

# QUEERHONI

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Week Nine | October 3



## God vs. Gays The queer and the faithful

Don't call me baby:  
or any other weird names

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Red light:  
being gay in China

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# Planner



### A History of Sexual Perversion

8pm, The Cellar Theatre, \$3 Access / \$6 G.A.

Two happy-go-lucky perverts seek redemption for their depravity, reconciling the questionable choices they made with the many who came before them. But how much of it is really a choice?

### Birdcage

From 6pm, Zanzibar FREE ENTRY

Wednesday has always been a great night for the lady-loving ladies in Newtown, but got even better this year when Birdcage began. This weekly night out at Zanzibar boasts awesome beats and the cutest girls in town.



### Big Gay Flash Mob

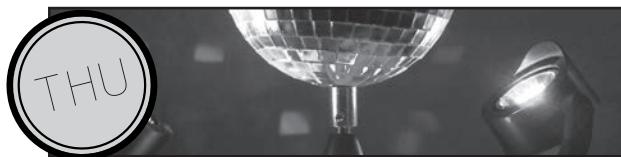
Pitt Street Mall, FREE

The Big Gay Flash Mob is the third year major work of theatre/media student, Jordan Johnny Johnstone! It will be raising money for GALFA (The Gay and Lesbian Foundation of Australia). There will be Glitter. Gaga. Queens and Queers all shaking their booties to support an incredible charity!

### Up Dayclub

From 5am, Phoenix Bar, Exchange Hotel FREE

What better way to not finish up a trashy night on Oxford St? Head to Up Dayclub this Saturday to keep partying all day long.



### VERGE: Glitterati

7.30pm, Verge Festival Dome, FREE/\$5/\$10

Consider this the love child of John Waters and Beyoncé, with a cheeky splash of Moulin Rouge. The USU – your authorized fun police – encourage you to get as glammed up as possible, or you'll be sent to our glitter prison. And that's an order.

### Karaoke at the Imperial Hotel

8pm, The Imperial Hotel FREE

Come on, everyone loves the Imperial. Get there on a Thursday night to enjoy some drinks, prizes, giveaways, and of course, some questionable singing.



### Addison Road Markets

8am-3pm, 142 Addison Rd Marrickville,

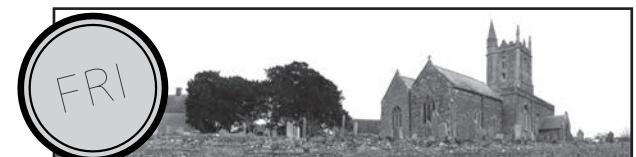
FREE

At the Addison Road Markets there is organic food, soy chai and handmade art a-plenty, not to mention pony rides for the kids. The markets are extremely queer friendly and a perfect way to spend Sunday morning.

### Agatha Christie's Miss Marple

9:30pm, ABC1, FREE

Recover from your wild weekend with yet another instalment of everyone's favourite detective series. It's the season finale.



### freedom2b October Meeting

7pm, ACON Building, 414 Elizabeth St Surry Hills, FREE

freedom2b supports LGBTQI people from Christian backgrounds on their journey to reconciling their faith, sexuality, and gender identity.

### Handbag Heaven

9pm, Arq, FREE

With DJs "Luke Leal" and "Tom Kelly". Performances by "Carmen Geddit" with "Ripley" and "Thomas". If it's Friday night and you're poor, it's Arq.



### VERGE: The Slow Bike Race

Mon, USYD Front Lawns, FREE

Bring your bike and get ready to go slow. Keep your feet on the pedals and no touching the ground, last person over the line wins. Slow and steady wins the race. Fantastic prizes to be won!

### Rainbow Queer Argentine Tango

Tues, 7pm, Columbian Hotel, \$15

Tango will make your walk more confident, improve your balance, and it's reliably uplifting. At this dance lesson you'll learn some sweet tricks for creating amazing feelings with another person. You can purchase eight lessons for \$100.

## EXCLUSIVE

### Statement from the Sydney University Liberal Club

Dear Honi,  
On behalf of its members, the Sydney University Liberal Club (SULC) Executive does not endorse and never endorsed Alan Jones' comments about Mr John Gillard in his address at the annual President's Dinner. Even though Mr Jones' statements were not ours, we recognise and accept our responsibility to the student body to minimise grievances whenever we possibly can.

SULC is an organisation that believes in a free, fearless and vibrant political discussion, where controversial voices from a range of perspectives may be heard without undue fear of reprisal by others. As an active Club, we often host functions with public figures from all walks of life, and we strive to contribute constructively to the national debate.

However, statements are occasionally made – not by the Club – that are false, hurtful, and distasteful. When made, these statements warrant a response from those who helped facilitate their utterance.

The remark made by Alan Jones in his 55-minute address, previously referred to, was such a statement. It was distressful and distasteful to Prime Minister Julia Gillard and her family. Alan Jones has offered an apology for his remarks, and we have welcomed that.

Like all clubs at Sydney University, SULC exists to serve students. To this end, we regret that some aspects of the aforementioned event were unbecoming of our organisation, and we ask for your pardon in respect of the future.

Yours in freedom,  
Sydney University Liberal Club

### Oscar Coleman Commerce I

Dear Honi,

The Sydney University Liberal Club has proven itself to be a disgrace to both the university and the Liberal Party. Time and time again it has made calamitous errors of judgement.

Firstly, it hired a notoriously inflammatory shock-jock for its President's Dinner. SULC knew that Mr Jones had the ability to tarnish the reputation of the club, but it seems that his cosy relationship with President Alex Dore meant that no matter how shocking and repulsive the comments, the night was always going to have a 'brilliant speech by...the nation's most influential broadcaster'.

Secondly, instead of behaving tactfully in relation to Mr Jones, SULC decided to fan the flames throughout the night by auctioning off the famous 'chaff-bag jacket'. This subtle 'joke' of killing the Prime Minister, no matter how much her policies may be reviled, is probably lost on most. As the Jones controversy began to unfold, Dore's stubbornness in refusing to distance his club and party from the comments brought SULC and the university into further disrepute by allowing it to become a target for the media and the general public.

Finally came Vice-President Zac Thompson's comments that context was everything. In fact, not knowing that you are being recorded does not excuse Alan Jones. In this day and age, nothing is private at a public function. Nothing can justify publicly insulting the Prime Minister's recently deceased father and even Andrew Bolt can admit that. If the Liberal Club can't, then it has truly been taken over by people who don't operate within the boundaries of reality.

## Union Board to review Queerspace

The issue of autonomy just won't go away, reports **Lane Sainty**

A comprehensive review has begun into whether the Queerspace is being used effectively. USU President Astha Rajvanshi said that the review would consider "whether factors like location, accessibility, autonomy, furniture and resources are affecting its use."

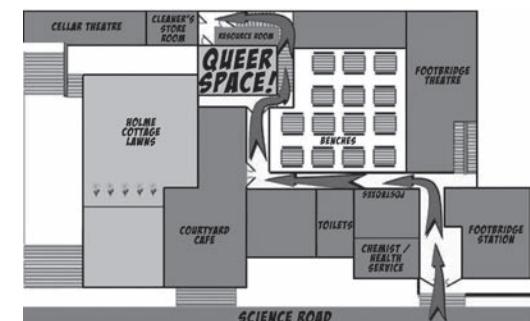
Ms Rajvanshi stressed that a thorough consultation of the queer community will occur before any decisions are made. "Any changes to the furniture or a make-over of the space will only occur after a thorough review indicates that this is in the best interests of the queer community," she said.

SRC Queer Officer Rebecca Alchin welcomed the idea of potential changes. "Any new furniture and other things to make the space a more comfortable place would be greatly appreciated and welcomed by the Queer Action Collective (QuAC)," she said.

However, some of the issues under review are set to prove more difficult than others. A controversy was created in August when an impromptu vote was held in a QuAC meeting to gauge people's views on autonomy. To the surprise of many, a motion in favour of a non-autonomous space was passed, whereby which straight people could enter provided they were accompanied by queer-identifying friends.

This led a number of people to believe that the Queerspace had become non-autonomous. However, this was not the case, as QuAC lacks the authority to make decisions about the autonomy of the space.

Rather, this responsibility lies with the USU Board of Directors. "The autonomous status of the space will only be



changed after proper consultation with our members is carried out," explained Ms Rajvanshi. "After consulting the members, a recommendation regarding any changes to the Queerspace or autonomy will be put forward to the Board to discuss and vote on at a consecutive board meeting. Alternatively, this recommendation can be made at a general meeting to allow the members to vote on the issue."

According to Ms Alchin, the vote held in August was not reflective of the views of the majority of the collective. "Autonomy aims to meet the needs of those who feel they need a safe space on campus, and I believe most of the collective would agree that it is only fair and in the interests of those people that autonomy is maintained," she said.

Ms Rajvanshi cited a number of actions that would be taken to gauge the views of the community. "[This will] include doing research into the autonomous status of the space and the reasons for its autonomy in the past, speaking to the Queer Officers and QuAC, holding policy forums with the queer and wider community and even getting feedback through surveys," she said.

The review is planned to be completed by late this year or early 2013.

## When a college outgrows a senate

**William Harris** thinks St Paul's College could teach the government a thing or two about fairness and equality

When the lower house knocked down the Marriage Equality bill this month, the entire process had become farcical. Liberal Senator Cory Bernardi linked same-sex marriage with bestiality, then resigned from his front bench duties to avoid apologizing for his comments. There were senators who supported the bill, yet voted against it as the bill faced defeat, citing that it 'wasn't worth it'. Even the Prime Minister Julia Gillard has signaled repeatedly that she will not back down from her nonsensical stance on the issue.

Despite being someone who rarely takes offense, the public discussion and political rhetoric around this issue has started to wear me down. We have an atheist, unmarried Prime Minister who for some reason has been given reprieve in her use of the "between a man and a woman" line. Gillard frequently cites her ties with her "many gay friends" as some sort of subtle insinuation that she can't be labeled a homophobe. Tony Abbott also uses this line, though the existence of these friends is a little less believable, unless of course they are at a Catholic



conversion camp somewhere.

The arguments for maintaining the status quo frequently contain homophobic undertones based in archaic religious doctrine. We hear about 'family values', as though gay people sacrifice their position in Australian families as soon as they come out. We are told that marriage should be between a man and a woman for the sake of the children, as though single parents don't exist and same-sex couples are incapable of raising children. Most frustratingly, we are told that marriage should remain the way it is in order to maintain a 'set of traditions' that Australia was founded upon. I think we need to restore some secularity to this debate, and stop the sort of schoolyard bullying

that the religious lobby have gotten away with for too long.

I don't expect Abbott or Gillard to be the celebrant at my wedding. What I do expect is that our political institutions start to pull their weight on this issue, and reflect the majority of Australians who support marriage equality. It is when institutions like these start to reflect the needs of the underrepresented that meaningful and effective change occurs.

This brings me to a pleasant surprise I received earlier this month. I have been invited by St Paul's College, through their senior student Hugo Rourke and college staff, to speak at Formal Dinner in a couple of weeks from now as a former student. I have been asked to speak about homophobia, the experience of being a gay college student, and most importantly, to make those who are confronted by their sexuality at college feel a little more at ease.

This event is to be matched by a student-organized forum on making Paul's and other colleges more gay-friendly. At least one college has now signaled its

desire to become more supportive of its gay or bisexual students, and I think this is a terrific step forward and one worthy of recognition. To scrutinize colleges is perfectly legitimate, provided that positive recognition is also given when appropriate.

I find it unbelievable that the Prime Minister has yet to signal her support for full equality. Despite this, I am heartened that an institution like Paul's is making a valid attempt to support its gay and bisexual students, regardless of its religious foundation. If only our politicians would recognise the power of language and change their rhetoric on issues affecting the LGBTQI community, then perhaps this issue would progress past the religious dogma.

More importantly, recognizing the need to support LGBTQI students on campus is a must in order to combat the various struggles these students can face. The opportunity to help a college student body to become more supportive of gay students is a terrific honor. It would be nice to think that one day they could invite our Prime Minister to do the same.

