quds on the 29th and a Palestinian art exhibition towards the end of the month.

We also acknowledge that our activism takes place in so-called Australia, whereby land was stolen in a violent process of colonisation which persists today. As such, we endeavour to work with the First Nations Collective in amplifying Blak Indigenous voices in the collective struggle for liberation; from Gadigal to Gaza.

We'll be starting a reading group on Palestine soon, and preparations for ACAR Honi are underway - get thinking about pitches & art! Keep an eye out on our Instagram @usydacar for more!

## Queer Officers' Report

Esther Whitehead, Jamie Bridge & Tim Duff

It has been just under a month since the horrific [alleged] murder of gay couple Jesse Baird and Luke Davies. This murder was at the hands of a NSW Police officer who shot them in their home with his service weapon. These deaths are not outliers, but just two of countless deaths of queer people and other marginalised groups at the hands of the police.

It was in this context that NSW police were permitted to march in this year's Mardi Gras parade.

On Friday the 1st of March, we took

to the streets in our hundreds to protest against this decision, and ongoing injustices committed towards queer people and other marginalised groups by the police. It was no surprise, then, when police violently assaulted, abused and threatened us as we took a stand against this ongoing brutality.

The only way we can protect ourselves is by fighting for our rights, not by sitting around and waiting for the police or the government to give them to us. The NSW Labor Government has once again delayed voting on the Equality Bill, delaying our rights. Rights to equality, safety and dignity, in our schools, in our workplaces and on the streets. That is why we will be marching for Trans Day of Visibility on Sunday the 31st of March. It's more critical than ever that we take to the streets to protest for our rights, with rally demands including:

- Full rights for Self ID
- Sex Work on the Anti-Discrimination Act (ADA)
- Job security, not religious bigotry
- End pinkwashing; No safety with police - defund, disarm and dismantle

We hope to see you out there, because this is the only way we can fight for our rights as queer people. If you'd like to get involved in helping us make this rally the biggest in Sydney's history, you can join us at linktr.ee/usydqueer.

## Intercampus Officers' Report

Alexander Poirier & Lydia Elias

The Inter-Campus Department has primarily been focused on engaging and supporting Conservatorium students. This cohort of first-years are very diverse and politically engaged, and it's important to capture these energies into the student unions of the university.

The first experience of the student unions Con students had was at Welcome Day on 12 February, organised by the Conservatorium Students' Association (CSA; for which Alex is also President). The SRC had a strong presence on this day, with Vice-President Annabelle Jones hosting a stall throughout the day, explaining the work of the SRC and distributing information flyers and wall-calendars; she also presented for 10-minutes as part of the CSA-led Student Culture Presentation, helping students understand the differences between the five student-organisations at the University of Sydney.

We also advertised the National Day of Action for Palestine on 29 February to Con students. This helped promote the student strike and grew the movement to the Con, continuing both the SRC's and CSA's dedication and commitment to a free Palestine.

## A Guide to Living on Little Money in Sydney

### Centrelink

If you are a full-time student, and an Australian resident, you may be eligible for a Centrelink payment. Lots of conditions apply so go to our website for details.

### Scholarships and Bursaries

The Uni offers financial support through scholarships and bursaries, as do some community organisations. Check each scholarship for conditions. The Uni also provides 12 month interest free loans.

### Working

Unions will protect your work rights individually and collectively, and their fees are tax deductible. To join go to [australianunions.org.au/join](http://australianunions.org.au/join).

### Pay Day Loans

Pay Day loans offer easy money but come with fees that are equivalent to 45% interest. Some consolidation loans will have you paying off the interest each month, without reducing the loan amount. The SRC strongly advises against taking out these loans, and instead talk to a caseworker about viable alternatives.

### Buy Now, Pay Later

It is great to have interest free periods, and partial payment schemes such as Afterpay, and Ezipay, but the penalties for late repayments are very high. When making a purchase, calculate when you will be able to complete the payment, and how much this will cost.

### Electricity And Gas

If you are struggling to pay your energy bills, ask your energy provider for an extension, payment plan, or hardship support. You may also be eligible for a voucher for a once off payment towards your bill.

### Debts

The National Debt Help Line and Gambling Help Line provide confidential assistance in resolving debt. Be very cautious about using the services of a debt consolidation agency as their interest rates can lead to bankruptcy.

### Food

The Food Hub has free food and other essential items and AskLzzy gives information on free or cheap meals. There are lots of easy cook recipes and snack ideas online or find someone who will cook dinner for/with you, and heat left overs in the Uni microwaves the next

day. Some restaurants and food courts have discount lunches and discount take aways near closing time. Fresh food markets will discount food at closing time, and you may also find fruit and vegetables there, that have fallen on the ground ("gleaning").

### Doctors / General Practitioners (GP)

The University Health Service provides bulk or direct billing for students. Other surgeries might not charge a gap fee, so check when booking. You should not have to pay an extra fee to get a medical certificate.

### Psychologists

The University's Wellbeing team can connect you with the Uni's free counselling service or you can ask your GP about a mental health plan to reduce private psychologists' fees. There are online forums, such as eHeadSpace, where you can connect with peers to share strategies that support your wellbeing. The School of Psychology has a clinic that provides counselling and may also do testing for conditions including ADHD, for a fee.

### Dentists

There are very limited options for free dental treatments through Medicare, but health insurance providers will offer some rebates for some policies. The cheapest way to have good oral health is to take preventative measures including regular professional cleaning and check ups as well as a daily brushing and flossing routine.

### Ambulance

Regardless of who calls the ambulance when you are sick or injured, you may be liable for the cost, starting from \$750. Health Care Card Holders are given free ambulance cover in NSW, and private health insurance provides ambulance cover from \$45 per year.

### Other allied health services

Final year students in courses including osteopathy, physiotherapy, psychology, acupuncture, hairdressing, chiroprody, and massage, need to practice for free or cheap, on real patients, under the supervision of their lecturers. For details contact the faculty or TAFE offering these courses.

### Health Care Card

Australian citizens (or PR) who earn an average of less than \$757 per week (single person with no dependents, as at 1st January 2024) may be entitled to a Low Income Health Care Card, giving:

- Reduced pharmaceuticals
- Free ambulance cover
- Free prescription lenses and frames (limited choices)
- Discounts to some alternative medical practices (as negotiated with the provider).

### Sexual Health

Have as much consensual, safe sex as you would like. The SRC can provide you with free condoms and lube. Take the time to learn how to use condoms correctly. If you are a sex worker, contact the Sex Worker Outreach Project for safer sex supplies, information, and support.

### Alcohol and other drugs

It's always cheaper to have some drinks at home before going out. NSW Health offers comprehensive information on different alcohol and other drugs. For free needles check the NSW Needle and Syringe Program. If Police accused you of possession or use of illegal drugs, say nothing until you speak to a solicitor.

### Transport

The City of Sydney offers information on how to ride and maintain bikes safely. Join the campaign to get all students transport concessions. If you are renting a car, read all the conditions, especially how much your excess payment is in the event of an accident.

### Fares Allowance

You may be eligible for Fares Allowance if you receive a Centrelink payment, and you live away from your permanent home for study.

### Fun

The Union (USU) offers social activities that are cheap or free, and Clubs and Societies in many different areas of interest. They also have a Rewards card (\$45) that will give you a range of discounts and benefits. Trivia nights at various pubs are free and can have great prizes. Some pubs have raffles or membership "badge" competitions free to people in the pub at a particular time.

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



Do you need to apply for **Special Consideration** for illness, misadventure or disability?

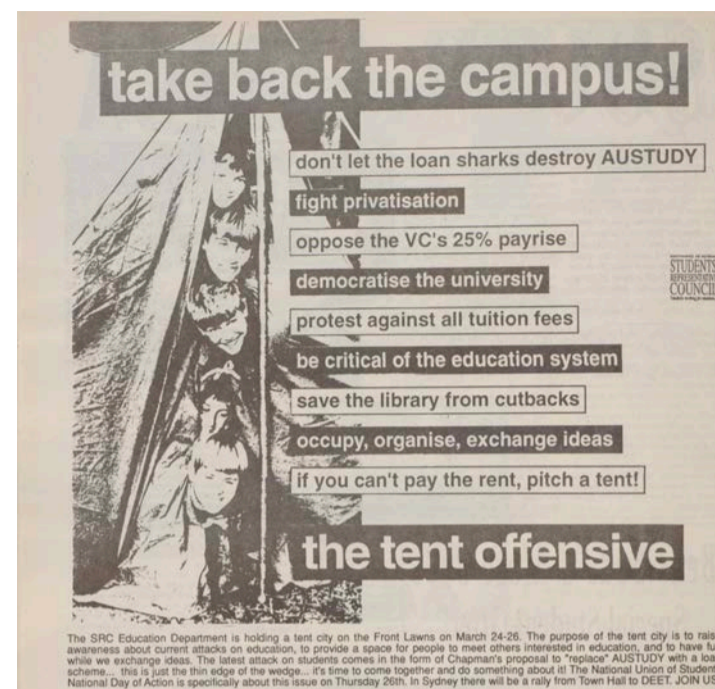
SRC Caseworkers can provide advice on applying for Special Consideration & appealing rejected applications.