# Camp-us

## WHAT GOOGLE THINKS

# Google

what do gay people do  
what do gay people do in bed  
what do gay people do for fun  
what do gay people do with hamsters  
what do gay people do with gerbils  
what do gay people do with hawthorne wipes  
what do gay people do together  
what do gay people do with wipes  
what does gay people do  
what do gay men do with wet wipes

But seriously, what **do** we do with hamsters?



## COMING UP



## EDITORIAL

# QUEER HONI

As society begins to progress towards an ethos of equality and acceptance, the debate on queer issues will inevitably flare up as the last pockets of ignorance and intolerance begin to collapse. The discourse must not be suspended, and, more importantly, the queer community must engineer its rhetoric to communicate with the rest of the world.

I think we have achieved this goal with this year's *Queer Honi*. We speak not only to the queer community, but also to the wider campus community. Within this edition we have dissected a wide array of topics. We have looked at how religion and queer identity can be reconciled. We have considered some of the arguments in favour of marriage equality. We have delved into queer developments on campus

and spoken to prolific queer commentator and Head of the School of Letter, Arts, and Media, Professor Annamarie Jagose.

Herein you will find a beautifully assembled mosaic of perspectives, from a spectrum as wide and diverse as the rainbow under which we gather. You will find the serious and the lighthearted. You will find passion and you will find laughter. And at the heart of it all, you will find our voice.

This special edition of *Honi Soit* gives us a powerful platform with which to express ourselves. It is my sincere hope that you, whomever you are, whether queer or not, will be able to take something valuable out of these pages.

Fahad Ali  
@FahadSKAli

## A Primer to Queer Campus Culture

Getting involved with queer culture often isn't the easiest thing to do, so we took a look at some of the main queer-focused clubs and organisations on campus.

### SHADES



SHADES is a society that organises social events for LGBTQI students and their friends. SHADES is all about valuing and respecting everyone—and having a great time doing it!

We hold a variety of events throughout semester from huge parties to casual drinks, and movie nights to BBQs. No matter what your interests are, we've got an event for you! Most importantly, we welcome anyone and everyone to our events, no matter what 'shade' you are.

SHADES events are open to everyone, but if you would like to support SHADES you can also become a financial member for just \$6 a year. You're able to join SHADES all year round. Come along to our O-Week and Re-O Day stalls or any of our events, and have a chat to one of our friendly exec members to let them know you're interested in signing up!

Our next event, SHADES Halloon, will be held on Friday 19th October at 10pm at Zanzibar. We hope to see you there!

**Kade Denton**  
President, SHADES

### Queer Action Collective



The Queer Action Collective (QuAC) is an SRC collective dedicated to making the University of Sydney and wider community a better place for queer-identifying people.

We welcome and provide a safe place for everyone in the LGBTIQ community to express their thoughts and ideas. Being a collective, we value each member and their input equally.

QuAC holds weekly meetings at 1pm in the Queerspace, which is located in the Holme Building (near the Courtyard Café) on Science Road. QuAC is a great place to meet other queer-identifying people and make new friends. No matter where you lie in process of coming out, QuAC is a safe place and is respectful of everyone's journey in life.

You can come to the meetings at 1pm on Mondays, and if you like, ask one of the Queer Officers (Rebecca and Eleonora) to add you to the mailing list. We hope to see you around!

**Rebecca Alchin and Eleonora Kazantzis**  
Queer Officers, QuAC

### Queer Revue



Want to see your name up in lights? Want all of your friends' parents to see you naked? Then the Sydney University Queer Revue is the place for you!

Queer Revue is an all-singing, all-dancing comedic production put on at the Seymour Centre every year by queer and queer-friendly students. It was founded in 2010 on two core principles: abortion jokes and body shaming cast members. We've gotten bigger and gayer every year, but we're not done yet.

We're constantly looking for new people to get involved so come up and speak to us whether you want to strut the stage (acting, singing, dancing) or help out behind the scenes (writing, design, working backstage). Keep an eye out for our AGM at the end of October and come say hello at O-Week next year. In the meantime, join the Facebook group and follow us on Twitter (@suqrs) for all the latest Queer Revue news!

**Gayda De Mesa**  
President, Sydney University Queer Revue Society

### SUPRA Queer Portfolio



The Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) has a strong commitment to equity, ensuring that all voices of post-graduate students are heard within the university.

We run a number of social events for students such as our monthly wine and cheese nights. We also have a monthly Equity film night. Our last Queer Equity film night explored the history of Sydney's HIV epidemic with a screening of *Rampant* and a discussion around the changing face of the epidemic - followed by *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.

We're currently working towards building an Ally network on campus and ensuring greater representation of queer student needs within the university.

If you're a queer postgraduate student and would like to be kept up-to-date with upcoming events and campaigns (or have any ideas you'd like to share), email me on queer@supra.usyd.edu.au.

**Tommy Berne**  
Queer Officer, Postgraduate Representative Association



Photo: Rob Jones



## GAY ECONOMY

### Welcoming the pink dollar

**Josh Sprake** wants Australia to cash in on gay marriages

With the collapse of global financial markets in 2009 and the economic turbulence that followed, governments have begun to look at new markets to counter the rapid drop in consumer confidence. Recently many economists have remarked upon the strength and resilience of certain markets and demographics, such as the mining boom and the predictability of low-income earners.

New markets and demographics have erupted that have greatly contributed to the strength of the economy both at home and abroad. *The Sydney Morning Herald* recently detailed the economic power of wealthy single women in inner Sydney, a group it dubbed “the diamond collective”.

I would argue that there is a better market still, known as the ‘pink dollar’. This is another name for the gay market, or the ability of a business to appeal to the gay population. It has previously been restricted to the context of marketing, such as the creation of a gay holiday resort or a gay friendly medical service and so on. However, this has now expanded, and the pink dollar has an interesting twist.

As homosexual couples have become more common and accepted, they have begun to move into de facto relationships. Usually, these sort of relationships

are known as Double Income No Kids (DINK) families, a term that has previously been used for professional young heterosexual couples who had not yet started a family.

The increase in gay couples has interesting implications for this category, as they are less likely to eventually have children. Instead, the DINK status could become a permanent state of living, as opposed to the brief transitional state it tends to occupy in the life of young heterosexual couples. Eventually, gay DINK couples could become a larger demographic than their heterosexual counterparts.

Additionally, a report put out by the BBC previously placed the value of the global LGBTQI market at approximately US\$350 billion each year, noting that this community is likely to band together and support businesses, in the same way immigrant communities do.

However, it is difficult to determine the effect of this community upon Australia’s economy. One of many reasons for this is that Sydney’s sizeable LGBTQI community has a large demand for status symbols and high-end items, particularly in the fields of fashion and electronics. As many of these items are not Austra-



Gay. And probably rich.

lian-made, consumers are forced online and overseas, and their income is lost to foreign businesses.

With this in mind, it is clear that our government and businesses should be targeting and fighting for the coveted pink dollar. One obvious way to help keep this money inside Australia would be to legalise same-sex marriage. The undoubtedly extravagant and expensive ceremonies that would follow such a decision would boost many different sectors of the Australian economy, in turn increasing jobs and services.

So, I have a proposal for the Australian government and all who oppose same-sex marriage. Next time you decide the economy is in trouble, instead of bailing it out or putting the budget into deficit, just legalise same-sex marriages. I can guarantee that businesses and economists alike will love the words ‘same-sex bridal registry’.

### Bottoming out on Oxford Street

The Golden Mile is dead, writes **Matthew Endacott**

On Oxford Street, there are more than just kebabs getting thrown up these days. “For Lease” signs are a dime a dozen on the Golden Mile, the most telling sign that the tide has gone out on Darlo. Too damn expensive, can’t park, can’t compete, carbon tax. Everyone has an opinion about who slit the eastern artery. Bondi Junction certainly has blood on its hands, but shopping centres have been killing high streets for decades. Oxford’s fault for not seeing it coming, I say.

Walking from Whitlam Square to Paddington Town Hall, the old drag’s toothless grin is almost unbearable by daylight. At the city end, it’s all sex shops and tragic sequined curtains that catch the midday sun. Lady Gaga drifts out of an empty Stonewall and the rumble of Kensington-bound traffic idles at Taylor Square. Up and over the crest and it’s all downhill, figuratively and literally.

In the block bound by Oxford, Flinders, South Dowling, and Taylor Streets you could lease enough space to move the Galeries Victoria. They’ve been felling the ancient oaks in this part of town for a while now, but I didn’t really mind until it claimed the Oxford art supplies store. Forty years of trading and one family that were effectively priced out of a street that they helped to build.

So what to do with a street that’s going down quicker than, but nowhere near as fabulously as, the Hindenburg? Sending in the chains is probably the worst idea, so this being New South Wales, you can expect it to be the first official response. It’ll be a blow-your-socks-off blueprint, complete with an artist’s impression of a scribbly glass box with the obligatory native bush. And trams. You can bet there will be trams.

Don’t get me wrong, there’s nothing wrong with a bit of bush and straphanging. All good in the hood. Problem is, it’s the only hood we ever seem capable of imagining. When in doubt about their urban environs, Sydneysiders rarely work with what they’ve got. They just pay someone from overseas to create a plonk-down-able solution. Where there’s a fragile network of local retailers, Sydney sees square metres. Where there’s the opportunity to work with, connect, or expand on public transport, Sydney asks the car salesman on William Street for his two cents.

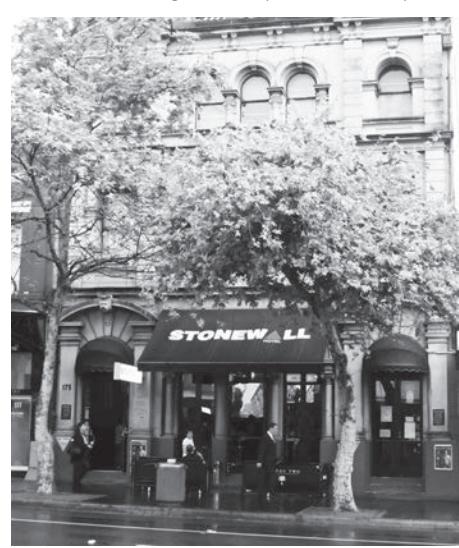
Throwing a tokenistic tramline down



Oxford Street won’t do anything to rekindle the home fires. Over the past seven years, the City of Sydney has spent \$45 million upgrading the shopping strip from Centennial to Hyde Park and yet it keeps hemorrhaging vitality. Cash is not the problem, nor is it the solution. The City of Newcastle hasn’t spent a cent on fixing its broken main street (another story altogether), but the not-for-profit Renew Newcastle initiative has allowed Hunter Street to bounce off rock bottom.

What Oxford Street needs is a bit of TLC. It needs a community that hangs around after the breakfast hose down. More importantly, it needs a community that does more than just romps in after dark, trashes the joint, and goes home.

If the LGBTQI community wants to make any claim on Oxford Street this decade, we’re going to need to demonstrate that we’re worthy of the deeds. If we want to right the old girl, we need to start working together on projects that nurture temporary and adaptive reuse during daylight. Working relationships with local council are important, but working relationships between businesses and locals are absolutely crucial.



## DISCRIMINATION

### No end to the right to discriminate

Religion will retain its privilege to reject gay students and others, reports **Michael Kozoli**

The NSW government has backed away from previous suggestions it would remove some religious exemptions to the Anti Discrimination Act, which allow denominational schools to expel students for being gay.

In last year’s edition of *Queer Honi*, we reported that the Attorney-General, Greg Smith, was considering changes to the act’s exemptions but that the government had “other legislative priorities for the time being”.

Whether that was the error of a rogue media adviser, or if the government has changed its position, the Attorney will not say. A current spokesperson for the AG would only tell *Queer Honi*: “The government proposes to retain the exemptions granted by the Anti Discrimination Act.” The spokesperson would not answer questions about whether the AG had met with religious lobbyists about the matter.

In February, Mr Smith wrote to his federal counterpart Nicola Roxon regarding the proposed consolidation of Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws, saying they threatened to compromise fundamental freedoms.

“The consolidated legislation may very considerably increase the regulatory burden and cost to business (and) diminish core democratic freedoms of speech, conscience, religion and association,” Mr Smith wrote.

The privileged right of religion to discriminate will be protected despite the federal government’s review. The discussion paper initiated by Ms Roxon in 2011 stated: “The Government does not propose to remove the current religious exemptions, apart from considering how they may apply to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.” It added that the exceptions “are necessary to avoid injury to the religious sensitivities of adherents of that religion.”

But even the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW stopped short of advocating reform in its submission to the review. Instead it argued that “further public discussion is required”, stipulating “the need to appropriately balance the competing rights of freedom of belief and the right to practice religion with the right to equality and freedom from discrimination.”

Without strong advocacy to the contrary, it seems impossible that the Commonwealth review will do anything to force change at a state level. That means schools will still be able to ask a gay student to leave, and hospitals will still be able to refuse employment to competent doctors on suspicion of what they might do in the bedroom.

Australia’s laws are among the most luxurious in the world for these state-sanctioned practitioners of hate, and it is a national shame.

Twitter: @michaelkozoli

# Back of the Closet

## LGBT-QI

Cam Smith puts the QI back into LGBTQI.

Ask any queer person what their great loves are, and they will inevitably list off two items before all others: random trivia, and thinly veiled pilfering of BBC quiz show formats. Well, we at *Honi* have heard your demands, and have scoured the history books, scaled the cliffs of knowledge and outright plundered After Elton's gay trivia section to bring you the most random and most factual LGBTQI facts you've ever seen this side of a British panel show.

- It was against the law for homosexuals to immigrate to America until 1990.

- According to the authors of *A Billion Wicked Thoughts*, 'gay' is the second most popular term when it comes to sex-related searches on Google; narrowly beating out 'MILF', 'breasts' and 'cheating wives' for the number two spot!

- In 2002, a classified file was discovered in the archives of Harvard University detailing a "secret court" of deans and scholars set up in the 1920s to hunt down and expel homosexuals.

- Scientific studies have proven that if you are male, every older brother you have ups your chances of being gay by one third, unless you're left handed.

- The film versions of *Sherlock* were almost cancelled after Robert Downey

Jnr implied in an interview that Sherlock and Watson were gay. *Sherlock's* rights-holder stated "I would withdraw permission for more films to be made if they feel that is a theme they wish to bring out in the future."

- Homosexuality was against the law in Tasmania until 1997, and now they're the first state in Australia to attempt to legalise marriage equality.



## Don't call me baby

Robert Grigor hates pet names

In an age where the English language is being desecrated by instant messaging and texting, where Carpe Diem is replaced with #YOLO, and LOL is basically used as punctuation, you'd think that the use of sappy pet names is something I would have gotten over back in the 90s. But you'd be wrong. After reflecting upon the way gay men communicate, I've come up with the top five names that gay men call each other that simultaneously roll my eyes and boil my blood.

### MR

Pronounced 'mister', but almost always abbreviated to Mr due to its incessant use in text messaging, this word has plagued me from the day I turned 18, and not from Australia Post. I've always found the name so dismissive. Most of the time, you're probably using it because a) You can't remember my actual name, or b) You never bothered to find it out in the first place. "Hey Mr" is not an adequate introduction, online or offline, and I've skipped over many Grindr conversations that employed that opening line. And even if you do remember my name...well, that's even worse! It's cheesy, it's corny, it's unoriginal, and it does absolutely nothing for me.

### SPUNK

Like Mr, I've found that this name is usually used for chatting up or complimenting a guy you've just met. Used on its own or as a descriptive adjective (e.g. spunky bum), 'spunk' is

an extremely out of date word, not one that I would consider complimentary at all. Just hearing the word evokes the image of a gaggle of middle-aged British women sitting around ogling David Beckham like a hunky piece of meat. Saying it directly to a guy is probably going to have a similar, objectifying effect. Not only that, but all three Urban Dictionary entries for the word spunk identify it as common slang for semen. Which begs the question, what is he really saying when he calls you 'spunky'?

### BABE

At this point you're probably thinking I'm some kind of linguistically crazed feminist that just hates being objectified. But fear not, my distaste for pet names has further reach! The word 'babe' isn't that offensive in a social setting, but in a relationship it is easily interpreted as a term of endearment. It takes an outsider to recognise the word 'babe' as the sappy and overused pet name that is really is. Sure, use it with your partner when they're upset and need some comforting, as though they really are a defenceless babe, wrapped up in your loving embrace. But when you use it constantly, it makes you sound like the whining infant that the name originally implies. It's also terribly emasculating - a point that goes for a lot of pet names, like 'sweet heart', 'cutie', or even 'honey', as made wildly popular by Karen Walker of *Will & Grace* (and guys, unless you're a reprimanding fag hag, that's not cool).

- Homosexuality was big in Ancient Greece, as it was believed that sperm was the source of knowledge and that it could pass on wisdom if ... deposited.

- The Ancient Greeks encouraged their soldiers to become lovers because they believed it would make them fiercer warriors.

- *The Children's Hour*, a play centered around lesbianism, was adapted to film in 1936 but by the time the censors were done with it, the film makers had to rewrite the central plot, retitle the film and then deny any link to the original play.

- The United States Air Force actually researched the possibility of creating a bomb that would turn enemy troops gay. A report produced on the topic speculated the results of such a weapon would be "distasteful but completely non-lethal".

- In 1919, in attempting to mount a case against suspected homosexuals, the US Navy had tasked a number of 'young and attractive' recruits to engage in homosexual acts with suspected deviants, for use as courtroom evidence against the accused. As a result of these "investigations", 17 men were court-marshalled and charged with sodomy.

'Babe' is just the dead, beaten horse of that list. No one wants to be around a couple that throws gag-worthy pet names back and forth between them as much as Ashley Olsen drops "like, you know?" in an interview.

### HUBBY

My first qualm with gay men using this term is the political incorrectness. I don't care how long you've been together, if you're using it already, it's not going to seem as special when that 'inevitable' marriage equality comes to pass, is it? You'll never see a straight woman calling her male de facto partner 'hubby', because they're not married. But my true distaste for this word is much more petty. It strikes me as a pathological need to constantly remind the rest of the world that you're in a relationship, which is super annoying, quite frankly, and borders upon desperate insecurity. I say this mostly because people use these types of relationship-orientated pet names when their partner isn't even around, e.g. "I'm going shopping with the boyfriend today", or "OMG my hubby made me the best dinner last night." Congratulations, you're in a long-term relationship. I'm sure he has a real name, so please use it before I upheave my own dinner onto you.

### DUDE

Okay, so maybe 'dude' isn't exactly a pet name, but for me that is essentially why it is so problematic. It plays into the infuriating discourse of 'straight acting' where guys will do practically anything, including alter the way they speak, to affirm their masculinity. Now don't get me wrong - 'dude' is a perfectly acceptable word in most social contexts,



- According to a PBS report, a majority of New York's gay bars, including the famous Stonewall, were run by the Mafia in the 60's. These bars provided a lucrative trade for the Mafia in both liquor sales and through extortion, where famous patrons were forced to pay up for the Mafia's silence.

- A mile long rainbow flag was created in 1994 to honor the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. It was certified by the *Guinness Book of Records* as the world's largest flag.

- The species of the dwarf chimpanzee, one of humanity's closest relatives, is considered to be entirely bisexual.

### Busted

- It's an urban myth that the original publication of Hamlet featured an acrostic reading "I am homosexual", often used to imply Shakespeare was himself a closet case. It does however repeatedly feature the word 'boob' as an acrostic, so if anything, he was probably a lesbian.

as are other typical masculinity affirming words such as 'mate', 'man' or 'buddy'. In fact, I've found them to be useful tools in 'friend zoning', where you don't want to come across as sexually suggestive in any way. But if you're flirting with me, trying to get my interest or make me feel special, there's no better way to shoot yourself in the foot than by treating me just like one of the boys. We're all dudes here, and we're dudes who do it with dudes, but if you want to do it with this dude, I swear to God, do not call me 'dude' again or I will sashay away and leave you fidgeting with the waistband of your jock strap, dude.



Dude, I'm not your dude.

Maybe I've gotten carried away in my ranting, but at the end of the day, what it all comes down to is that I have a name, so I would like you to use it. Contrary to witty comebacks in pop culture, you're not going to wear it out!



## Tips for long distance loving

Katherine Sherrie lives to tell the tale.

So you've gone and found yourself a hottie to call your own, but suddenly you're in a right predicament. That sweetheart of yours is going away on a student exchange, or maybe you're the one jetting off to India to 'find yourself'. Or perhaps you've embarked on the tumultuous emotional adventure that is falling in love with someone from a different continent to you!

Whatever the reason, the long distance game is hard work. In fact, a lot of the time, it sucks. But since my sweet Texan ladyfriend moved back to the mid-west, I've learnt of a few things that make it easier, and these are my top five.

### 5 Rediscover the art of the letter.

Hardly anyone sends letters anymore, with good reason: 1) they take forever to get there, and 2) you have to somehow find postage stamps. There is something wonderful, however, about receiving a hand-written missive from half way across the world, so get old-school and bring back the romance via pen and paper.



### 4 Get a life-sized human cut-out.

I have to admit I have not actually done this one. But according to [lifesizecutouts.com.au](http://lifesizecutouts.com.au), you can get a life-sized digitally printed human cut-out for only \$150, plus postage and handling! When you factor in that you won't need to take them out for dinner anymore, that's practically a bargain.



### 3 Keep busy.

My modus operandi for the past year has been the busier I am, the less time I have to be sad. People might tell you it's crazy to work three jobs, study four university subjects, involve yourself in university co-curricular activities and find the time to eat excessive amounts of dumplings. But hey, the more tired you are when you fall into bed, the less time you spend laying there, missing the big spoon, right?



### 2 Get your game on!

When I say game, I'm talking online scrabble! Rummy king! Uno! I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, "Kat, not everyone has the spirit animal of a 65 year old retiree named Beryl". But I'm being serious here. Playing online board games can actually be a really fun way to spend time together long distance.



### 1 Sort your technology out.

If there's one piece of advice I can give you, it is to download WhatsApp. Do it this very second. Viber too. These fantastic apps allow you to text message and call for free using wi-fi or your data allowance. You can barrage your partner with an endless stream of texts, for the cost of \$0!



Good luck, and enjoy watching your life savings disappear into Qantas!

## Bad Gay

Bro Reveleigh

"You're a bad gay."

I suppose I am. I guess I should apologise to the old gay gods and the new... For wearing this polo from Lowes.

And for making a Game of Thrones reference just now.

And for despising reality television based around fashion.

And for not really liking Gaga (Bad Romance was alright...I guess).

And for refusing to shave in drag.

And for never having set foot in Arq.

And for having to look up the spelling of Arq.

And for being able to fit my entire wardrobe on a single clothes rack.

And for wearing the same outfit combinations frequently.

And for not having always known that I was gay.

And for not being that much into glitter.

And for not having what one might describe as a fierce and fabulous personality.

And for having my celebrity free pass as James Spader in his Boston Legal days.

And for never having attended a marriage equality rally...

...I think I'm actually sorry for this one.

Oh! And for always being that one person who gives Jimmy a run for his money when Khe Sanh plays on the radio. In fact, for liking Jimmy Barnes.

Bad gay.



BLUFFER'S GUIDE

## Queer dating: for straights

If you've ever thought that queer dating is different to the yawning meander of a straight date... well, you'd be right! It is! Fear not, for this handy guide has been prepared by **Herb R. Ogervie**



These people are straight. Or perhaps they're just straight-friendly...

1. Queer first dates do not exist. They are like self-cleaning polyester or unicorns after February, 1856.

2. Second and subsequent queer dates are sacred events, much like the wearing of sequins or a viewing of The L Word. As such, queer dates usually begin with a solemn rainbow flag ceremony and a recitation of the Queer Pledge of Allegiance – quoting Sue Sylvester from Glee.