## Weekly quiz

- In the 2018 SRC election, how many tickets ran to edit *Honi Soit*?
- What is the occupation of protagonist Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises*?
- 2024 Best Picture nominee *Anatomy of a Fall* heavily features a cover of which 50 Cent song?
- The word “asbestos” derives from which ancient language?
- Has a McDonald’s franchise ever operated in Newtown?
- What year did the Forest Lodge Hotel first open its doors?
- Which Sydney brewery produced an ‘Albo Pale Ale’ following the 2022 federal election?
- What type of musical instrument is a Kobza?
- The cover of London Calling (1979) pays homage to what artist’s self-titled debut album?
- The University of Sydney Students’ Representative Council has how many seats?

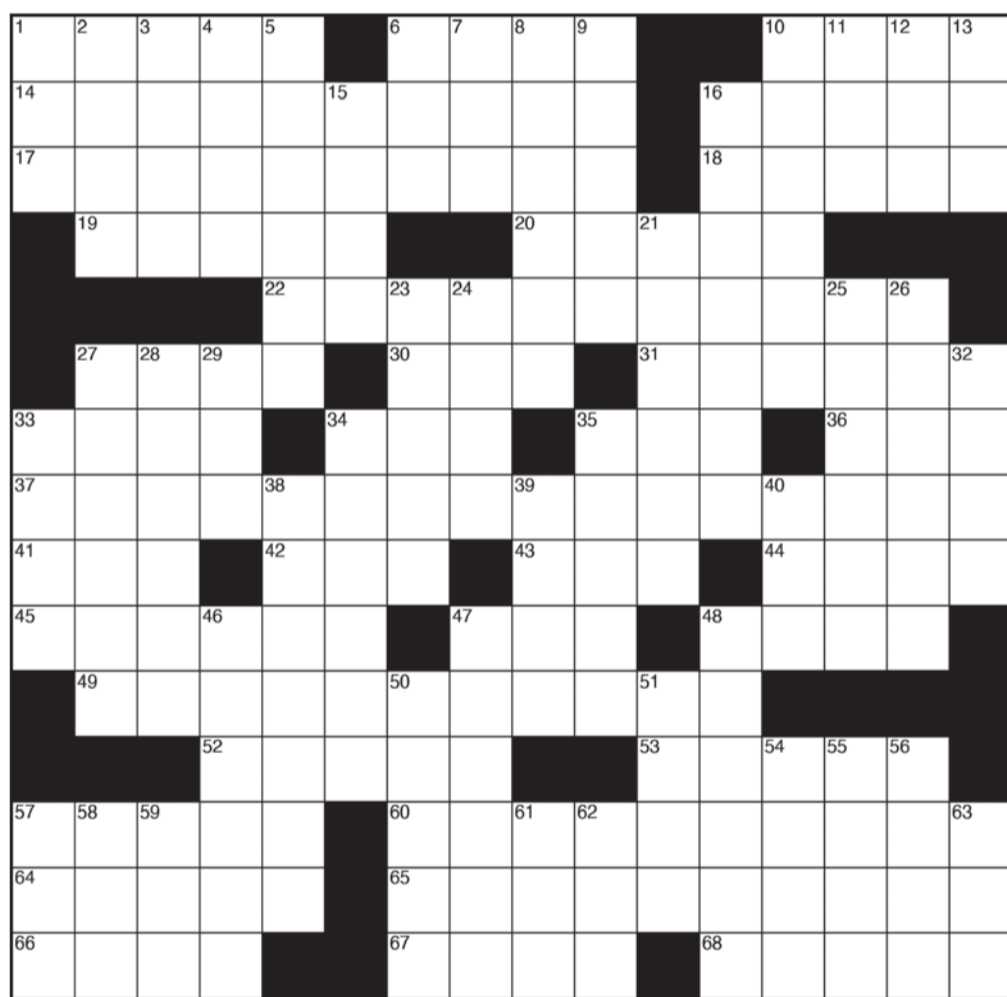
## Dusting off the cobwebs



The Tent Offensive, *Honi Soit*, 1992, Issue 5, Vol 65.