3. After each date, a quick candlelit vigil is held for each of the participant's patron saints of Queerdom. Notable examples include Sappho, Elizabeth I, Oscar Wilde, Harvey Milk and Rosie O'Donnell (pending timely death).

4. Once a more prolonged relationship has been established, a more complex system of etiquette must be followed. Examples: For a gay couple, whoever has the most 80's haircut is obliged to open the door for the other. For lesbian couples, whoever most recently scissored on top must carry the umbrella when it's raining. For pansexual couples, a hot air balloon race around the world in 80 days or less will determine the right to restaurant selection.

5. If a queer breaks the terms and conditions of a queer date (as clearly outlined prior to the event), then the wronged party has the right to demand the offence be repaid in rainbow "blood". This tradition dates back to 1856 when all the unicorns on the Crimean Peninsula were slaughtered and the Black Sea ran rainbow with their blood. The modern day ritual substitutes rainbow ice cream and edible glitter sprinkles for unicorn blood. The Crimean Peninsula was the last known habitat of unicorns. RIP.



QSYD.ORG

Are you queer or questioning and looking to find out more about queer stuff on campus?

Visit [qsyd.org](http://qsyd.org) for an up-to-date list of all the LGBTQI organisations and events happening around Usyd, as well as some contact details for our queer officers and convenors!

# Opinion



POLITICS

## Fuck the glitter: I'm not 'proud'

Nick Richardson wants to separate personal identity from sexuality

Of all the developments of the 21st century, by far the most regressive and counter-productive is the obsessive and bizarre attachment to collectivising sexuality. Notions such as 'gay communities', 'gay pride', and 'queer identity' that are being perpetuated mostly from within this so-called community, have ensured that all homosexuals in Australia, regardless of whether they subscribe to these ideas or not, are trapped in a self-imposed exile, isolated from the rest of society yet longing to be a part of it.

It is important, firstly, that we place the collectivisation of sexuality in context. In the post-Stonewall, AIDS-era Western hemisphere, it made a lot of sense for a marginalised group to band together and form a united front against their perceived oppressors. I think to an extent this was justified.

The problem is, a lot of people haven't grown out of this identity and the movement has ultimately fallen prey to the major issue facing every collective throughout history: those who flounce around the loudest naturally gravitate to the top and end up speaking on behalf of everyone.

Personally, I don't appreciate this, and cringe whenever a "representative from the gay community" expresses their admiration of the Greens (I am a

Tory), their desire to amend the Marriage Act (it should not be amended, it should be abolished), or shrilly cries of "Homophobia!" every time someone dares to disagree with them (to such an extent that the word has absolutely lost all meaning). I do not know them. They don't speak on my behalf.

On top of this, enforcing an arbitrary marker of distinction upon themselves is absolutely antithetical to everything that this group is trying to achieve. The Mardi Gras exemplifies a serious clash of conflicting narratives. On the one hand we have the 'Bondage Appreciation' float, followed by a procession of Thai Lady Boys and horny lifeguards. On the other we have the 'We Demand Marriage Equality' float. Drawing attention to why you are different and then demanding to be treated the same as everyone else is a self-evidently moronic logic-fuck. Equality or expression of differences – it's one or the other.

Furthermore, gay 'community' rhetoric perpetuates the false notion that this is a unique 'community' which every gay person identifies with. No, this is not my identity. No, those are not my beliefs. No, I do not want to dress up in drag and sing cabaret, and I fucking hate musicals. I am no fan of Cory Bernardi but you can hardly blame

him, the Australian Christian Lobby, and other groups for thinking the way they do. They aren't watching Mardi Gras thinking about how great it is for self-expression and tolerance. They are watching Mardi Gras thinking: "What sluttiness is this! And these people want to get married!?" This is where the idea of the 'queer lifestyle' comes from, the idea that every single member of this 'gay community' exists following the same behavioural rituals. This problem is entirely the making of homosexual collectives and now they, rightly, are left with the damage.

Unfortunately, though, this has other victims as well. I am gay but not in the slightest bit 'queer identifying' (what does this even mean?). When people talk to me, they talk to me with a set of loaded assumptions that I never asked for. I am certain that when I go out to the movies with friends, my parents think that I've gone to a bondage dungeon to get fisted. I did not ask to join this fictional community, want absolutely no part of it and deeply resent this identity being thrust upon me.

I seriously doubt that I am alone here and, far more seriously, I think that this has a negative effect on gay youth. Kids struggling with their sexuality, who may want nothing to do with this insidious culture perpetuated by increasingly vocal collectives are being done an immense disservice.

So let's lose the collective identity



Not pictured: Nick Richardson

crap. I am an individual who has been developing my own identity since well before I even contemplated being gay. My identity has nothing to do with my sexuality, which is nothing more than a fact of my existence. If you are also gay, then good for you. That does not make us friends. There is no imaginary narrative that binds us together, no shared 'history of oppression'. I have personally never been oppressed.

I do not live a queer lifestyle and certainly am not proud of being gay (I not ashamed of it either, it's a fact I am indifferent to and just live with). Queerspaces, *Queer Honi*, and the like – they all have to go. They entrench a victimhood complex which is entirely self-defeating.

As long as sexuality is being used as an arbitrary marker of distinction it is something we will all be shackled by. We cannot expect to be able to have the freedom to form our own identities and be taken seriously for the mostly decent and diverse human beings that we are as long as we are spoken on behalf of.



SOCIETY

## How homophobia affected me

My own struggle with intolerance and discrimination taught me that things really do get better, writes Isabelle Cox

The debates occurring in Australian politics about gay marriage, mental health, and the rights of LGBTQI people have reached the zenith of their destructive discourse. While such discussions have the potential to raise awareness about the struggles of the gay community, they also give platform to voices that claim gay marriage will destroy "family values", make "gay children" and even, in the words of Liberal senator Cory Bernardi, legitimise bestiality.

How such ignorance still permeates the 21<sup>st</sup> century is beyond me.

I am comfortable admitting that I have undergone tremendous struggles being bisexual, as has my homosexual twin brother. I was bullied in school for being in a same-sex relationship and was socially ostracised, as my ex-girlfriend didn't want to come-out for fear of further discrimination. I performed worse than expected in the HSC because I suffered depression and suicidal thoughts from this bullying. My brother, uncomfortable with his own sexuality, was the main instigator of rumours. But my brother is now comfortable, out, and doesn't let his sexuality define him. He's also my best friend - a kind, loving, and compassionate person who doesn't give a shit about what people think of his sexuality. He is happy with his partner and I hope someday they will be allowed to marry and live together, 'til death do they part.

Men have told me that they have the ability to "turn" me, not realising that



The Westboro Baptist Church regularly pickets funerals of deceased American soldiers.

I am sexually attracted to both sexes. I have had mental health issues exacerbated by men and women calling my preference "disgusting". I've been told I will grow out of this "stage". My own father said: "Everyone experiments when they're young." I wanted to scream: this isn't a stage. This isn't something that will stop when I turn 30. I have been told by my own extended family that it was maladjustment during childhood that made me gay and that I won't go to heaven (not that I care much).

But it is insulting that despite being a caring, loving, intelligent, and passionate person, I am somehow going to hell because of my sexual preferences. How is this fair? It's not. People don't understand the discrimination that can happen on a weekly basis. Luckily, university is a

much more open environment.

I have friends who are transitioning, transgender, bisexual, and queer. I understand their pain when they say they fear the judgment of others, even from within the gay community. For instance, in the lesbian community it might be a surprise to know that some women are judged on being femme or butch. Just because I have long hair and like fashion, wear makeup most days, have a small but noticeable tattoo, and a blog that is dedicated to art, that doesn't mean I am "femme". I am not a fan of the Oxford Street stereotypes, but why should I judge those who engage in that subculture? And why is it even a subculture in the first place? Why is Mardi Gras criticised for being too over the top? Who really gives a shit?

If you judge someone for being gay, you're a homophobe - and let me tell you, that isn't something to be proud of. I can't bully you for being Australian, or straight, or conservative. Why should other people who don't know me care who I am or what I do? Why should friends discuss my sexual habits behind my back? Why should my suicide attempt be an open topic for discussion?

No one should force another to be "outed", because it's a personal choice that is very difficult to undergo. I am ashamed to say I have spread rumours about people being gay, and I am incredibly sorry to these people. I apologise wholeheartedly: no one should have to undergo that.

Discrimination, mental health issues, and the scourge of conservative politics have affected my life, and they've affected the people I love and cherish with all my heart. Don't let the discriminatory, divisive, and sensationalist rhetoric persuade you to become discriminatory yourself. Love is universal, and kids deserve a loving family. In the words of Ellen DeGeneres, a pioneer in gay awareness: "Things will get better, people's minds will change, and you should be alive to see it."

\* Isabelle has chosen to be open about her own struggles with suicide, and encourages you to contact Lifeline if you are experiencing such feelings:

13 11 14



## Heterosexism

Melanie Jayne discusses the assumption of heterosexuality

*A straight guy walks into a gay club. Nicki Minaj pulsates through the speakers as he works his way past drag queens and cage dancers in his quest for the bar. He spots a familiar face in the crowd, my own, and strikes up a conversation. We chat, we drink, and he mentions a mutual friend of ours that recently came out. He talks as if our friend has suddenly converted, try as I might to convince him otherwise.*

*He asks: "So, what about people who are born straight, but then become gay?" I respond: "Are people born straight, or just with the expectation?"*

In today's society, heterosexuality is treated as the default orientation. Children are raised on heterosexual fairy tales, television shows and movies glamourise heterosexual romances, and musicians continually churn out songs catering to the boy-meets-girl fantasy. Sure, there's a sizable portion of queer media on offer too (thank you, *Queer Honi!*), but it's hardly contentious to claim society operates on the unwritten rule: 'straight until proven otherwise' - formally known as 'heteronormativity'.

Heteronormativity refers to an ideology that promotes heterosexuality as the norm. It's a behaviour so embedded



Photo credit: Yoshimai via Flickr

into the collective psyche that most of us don't even realise we're reinforcing it. Entrenched within the social fabric of the Western world, heteronormativity doesn't rear its head so explicitly as homophobia, but it bears just as much potential to hurt the progress of equality.

"Why does what's 'normal' matter," you ask? Well, because it provides the foundations for that alienating experience where a young gay man is asked by his parents when he's going to get a girl-

friend, or the where the lesbian woman is asked if she'll be bringing her husband to the Christmas party. It's the justification for some of the most frustrating questions put to LGBTQI people:

*"When did you realise you were gay?"*

It must have been around the same time that you had your heterosexual epiphany.

*"Why didn't you tell me you're gay?"*

The same reason you don't introduce yourself to strangers with: *"Hi, I'm John, and I'm a raging heterosexual!"*

*"Don't you want to have sex with someone of the opposite gender just to be sure?"*

Sure, as soon as you've had sex with someone of the same sex to confirm that you're hetero.

Cries of "excessive political correctness" and "catering to the whims of a minority" are typical defences from critics, but neither of these are a fair justification for inequality. LGBTQI people shouldn't be made to feel excluded from the wider discourse for any reason: it's a matter of being inclusive of the entire population.

Unfortunately, things aren't likely to change in our lifetimes. Sadly, asking people to view the world in a less biased manner is still a radical proposal. However, there are minor - yet important - adjustments that we can make to the way we think and behave as individuals. It might not change the world overnight, but it can make a world of difference.



## A view from the fence

Blythe Worthy likes it both ways, but not necessarily your way

It's hard being a little bit bi. Fuck, who am I kidding. It's hard being any sexuality, but recently I discovered just how difficult it can be talking to people of other sexualities about my own.

I've always had boyfriends and have been dating girls since I was 18 or so. For most of 2010 I dated only girls and then I fell in love with a boy in 2011. Trust me when I say I like people for who they are, not what they're packing. When I broke up with my boyfriend a few months ago, I realized I was no longer a 'guy's girlfriend' but a fully functioning single-ready-to-mingle-holla-come-at-me-hotties bisexual again.

This was weird, seeing as I had also just returned from a gap year and was quickly settling back into university life. I was making new friends and catching up with old ones. Most of my friends at university were openly gay, and so were their friends, so my social circumstances became REALLY gay. The one thing that surprised me about hanging around with a big group of gays was that I found it difficult to explain my sexuality.

"This is Blythe, everyone, and she has a boyfriend," was my friend's way of introducing me, as he thrust me into the thick of a clearly gay social circle and left. As the surrounding gays and lesbians returned to their conversations, I began to feel really uncomfortable. Like, 'I must get out of here before I have an

anxiety attack' uncomfortable. Or even 'FUCK IF I TALK TO A GIRL AND THEN TELL HER I'M BI WILL SHE THINK I'M A CREEP OR THAT I'M HITTING ON HER WHEN I'M NOT I'M JUST TRYING TO TELL HER I'M BI' uncomfortable. Yeah.

The most interesting thing of all was the way I was treated the more I hung out with my gay friends. They laughed, made camp jokes and grabbed the lesbians' boobs like any usual flaming queer event, but I felt like an outsider. I felt like a closeted man, struggling to be honest with the people around me without causing raised eyebrows, but failing miserably. Not to mention awkwardly.

To be honest, I think that bisexuals have a bit of a bad rep. I've been asked to kiss other girls by my straight male friends and have been 'The Lesbian' at straight female gatherings. I guess it doesn't really help that I've got a shaved head. I also never ended up telling any of my new gay friends that I was bi, which I think is a decision I chose to make simply because no one ever asked me if I was. They all just assumed that I was straight, even when my relationship ended.

Gays: next time someone tells you they're bi, don't roll your eyes or think they're hitting on you, because sometimes it's just as difficult for them to say as it was for you.



## Reinventing Paris: What can Sydney learn from their planning revolution?

### MC

Graham Jahn, AM, Director City Planning, Development and Transport, City of Sydney

### WELCOME

Lord Mayor Clover Moore

### GUEST SPEAKER

Pierre Mansat, Deputy Lord Mayor of Paris, in charge of Paris Metropole and relations with communities of the Paris Region.

Cities are dealing with the growing and changing needs of communities, businesses and our environment.

Pierre Mansat will speak about his work over the past decade to unite government officials from Paris and its suburbs.

What can Sydney learn from Monsieur Mansat's efforts to streamline governance in Paris? And how could partnerships between the City of Sydney and other governments make our bold vision for Sydney a reality?

DATE Thursday 25 October 2012

TIME 6.30 – 8pm

VENUE Lower Town Hall, Sydney Town Hall  
483 George Street (entry via Druitt Street)

### TRANSPORT

Rail: Town Hall station

Bus: George, Druitt and York Streets

Bike: Free bike parking on the Druitt Street side of the building

Tickets are FREE & ESSENTIAL and available from City's Angel Place Box Office on 02 8256 2222 or [cityrecitalhall.com](http://cityrecitalhall.com)

Visit [sydney2030.com.au](http://sydney2030.com.au) for information on our sustainability projects



# Tying the

As the marriage equality debate rages on, we present two

## The unspoken, killer argument for gay marriage

Science has something to say about discrimination too, writes **Benjamin Veness**

It's a funny kind of democracy when an issue with majority public support, a solid grounding in human rights, and zero cost to implement fails to pass either house of Federal Parliament. But when the seldom-voiced health arguments in favour of marriage equality are made, a chill passes through the air and the mood turns humourless.

University students can't ignore evidence. A meta-analysis in BMC Psychiatry of papers published between 1966 and 2005 found that people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) are 2.5 times more likely than people who are heterosexual to attempt suicide (4 times for men who are gay or bisexual), 1.5 times more likely to suffer depression and anxiety disorders, and 1.5 times more likely to experience alcohol and other substance dependence.

"If we truly want to provide all of our youth with a safe, supportive environment in which to develop and maximise their potential, then we must also allow them the opportunity to realistically envisage marrying the person they love, whomever that may be"

Is it unhealthy to be queer?

This is an important point, so let's be crystal clear: No. It is not unhealthy to be homosexual, or bisexual, or anything else. It's unhealthy to be discriminated against, and suffer what's termed minority stress.

A study of more than 34,000 LGB participants published in the American Journal of Public Health two years ago found empirical evidence of detrimental health effects due to discriminatory policies on marriage equality. They surveyed participants in 2001 and 2002 on a range of psychological health indicators, and they administered the same survey in 2004 and 2005, after 14 states approved constitutional amendments limiting marriage to opposite-sex unions.

"In the second set of responses, participants reported significantly higher rates of psychiatric disorders, with increases of 36% for any mood disorder, 248% for generalized anxiety disorder, 42% for alcohol use disorder, and 36% for psychiatric comorbidity. In the comparable control group from states without such amendments during the same time period, there were no significant increases in these psychiatric disorders."

The four authors of this study – from Yale, Harvard and Columbia Universities

– concluded that, "This study lends support for current policies that have sought to eliminate discriminatory acts toward LGB individuals." Their research supports "an argument that implementing social policy changes to abolish institutional forms of discrimination may ultimately reduce mental health disparities in LGB populations, an important public health priority."

And in Australia, our most obvious form of institutional discrimination can be found in a Federal Act of Parliament, the Marriage Act 1961.

Researchers from the University of New South Wales eloquently argue in *Drug and Alcohol Review* that we are squandering an opportunity for primary prevention. "Discrimination and stigma underlie cultural norms,



"But a more direct, public health approach to managing both community stigma and individually experienced internalised homophobia is, of course, to reduce societal stigma and discrimination. And, one of the clearest strategies is to legitimise sexual minorities through recognition of relationship status – that is, legalise gay marriage."

They note that, "The best public-policy interventions are those which target a significant problem, have a clear rationale, are supported by research evidence, are least costly to implement and have strong community support. Legalising gay marriage as an alcohol and drug policy response meets these criteria."

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) says that, "Society's acceptance of diverse sexualities and gender identities is a major factor in an individual's successful transition through various lifestages" and that, "Mental health problems are statistically over-represented in this population throughout life due to exposure to discriminatory behaviour."

The AMA identifies young persons who are queer, especially those living in country regions, as one of the main groups affected by discrimination, noting that "they have increased rates of homelessness, risk-taking behaviour, depression, suicide and episodes of self-harm compared to their heterosexual cohorts."

The American Medical Association "recognizes that denying civil marriage based on sexual orientation is discriminatory and imposes harmful stigma on gay and lesbian individuals and couples and their families", and is joined by many other health associations that also support marriage equality, or have recognised the major health disparities that exist as a result of denying it. A non-exhaustive list

includes the Australian Medical Students' Association, American Medical Students' Association, Indiana State Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Psychological Association, and the Australian Psychological Society.

The AMA's point about youth is important, and should concern us all. Marriage equality offers significant benefits to young people – both those who already identify as queer as well as those who are 'questioning'. Passage of an equality bill would assist them to feel like an equal member of a society that affords them all of the same rights as their heterosexual family members and friends, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

If we truly want to provide all of our youth with a safe, supportive environment in which to develop and maximise their potential, then we must also allow them the opportunity to realistically envisage marrying the person they love, whomever that may be, in a ceremony in which that love is publicly supported. It is crucial that 'marriage' is offered to everyone, or we put youth at risk of feelings of inferiority and undeserved stress.

Whilst we patiently debate this issue, real and perceived discrimination burns. Invisible, it is ignored and denied by those in power, but the evidence shows that the status quo is harming the health of persons who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex. At the saddest end, queer youth are at heightened risk of suicidal behaviour. Our elected politicians must pass legislation for equality, just as most of us want them to, and all of us need them to.

*Benjamin Veness is President-elect of the Australian Medical Students' Association.*

individual experiences of 'coming out' and contribute to intrapsychic distress. 'Internalised homophobia' is the term used to describe the internal conflict within sexual minority individuals, who have been exposed to negative attitudes, stigma and discrimination due to their sexual orientation. Alcohol or other drug use is one way to attempt to manage such internal conflict. Therapeutic interventions aimed at self-acceptance are encouraged.



# Knot



discussions which are often overlooked in the discourse

## A union of radical and conservative politics

Marriage equality and politics can sometimes have some unexpected junctures. **Nathan Li** reports

The intersections between queer issues, politics, and religion is nowhere more apparent than in the same-sex marriage debate. To begin, I will admit that I wasn't the first person to recognize the irony of progressive politics lobbying for an expansion of what is traditionally a conservative institution. For those who are unfamiliar, the premise is that it is ironic that as more socially progressive heterosexual couples reject marriage as an important convention for their own relationship, more apparently socially progressive same-sex couples are seeking to confirm their relationship by petitioning for the right to marry.

As David Cameron was apt to say in 2011, "Conservatives believe in the ties that bind us; that society is stronger when we make vows to each other and support each other. So I don't support gay marriage despite being a Conservative. I support gay marriage because I am a Conservative."

It is neither necessary nor desirable to quote the contrary views of Miss Gillard.

These both serve as a clear indicator that you cannot judge someone's political disposition by that person's sexuality or gender identity. Sexual and gender identities cut across all political, religious, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds. Similarly, one cannot depict all same-sex attracted or gender diverse people as progressive, atheist, unemployed, hipster vegetarians. Queer identities are not so clean-cut.

Just as important as it is to recognize the intersection of political and religious perspectives within the queer community, we must recognize the intersections between queer and non-queer issues, the queer community, and the heteronormative community. Again, the issue of marriage equality is not "just a gay issue". It's everybody's issue. It is not supposed to be a fight between gay and anti-gay forces (though between these two, sparks certainly do fly). Marriage equality matters to everyone in our society, just as the abolition of slavery mattered to both bondmen and freemen, and suffrage

mattered to the franchised and disenfranchised. The freedom of my brothers and sisters are just as valuable to me as my own freedom. The franchise of my brothers and sisters are just as valuable to me as my own franchise.

Therefore, the right for all to live in blessed matrimony should matter as much to those given the right to marry as it does to those denied the right. A society that uses the right to marry to institutionalize and perpetuate discrimination reflects poorly on the individuals within that society. The attitude that the rights and happiness of our neighbours are no concern of our own surely casts a shadow on our collective consciences. Whether queer, heterosexual, married or unmarried, we all find a common intersection in our love for freedom and equality.

The question for us as a community today is whether marriage should be about love and commitment, and let all couples who are loving and committed to each other marry, or whether marriage should be about the convenience of a man and a woman creating rights to each other's property upon death or separation. Given the prevalence of the prenuptial agreement to avoid the incidences of property division upon separation, and the rights of de facto partners that approximate the incidences of property division upon the dissolution of marriage, the latter definition seems shaky. By process of elimination, we can conclude that if marriage is not about love and commitment, it loses all its relevance to our society.

As the discourse currently stands, marriage has lost its original relevance. It is no longer about promoting loving, committed relationships or about forming a foundation for a stable family. Instead, it is now only relevant only insofar as an institution of marginalisation.

If marriage is to stay relevant, especially for heterosexual relationships, it must have some meaning. If the proponents of marriage are genuinely interested in strengthening the foundations of the social institution, and turning it into an

institution celebrating love and inclusion, they must repudiate any notion that marriage should be defined solely by exclusion (that it is only between a man and a woman) or that the only sufficient and necessary precondition to marriage is being two people of opposite sex.

For everyone in society, regardless of their gender



or sexual orientation, and regardless of their intentions to marry, or to never marry in life, the question of same-sex marriage is one of equality and dignity. The question we must ask ourselves is whether it is right to deny an entire demographic the right to marry, and whether it is right to say to an entire demographic that they were born with fewer claims to rights and dignity because of their sexuality or their gender identity. Even the great villain Iago had the conscience to reflect that "he that filches from me my good name / Robs me of that which not enriches him / And makes me poor indeed". If we are to pride ourselves on our tradition of justice and equality then such wrongs must be righted.