Answers: 1. 3, 2. Journalist, 3. P.L.M.R., 4. Ancient Greek, 5. Yes, 6. 1866, 7. Willie The Boatman, 8. Lute, 9. Elvis Presley, 10. 37.

## Crossword



Crossword: Michael Smith

### Down:

- Titular character puppeteered in an 80’s sitcom
- Baklava ingredient
- Text in a neon sign, say
- Grey \_\_\_\_
- Period of self-care
- Without further \_\_\_\_
- Luthor portrayed by Jesse Eisenberg
- Elegantly fashionable
- Thing liquidated in some bankruptcies
- Cry from civilians in a superhero film, say
- Nintendo avatar
- British singer and actor Rita
- Suffix for hexa or octa
- Prefix for beat or futurism
- Like much of Bach’s “The Art of Fugue”
- Grammy award-winning singer \_\_\_\_ Heap
- Silent \_\_\_\_ (dance event)
- \_\_\_\_-I, Ghostbusters car
- Onion material, say
- Modern kind of windows?
- DADGBE, for one
- Food whose name derives from the Austrian capital

- Street visited by Freddy Krueger
- Paradise
- Actor Paul of 2022’s “The Batman”
- Kitsch
- Nearby
- Iced tea brand with uniquely shaped bottles
- Life and \_\_\_\_
- Relatable initialism used in some memes
- Greeting in the American South
- How ferry-goers travel
- Alphabetizes, say
- Scratchie game
- Local standard used between October and April, in brief
- Sandpaper spec
- Chevrolet Bolt or Tesla, in brief
- “The Persistence of Memory” painter
- Letters before an alternate name
- Gang up on
- Comedian \_\_\_\_ Martin who won the British game show Taskmaster
- Refere, in slang
- Alias adopted by Thomas Anderson, in The Matrix films
- Cookbook measurement, in brief



# Always Balanced Coverage

HEDONISM | SIMS 2 | SCANDAL | DRUGS | NOAM CHOMSKY |

## COP DROPS CHARGES TO MAKE THE THINK PIECES STOP



After a rocky 24 hours, the revelation of Sam Kerr’s alleged racism elicited a sigh of relief amongst fans worldwide.

However, many were not prepared for the horrors to come.

The alleged utterance, calling a cop a “stupid white bastard,” may have been a sigh of relief for the regular bystander — but was a heinous wet dream for the think piece brigade.

The horde of think pieces pontificating on whether “white” is a slur and reverse racism is real is exhausting the public.

“I can’t take it anymore,” he said. “They’re just all so fucking annoying.”

*Always Balanced Coverage* suspected the cop was referring to media saturation from yuppie rags and discourse from those with email jobs — *Crikey*, *SMH*, usual suspects.

“Not everything has to be regurgitated into content. Honestly what does ‘content’ even fucking mean.” a spectator told *Always Balanced Coverage*. “One second the group chat was laughing at what Sam said, the next, it was opined into oblivion until it just had to be ruined for everyone. Kerr could have just been referring to *Paul Blart Mall Cop 2*.”



**THIS WORM CANT BE TAMED: MURDOCH ENGAGED AGAIN AT 92. WHO UP PLAYING W THEIR WORM? :J**

Join the dumb bitch party

## IN THIS ISSUE...

Instagram reels IN REAL LIFE??? Libs soyface at Abbott and podcaster, blame dissent on “soy milk” as if its 2012 (reddit is down the hall and to the left)

International Womens Day celebrated in *Honi* Office by women-only layup

Loan sharks are knocking on your door about your horrific sleep debt

GTA 6 Protagonist revised, revealed to be Chloë Sevigny



ISRAELI



# APARTHEID

WEEK

# MARCH

4TH - 29TH 2024