The reality of the matter is that individuals within society will sometimes move at a different pace to society as a whole. There will be many people who still believe that to preserve the traditional values of marriage means to exclude same-sex couples who are, to them, incapable of forming loving and committed relationships. For them, and for those who do not believe in marriage altogether, we must ensure that their disbelief does no harm to the rights of other people.

The story of same-sex marriage is one of intersections between many cultures, beliefs, and political dispositions. Such

fundamental issues to our society can no longer be polarised into labels such as "homosexual agenda" or "progressive politics". Supporters of equality span the spectrum of sexualities and genders as they do the political spectrum. It is because we can find friends and allies everywhere we turn that makes greater equality inevitable.

*Nathan Li is a Queer Student Events Coordinator in the University of Sydney Union.*





The likes of Jim Wallace do not speak for the queer religious community, writes Curtis Dickson

# GOD VS GAYS

Over the last few years there has been a groundswell of support for marriage equality – the push to extend state recognition to all couples, regardless of gender. Public debate intensified during 2012, after the Australian Labor Party changed its platform to support marriage equality and four different marriage equality bills ended up before parliament. Disappointingly, two of these bills were voted down last week.

In a bitter twist of irony, this was largely because of the actions of the two major parties, and the intransigence of Tony Abbott and Julia Gillard. The ALP (the party of collectivism) gave its MPs a choice to vote against their party platform, while the Liberal Party (the party of personal freedom) bound its MPs to vote against marriage equality.

If there has been one negative aspect to this process, it has been that the debate continues to polarise queer and religious

voices in the public sphere. In her speech against marriage equality, Liberal Senator Connie Fierravanti-Wells emphasised the point that most major religions have a special reverence for the institution of marriage. She mused: "I doubt that most people who are pushing these amendments are overly religious or even intend on staying in a monogamous relationship, which begs the question: why do they want to get 'married'?" Of course, there is an underlying assumption to Connie's question: that it is not possible to be queer and religious.

Nonetheless, queer people of faith do exist, albeit in smaller numbers. Research has shown that lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex people are much more likely to identify as having 'no religion' and less likely to affiliate with Christianity than the general population. A 2008 study compared census data on religious affiliation with

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40 per cent of people in same-sex relationships identified as being Christian.  
.....

data found in Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria's Private Lives report. The researchers found that in 2006, 63.9 per cent of the general population was affiliated to a Christian denomination and 18.7 per cent were not religious, while in the LGBTI population only 17.2 per cent identified as Christian and 71.6 per cent declared themselves to be non-religious. More recently, data from the 2011 Census showed that 40 per cent of people in same-sex relationships identified as being Christian (compared to opposite sex couples, who were 67 per cent Christian).

While these statistics do show that the queer community are less likely to be religious, they certainly lay rest to the claim that those pushing for marriage equality are not religious. Of course, one could be forgiven for assuming a dichotomy between churches and queer people. After all, Christian churches (as well as many other faith communities) have often stigmatised queer people, and excluded them from belonging to their congregations. Many hold firm to a strict binary notion of gender, privileging 'heterosexual vaginal intercourse within marriage' as the only acceptable expression of sexuality.

In Australia, the dominant opposition to marriage equality has persistently come from the religious right – most vehemently from the Australian Christian Lobby. Invariably, conservative religious groups such as the ACL shift the parameters of the debate – pushing it from a discussion about the role of marriage in society to one where they have a platform to openly express their disdain for queer relationships as 'unhealthy' or 'unnatural'. This sort of attitude was on display when the ACL's national spokesperson Jim Wallace suggested that smokers lead longer, healthier lives than gay men (a claim based on flawed research). At around the same time, I attended two forums held on campus where this factoid was produced as an argument against marriage equality.

It is this sort of attitude that drives many queer people away from organised religion. However, a small percentage of people stay involved, managing to find a congregation or denomination that accepts them for who they are. The Metropolitan Community Church, founded as a gay-affirming denomination in the 1970s, has three congregations in Sydney. Many Uniting Church congregations are accepting of LGBTI people – with two recently appointing a gay or lesbian minister. Other groups are targeted towards people who may be members of less accepting denominations. These include "Freedom 2 b[e]", a support group for Pentecostals, and "Acceptance", an LGBTI Catholic group that celebrated its 40th anniversary in Australia this year – yes, it began in 1972, six years before the first Mardi Gras!

Over the past year I have been exploring queer Christian identity as a part of my Honours research in Sociology. I've found that for many LGBTI Christians, living the contradiction of being queer and religious becomes, as sociologist Jodi O'Brien put it, a *raison d'être*. They are able to reconcile their identity by rejecting the six to eight 'clobber passages' – the pieces of scripture that are used to condemn queer people.

Instead, the people I interviewed embrace some of the more vital aspects of Christianity: they believe in a compassionate God, a loving Creator that does not condemn, but rather made them the way they are. They often see Jesus as a radical social reformer who stood for the

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In an environment where progressive politics and rational secularism are the order of the day, it often feels easier to come out as 'queer' than to come out as 'Christian'.  
.....

marginalised in society. Christ's example of battling the powers of his day inevitably encourages LGBTI Christians to challenge traditional religious authority and make the church a more inclusive and accepting institution. Still, many feel a sense of dissonance between themselves and the broader queer community, where admitting that they are a Christian can





be met with reactions of bewilderment to outright hostility.

I understand first hand how this dissonance feels, particularly at university. In an environment where progressive politics and rational secularism are the order of the day, it often feels easier to come out as ‘queer’ than to come out as ‘Christian’. But I was raised in a Christian family – my parents are both ministers of religion in The Salvation Army – and I was a part of that denomination

until my late teens (and no, they don’t believe that gays should be put to death).

When I first started to realise that I was attracted to other guys, I was terrified of how my parents and church might react – so I pulled away from organised religion. I later met my partner, who had been rejected from his Anglican church for being gay. Together, we began attending a Uniting Church congregation, which we discovered through Rev Dr John Hirt in the campus Multifaith

Chaplaincy Centre. When we first attended that congregation we were treated like any other couple, and still are to this day. Our friends at church are eager to one day be able to celebrate our wedding with us – I often feel that they are more incensed about the injustice of the Marriage Act than I am.

Behind all of the public debate around the worth of non-queer relationships, and the ugly comments from self-proclaimed Christian leaders like Jim

Wallace and Cory Bernardi, there are thousands of queer people of faith – Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists – trying to live out their deeply held faith in the best way that they can.

As the campaign for marriage equality moves (for now) from the Federal to State level, we can only hope that the dignity and worth of all people are upheld in the debate.

Curtis Dickson is on Twitter: @Cubansunrise

## A silent revolution has begun to purge homophobia from the Middle East, writes **Fahad Ali**

I became fully conscious of my sexuality while living in the Middle East. This isn’t the greatest realization one could have: I’m gay, and I’m living in a part of the world where homosexuality is met with fierce opposition (and very heavy stones). A bit more than a year ago, I decided to come out to my closest friends. It went surprisingly better than I expected. When I told my best friend, he looked at me, shrugged, and said, “You’re still the same person.”

It wasn’t perfectly trouble-free. When I came out to a classmate over Facebook, I had death threats hurled at me. And this:

“This is something that if you are in canada or the states they will put u in jail, i swear... U have a disease... go find a doctor and cure it.”

This kind of thinking surprised me. He seemed to be suggesting that homosexuals were condemned with more aggressiveness in the West than in the Middle East. This is, of course, completely batshit. There is no way these preconceived ideas could have formed from direct observation or experience. It was something borne from misinformation and ignorance. And the great thing about ignorance is that it can be remedied.

The Qur'an does not prescribe any condemnation for homosexuality; in fact, in my reading of the Qur'an, it's okay to be gay. The Islamic perception of homosexuality as a vile act to be punishable by death is rationalized by the idea that it is a form of *fitnah*, or ‘mischief’. The act of *fitnah*, or “making mischief in the land”, includes things like acts of treason and terrorism; crimes that have serious negative consequences for the whole of a community.

The idea here is that homosexuality (or any alternate sexuality) will corrupt society and bring ruin to a nation.

This concept is beginning to deterio-

rate. It’s not such a huge leap to shatter the often recited lie that homosexuality is *haram*: explicitly forbidden by the word of God. From there, it is not hard to realise that if indeed homosexuality did cause chaos, then the Western world would be in flames. Clearly, quite the opposite is true. The Arab Spring, to which I have been an eyewitness, has brought conflict to some of the most docile regions of the Middle East. If Islamic society were truly as utopian as its fanatical clerics claim it to be, there would not be the exchange of bullets, Molotovs, and tear gas on the streets. The Arabic youth know this.

“.....  
The Qur'an does not prescribe any condemnation for homosexuality; in fact, in my reading of the Qur'an, it's okay to be gay.”

They're beginning to make the links, especially with the advent of file-sharing and social media. The infiltration of Western film and television into the culture of the Arabian youth has exposed them to a picture of the world that is radically different from their own. In the West, prosperity, peace, and liberty are nearly ubiquitous. Faced with the realisation that the grass is greener on the other side, we are seeing the Eastern youth trying to impersonate the West in all its aspects, including queer acceptance. I suspect that the quite recent emergence of queer identities in the mainstream media culture has brought about a shift in paradigms across the world.

After I had returned to Australia, I heard that the one of the newspapers

in Bahrain, the *Gulf Daily News*, had published a letter from a young woman that was violently attacking homosexuality for being sinful and vile. A close friend of mine replied to this letter with her own, which was published as well.

This was unprecedented. I did not find it surprising that the newspaper would publish a scathingly homophobic letter, but it was astounding that they would publish a letter defending homosexuality.

The friend who wrote the letter had not been raised in a country where homosexuality was accepted, but where it could be met with the death penalty. She had minimal exposure to queer persons, and yet she understood that queerphobia was terrible and unjust. I do not believe at all that her schema of acceptance would have been formed without an influx of Western ideas into the Middle Eastern ethos.

The implications here are significant. I would argue that our fight for queer rights here in Australia, and elsewhere in the Western world, have consequences for the Middle East. I think this is often overlooked. We need to realise that our

fight for equality and justice at home are sowing the seeds of acceptance in parts of the world where homophobia is endemic. By championing our own cause here in Australia, we are lighting a spark of hope for those that will be the champions of their own fight, across the seas.

I do not pretend that it will be an easy task. Indeed, we have not won our own fights here in Australia yet, but I believe with certainty that we are getting there. Weapons and warfare will not overthrow zealous clerics and the men they control, including much of the monarchy and government in the Middle East. They will be overthrown when their source of power - unquestioned belief - has faded.

As the youth of Arabia begin to question their world, the grip of ignorance and hatred loses potency. The silent revolution has begun, and I find it difficult to imagine current conditions in the Middle East will be extant in the next century.

The worst possible thing we can do is be silent. An Islamic proverb reads: “he who remains silent in the presence of Satan is indeed himself a lesser Satan”. I think the same concept applies here.



# Queen Scene

## THEATRE REVIEW

### *Legally Blonde*

Jessica Jeffery thinks the show could've done with a manicure

On Wednesday night I made the trip out to the Lyric Theatre to see *Legally Blonde: The Musical*. Now, I loved the original *Legally Blonde* with Reese Witherspoon. I even liked the hilariously bad follow-up *Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde*. But I wasn't convinced it would work on stage – the story just doesn't seem like an obvious choice for a musical makeover. Now that I've seen it, some of my misgivings have been confirmed.

I can understand the reasoning behind the show: take a well-received comedy from the past decade, add music, dance, and an expensive set, and you should



have an easy success. But I feel like the show celebrates pop culture moments that have come and gone, like the song and dance celebration of the 'bend and snap'. I also think that it would have been more enjoyable if I hadn't seen and enjoyed the movie version of *Legally Blonde*, because then I wouldn't have known all the jokes.

If you haven't seen the movie, here is a quick outline: Elle Woods (played Lucy Durack) is a frivolous sorority girl madly in love with her boyfriend Warner (Robert 'Millsy' Mills). When he dumps her because he wants a more serious girlfriend, she follows him to Harvard Law School to win him back.

The first number (entitled "Ohmigod You Guys") was unforgettable, and I mean that literally because it's so catchy it's been running non-stop in my mind all week. Less impressive songs include "Serious" and "Blood in the Water" sung by Millsy and Cameron Daddo (who plays Professor Callahan) respectively. I didn't expect much from either of them, but they seem like decent singers, just not as good as the seasoned performers around them. Lucy Durack was amazing, easily my favourite performer of the night. Also she's really pretty and I want the

# LEGALLY BLONDE

## *The Musical*



sparkly pink dress she wore during the curtain calls.

Other actors include David Harris (Emmett) and Erika Heynatz (Brooke Wyndham). But the biggest clap of the night went to the two dogs who 'played' Rufus and Bruiser. Those dogs were really well trained and adorable.

The show was very faithful to the original, probably to a fault, as some songs were merely extended versions of jokes from the film. The second act dragged on a bit, but it was enlivened by the best song of the night "There! Right There!".

The whole show was incredibly high energy – the dancers were like ferrets high on red cordial, except with more energy. There were seamless transitions

between scenes and the Lyric Theatre seems like an excellent venue for this type of big production. I could see and hear the show well from the dress circle.

The show was easily the most expensive performance I've ever seen, and I bought a preview ticket with a group discount. While it was a fun night out, I just don't think it's worth the cost given that it's not an original show.

**i** Legally Blonde will be playing at the Lyric Theatre until December 16th.  
See [legallyblonde.com.au](http://legallyblonde.com.au) for details.

## GAMES

### *My Mini Gay Girlfriend*

Flora Grant gets a new girlfriend

*My Mini Gay Girlfriend* is an app by Digicub where users foster a relationship from meeting to marriage with their own mini gay girlfriend. She's like a queer digimon, but instead of requiring food and water, she demands cuddles and brunch.

The app is a series of mini games that rate your ability in successive stages of a relationship.

Once you've set your eye on a lady, it begins with holding hands, hugging and kissing as you vie for her attention. The reaction and memory games are addictive, and depending on how well you do, you can ask your pocket lover if she wants to date. After a few rejections, your patience is rewarded with coffee dates, trips to the movies and romantic dinners.

Eventually, you can ask your pocket lover to be your girlfriend. The clincher? In one of the best examples of clever monetization of an app, you have to pay \$0.99 to make her your girlfriend.

Once you pay and make her your girlfriend, you're allowed a candlelit bath followed by breakfast in bed (where you have to find a croissant under the sheets to win her love), and after about 5 days of a solid smartphone relationship, are allowed to ask her to move in with you and get a cat.

The final stages of the game are marriage and going on holidays together, although once you've reached these stages there isn't too much to keep you coming back to the app.

When you leave the app and return a



few days later you will find a grumpy wife. In some cases she may have broken up with you, or, even worse, your cat might have died.

Thankfully, one of the selling points of the app is that it allows you to have as many ex-girlfriends as you like, meaning the fun can start again with any one of 18 mini characters.

Suggested improvements from users include a 'scene' section of the app, where all these exes can bump in to each other and be friends.

The app plays in to the well-worn lesbian stereotypes about U-Hauling – the feedback on the App Store is: 'I love it, but one problem: it takes too long to



make her your girlfriend', but with a 4.5 star average rating it's obvious that it's hit the mark.

*My Mini Gay Girlfriend* is popular because she plays so hard to get. Despite demanding affection, she never tells you she loves you, never offers you a hug first and is quick to scowl at you when you don't choose the right things for your picnic together. She rewards your dedication and consistency – so maybe the app is a good thing for relationships on the whole.

Now I have to go before she gets jealous.

## POETRY

### Tuesday Talks at Manning

Annaliese Gale

Reigning denominations  
argue politics  
at ineffectual debate  
where the right-to-free-speech  
reigns over free minds  
turning anger to apathy  
inaction and a total  
air of idiocy

A selected panel of three  
hand-chosen, revered -  
tell paisley-clad  
practising androgyny  
neutral pronoun followers,  
that the best they can offer  
is an open closet  
full of their own skeletons,  
that when entered into  
is locked, key thrown away  
forgotten with a handful of  
other perverted types

The same old fear  
recycled for centuries,  
return to haunt  
dismal youth who preach  
intentionality in language  
deconstruct discourse  
and troll cyber-space  
reprimanding those who  
'simply didn't mean that'

A heckle from inattentive crowd  
reminds all  
that fear of other will always return  
in one way or another.

# “Foolish and lucky”

A combination of hard work and pure chance brought Annamarie Jagose to the University of Sydney, writes Lane Sainty



I first heard Annamarie Jagose's name earlier this year when she participated in a debate on the proposition 'same-sex marriage should not be legalised'. This was not remarkable because of the participation itself — after all, same-sex marriage has been discussed to death — but rather because Jagose, a queer, progressive woman, argued for the affirmative.

While this debate has constituted the bulk of Jagose's media attention this year, she offers, as I discovered, much more than an alternative viewpoint on marriage. Jagose is a respected academic and a published novelist. She is also modest, describing herself as "lucky" throughout our interview, claiming that much of her success came from "being in the right place at the right time".

Currently, Jagose is the head of the School of Letters, Art and Media (SLAM) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Sydney. She's been employed as an academic for the past 20 years, but surprisingly, this was never part of her plan.

In fact, much of Jagose's life seems to have been determined by chance. She grew up in the Waikato region of northern New Zealand, and ended up studying at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch. Jagose cites scholarship restrictions as the reason for her choice of university and degree.

"If you were under 20, you were only eligible for a scholarship if you studied something that wasn't available at your local university. At Canterbury, they offered a degree in Latin. So I did a degree in Latin," she explains, laughing.

I ask what she was like at university, and she immediately responds: "A hopeless swot." When she first arrived at the residency halls of Christchurch, she spent every spare minute studying.

"I didn't exactly understand at first that not everybody was doing this," she says, laughing again.

Her study habits were so extreme that they attracted light teasing from friends. "Some of my friends would say 'Look, Annamarie, you worked for fifty hours on that essay, I've worked for two, you got an A plus and I got a B plus. So who's the stupid one?'" she remembers.

"And I could see their logic! But yes, I did work hard." Jagose also mentions that she was involved in feminist, lesbian, and land rights activism.

Jagose moved to Victoria University of Wellington to complete her PhD, which eventually turned into her first book: *Lesbian Utopics*. Even then, Jagose had no idea what to do when she finished.

"I completed my PhD without ever thinking that I wanted to be an academic. I am the least sensible academic I know in this respect."

She considered different career options, law among them. "Law was one of those things that careers counsellors always pushed at me at school, but then I thought oh, you'd have to be a lawyer, which seemed a disadvantage," she comments wryly.

Auckland where she became a head of department for the first time in 2007. Her position as the Head of SLAM is the first non-teaching role she has ever held.

Academia aside, Jagose is also a published novelist, with three books under her belt. *Slow Water*, her most recent novel, was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award in 2004.

"Somebody told me once that the strange thing about my novels is that they are all totally different, not just in terms of what they're about but almost as if they'd been written by three different people," says Jagose. "I'm not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing."

They certainly all sound different. *In Translation* is about a lesbian love triangle, *Lulu* a couple who raise a chimpanzee in their house for linguistic

**"I completed my PhD without ever thinking that I wanted to be an academic. I am the least sensible academic I know in this respect."**

Her mother was increasingly concerned about her job prospects ("You've been at university for seven years now, what are you going to do?"), but instead of parental pressure, it was a chance conversation with a friend that got Jagose her first academic gig.

The friend was among the "sensible, well-informed PhD students" who searched for jobs amongst the educational hire pages in various international newspapers. She told Jagose that a job was going for a lectureship in English at the University of Melbourne; Jagose applied and got it. In retrospect, she considers herself more than a little lucky.

"That's not really how you should apply for a job," she says disapprovingly. "But it worked out for me." Jagose started at the University of Melbourne in July of 1992, but it took a little time for her to start feeling like a real academic. "I always felt like a bit of a sham, because I had just sort of lucked into it," she explains.

Nonetheless, she stuck at it, working at Melbourne until 2003 when she took a new position in Film, Television and Media Studies at the University of

experimentation and *Slow Water* a nineteenth-century historical romance based on a real life sex scandal. Jagose explains the basic plot lines of each, concluding her précis of *In Translation* with "the shared love interest is a translator...and that's sort of why it's called *In Translation*. Oh god, that sounds like such a terrible novel."

Her writing process is diligent and methodical. "I make it manageable for myself by saying 'I will write x number of words a day,'" she explains. "I wrote my PhD by writing 400 words a day, and now I've raised that total to 500. In 20 years." She laughs. Jagose admits that sometimes she doesn't reach her target, but that "it doesn't happen so often" only on "very unhappy days."

Being able to write her first novel is another milestone Jagose puts down to luck. On the day she finished her PhD, she got a phone call informing her that she had won her first writers fellowship, to the value of \$18,000.

"At first I thought someone was pulling my leg, because the application had asked for five to ten pages of a novel in progress, but I didn't have a novel

in progress, so I just thought 'Well, I'll just write one and send it,'" she recalls. "But because I'm such a slow writer, I only managed to write a paragraph. So although I would say to any student who asked me 'They asked for five pages, so don't apply if you've only got a paragraph,' and even though if I was on a committee I wouldn't award a prize to a person who only submitted a paragraph, somehow, it...it must have been a good paragraph."

It's only when I press her on it, saying that she doesn't give herself much credit that Jagose relents — slightly — on the "foolish but lucky" line.

"Well, I did say that I was a swot at uni, didn't I? I do work hard, that is fair to say. But there was a lot of luck there, because lots of people work hard. I didn't have any kind of career plan... everything just lined up."

Jagose admits that she doesn't have a lot of spare time, but lately she and her partner have been spending time at dog training with their eight-month-old puppy. Jagose has been with her partner for 16 years, but is not married; hardly surprising, considering her views.

"I can truly say I have never wanted to be married," says Jagose, explaining that she found the concept highly dubious from a very young age. At school in religious studies class she would ask the teachers how it was possible to promise to do something forever, as marriage or religious orders required. "I'd question it, saying: 'How do you make a promise for the future? How do you say I will do this for all time, because I might not want it in ten years time?' And they said 'Well, you just have to keep to your promise.' And I just didn't think it was a very good logic."

On the media attention surrounding her pro-queer, yet anti-same-sex marriage views? "I'm rather hoping that soon people will stop asking me to speak about this topic, because I don't have much else to say."

When quizzed about the biggest challenge she has faced, Jagose pauses, and chooses her words carefully.

"On a personal front, I found it challenging to leave a family environment that was very close and affectionate, knowing that I had a trajectory that was going to take me outside the expected version of being like my parents. So coming out as a lesbian to my family was quite difficult, and for a long while I didn't have the same relationship that I had previously had."

But Jagose isn't bitter. "Now that I'm older, I can see that it would have been a challenge for my family too, and one that with the passage of time they've actually managed fantastically."

She also says that she has never experienced workplace discrimination on the basis of being a queer woman.

"No, no, I've been hired on the basis of it!" she says, explaining that when your first book is called *Lesbian Utopics*, those who might have a problem with queer women tend to stay out of your way.

"You're off the hook from having to explain," she says. "And in my experience, universities tend to be much more progressive than conservative. That's yet another way in which I've been incredibly lucky."

# Action-Reaction

## Becoming Clitaurus



A few weeks ago, I found myself in need of a dress. You see, I would be making my drag debut on stage in the 2012 Sydney University Queer Revue and unfortunately, not being Cinderella, I couldn't get any friendly neighbourhood mice to make me one. So, two weeks before the show, the props team, Jed & Annie (Jannie for short), the director, Joe, and I loaded ourselves into a Toyota Camry and embarked on an expedition to find a fabulous frock or two. Our quest took us deep into suburbia to the McMansions of Quakers Hill where Nathan, better known to many as Karen Kardashian, made his home.

He kissed us all hello and ushered us into his bedroom, racks of gowns impeding our entry, and then it seemed it was

**John Francis** becomes a woman, and feels fat

time to get naked. Now, getting naked is awkward at the best of times, but it's a confronting experience when you're standing in front of three judgmental fags and a hag in order to try on dresses at a stranger's house – all while being sober.

The first dress was long, flowing and dark. It seemed perfect, until the zipper started to struggle around my ribs. So now not only was I half naked, half wearing a dress in a stranger's apartment, but I was also FAT! As it turns out, being fat is a state of mind – and of inflated lungs – so I expelled and voila! I was thin again! The dress was stunning and it made my collar bones look a million dollars, so we continued on. Upon leaving Nathan's house, I felt much more comfortable for the role ahead, knowing that I at least wasn't going to look awful.

After that special evening in Quakers Hill, the opening night approached quickly. It was a Wednesday and I left the office half an hour early to get to the theatre. My talented make-up artist, Aidan, and his assistant, Clare, were patiently awaiting my arrival as we had to start early to get my makeup done in time. I grew to enjoy this part of the preparation and marvelled at the evolution that my face undertook. In some ways, I think Clitaurus' persona would begin to swell inside me as she started to see her face staring back at me.

Suddenly I was doing it. I was getting my sass on and owning the stage. Well, I was sharing the stage with each and every other performer, but for the moment when I was in the spotlight, I felt like a



Hello, Clitaurus!

Photos: Rob Jones

star. At one point, I found myself sitting on a stool, centre stage with a spotlight glaring down on me. A "cop" on either side of me, the only thing I could think of was how I'd sat the wrong way and the strapping tape keeping my junk in a neat "tuck" was now pinching. I could change position, but the incredibly revealing sequin dress in which I was clad was just looking for an opportunity to ride up. Oh god.

Yes, it was difficult to be a drag queen. But, as in any character role, it's a chance to become another person or being and to live vicariously through him, or in this case, her. Clitaurus Van Carti-Gay gave me the opportunity to become an extraordinary woman for five awesome nights, to meet some pretty amazing and interesting people, and to have a completely new and challenging experience along the way.

persuade them that these dreams are achievable. Apart from the hope that this more visible representation would impart, we also require queer scientists to be acknowledged in order to convince the general public that the queer community provides an invaluable contribution to all aspects of society.

To be silent is to be secure, but wars are not won by security. The fight for queer rights is an issue that transcends the importance of the individual. I would say that the queer scientist has an obligation to be an activist because there are people who depend on them to set an example. Young people need heroes and heroines, and the rest of the world needs to understand that queer people can do remarkable things.

I believe that the establishment of a national union for queer scientists is an idea that should be realised sooner rather than later. We need a strong, unified body of queer scientists to stand collectively against discrimination in the scientific profession, to combat the pseudoscientific arguments being used to attack the queer community, and to foster a new paradigm of inclusiveness and acceptance.

In 1975, 186 prominent scientists signed a document entitled declaring their objections to the pseudoscience of astrology. These scientists were appealing to natural law and scientific fact to, as they put it, "caution the public against the unquestioning acceptance of the pre-

dictions and advice given privately and publicly by astrologers". I would like to see a similar statement issued on the topic of queer rights. At moment, we are coming under a barrage of completely outlandish, pseudoscientific claims, which are being accepted, quite remarkably, by members of parliament and a part of the general public. Scientists can be vocal and rebut these arguments, if they so choose. Scientists are, in one sense, the seekers of truth, and knowing the truth, they would be mistaken to remain silent. They must find the resolve to help turn the tide.

In the same vein as those 186 scientists against astrology, I believe that "the time has come to challenge directly, and forcefully" the prejudiced claims of our adversaries.



## Where Are All the Queer Scientists?

The time is nigh to rise up in the name of fact, writes **Fahad Ali**

It is a worrying observation that there is an apparent deficiency of queer individuals in the scientific profession. They are almost certainly there, but they are not as vocal as one would expect. There is further cause for concern when we consider that there is no national association for queer scientists in Australia. The tacit nature of queer scientists is problematic, and that the lack of formal organizations for these scientists is a very germane issue.

My concern is that the practitioners of science, distinct from their field, are being prevented from taking part in queer

activism, for fears of losing tenure or having grant proposals rejected. This is why solidarity is required: just as a trade union protects employees, an association of queer scientists and allies would be a strong protective force against discrimination.

For the same reasons that we need women and minority ethnic groups to be represented in science, we need queer scientists to be recognised. The issue is not one of minor importance. A more conspicuous representation of queer scientists is necessary to empower young people to fight for their dreams, and

## Queer Officers' Report

No rain on QuAC's parade in 2012, writes **Rebecca Alchin**

It's been a good year for the University of Sydney's Queer Action Collective (QuAC). We've had numerous events throughout the year to keep us busy, and none of them could have been achieved without the help of our amazing collective members.

We started off the year participating in a cross-campus Queer Students Network (QSN) Mardi Gras float. Even though it rained, that didn't stop our 'queers of the future' themed parade from going ahead, and we marched down Oxford Street, proudly carrying a banner painted with a glittering unicorn, and receiving hugs and high-fives from the crowd.

With the help of the SRC, we were able to send a group of students to this year's Queer Collaborations (QC) conference in Adelaide for a week during the holidays between semester one and two. We also held a successful fundraising 'Queer Cabaret' party at the Red Rattler – complete with band and drag

performances – to cover the travel costs for students going to QC.

This semester we had Pride Week, and after a lot of grocery shopping and panicking with my co-officer, Eleonora, we were ready to celebrate with a pancake breakfast, 'Coming Out By Candlelight', and a delightful picnic.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Eleonora, and also to Lane and Lachlan, for being my co-Queer Officers. They are beautiful people and I am so glad to have worked with them. I would like to thank Nathan for guiding us along the way, and Evan and Charlie for sacrificing so much of their time to organise the Queer Cabaret party. To QuAC's 'officers of fun' – Jamie, Sarah and Nick – thank you. I want to thank Fahad for taking on the role of editor-in-chief of *Queer Honi*, and to everyone else who made this publication possible. And to everyone who helped El and I put up posters for various events throughout

the year - our arms were a lot less sore with your help!

And finally to the collective: QuAC has been one of the greatest experiences of my university life. The collective has a special place in my heart – coming to USYD in 2011, straight out of school, I didn't know any queer people. I made the awkward trip down to the Queerspace during a QuAC meeting, completely terrified and not uttering a word. I'm happy that I braved that first trip down. Without QuAC, I wouldn't have met so many lovely people, and wouldn't be quite as secure as I am today in my own queer skin. I wanted to try and give something back to the collective that has done so much for me, so I took on the role of Queer Officer, which leads me to my next point.

Nominations for the 2013 Queer Officer positions are coming up soon. If you would like to run for the position, please come to the meeting we will be holding

[queer.officers@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:queer.officers@src.usyd.edu.au)



on 8 October in the Queerspace.

Any queer-identifying student at USYD is entitled to vote, and a total of four officer positions will be available.

Lots of love,  
Rebecca

## Environment Officers' Report

Reflections as a Queer Wom\*n, by **Steph Clark**

The Environment Collective is a group on campus that works together to address and engage in environmental issues. Its goal is to promote environmental awareness whilst producing an empowered space that is less alienating.

I want you to think back to a time when you felt that you couldn't speak

up about an issue, where you were made to feel awkward, or uncomfortable, or that your opinion would be ignored, or laughed at. Why were you positioned to feel like this? Who was being over-represented in the discussion? Who else in the group wasn't voicing their opinions? Were you not speaking up because you

feel like your view wouldn't be accepted or that people would judge you?

I feel that collectives function in a way that allow for the representation of views from a multitude of groups, not just from a white heteronormative

patriarchal viewpoint (or those with the loudest voice!). This is aided by progressive speaking lists which mean that people who haven't spoken before in the debate or those who identify as belonging to marginalised societal groups (such as women, queers and people from ethnically diverse backgrounds) are prioritised in the debate and 'bumped up' to the top of the speaking list. It is the accessibility of collectives to people who may otherwise feel disempowered in everyday life, that allows for a vibrant and strong grassroots movement.

It was in this way that I was able to feel completely comfortable with voicing my opinion and my whole identity in the Environment Collective as a queer wom\*n and later go on to be the Environment Officer and represent the Collective in the SRC.

The really exciting thing about the Environment Collective is the connections

it has and makes with other collectives. These collectives are both environment based and in other spheres (such as queer issues). Through this, I have been able to make a whole network of friends not just across campus, but also across Sydney, the state and the country. This is partly due to groups such as SEAN (State Enviro Action Network) and ASEN (Australian State Enviro Network) that have set up working groups, workshops, forums and Environment Camps such as SOS (Students of Sustainability) on a multitude of issues and ideas.

All of these different groups and events aim to build and strengthen the activist movement and collective framework in a way that, I believe, allows for the input and involvement of a whole range of people.

I'm here! I'm (an Enviro-)Queer!  
Steph (Sparkle) Clark  
Email: stephdebclark@hotmail.com



## The Wallace Report

An extract from the diary of **Jim Wallace**

So I took the wife and my two beautiful children on a camping trip this long weekend. I could of spent it with some old school chums, who were going golfing. I, however, have never liked golfing – I just really hate the Greens! Sorry, the greens – it's a force of habit to capitalise Greens in writing that phrase.

Camping is the life for me! I always like getting into the wild, like when our Lord and Saviour Jesus went out into the desert and avoided temptation, and feel like I'm doing the same, getting away from all the modern distractions and decadence of our society! Of course, though, I did need to take the iPad to livestream Q&A in order to tweet



about how the gays are neo-Nazis.

I got my son Jack to help me set up the camping gear – it'll teach him how to be a man. I think it's very important that teenage boys pitch tents when other men are around.

We took a hike around the cliff we had a bit of a scare – I nearly fell down near a muddy precipice! Gosh, I just can't avoid slippery slopes!

I've been worried about Jack – the whole day he's been playing the "Call Me Maybe" video from his iPhone. I don't want him to pick up any immoral 'lifestyle habits'. I've taken him fishing today in order to learn how to be a man – I thinking if he gets the opportunity to

watch an animal die next to him, then de-scale and gut it after finally putting it over fire and devouring it, it'll lead him to a much more moral lifestyle.

The kids say that they are afraid of the wild animals that might be around the camp site! I told them that it is ridiculous to be afraid of that. Besides, even if they were violently mauled until their eventual death by some vicious animal, their lifespan would still be longer than the average homosexual. Then I handed them a pack of cigarettes and told them to get smoking.

I just want my kids to do the right thing. Not the left.

-Jimbo

# SRC ELECTION RESULTS

## ELECTIONS 2012

ELECTORAL OFFICER'S REPORT  
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

I declare the following persons elected:

**PRESIDENT:** David Pink

**HONI SOIT:** JAM

**NUS DELEGATES:** 7

(in order of election)  
Phoebe Drake, Sam Farrell,  
Dylan Parker, Jacqui Munro,  
John Harding Easson, Astha Raj-  
Vanshi, Constantina Hallas.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE  
COUNCIL:** 33

(By Ticket Order on the Ballot  
Paper)

**A Free Parking**  
Sam O'Leary

**C Legalise It**  
Harry Stratton

**E McDonalds on Campus**  
Penelope Parker

**F Rise for SRC**  
Sam Murray

**H Stand Up for Law**  
James Higgins

**I Stand Up for International  
Students**

Jay Ka Jing Ng

**J Stand Up for Cumberland**  
Isabelle King

**K Stand Up for Science**  
Alexander Peters

**L Ian Chan (Durian)**  
Ian Chan

**M Grassroots for Student  
Welfare**

Rose McEwan

**N Equal**  
Nathan Li

**P Voice for First Years**  
Penina Su

**Q Voice for Education**  
Cameron Caccamo

**R Voice for Arts**  
Samuel Pearson

**T Voice for Science**  
Kade Denton

**V Stand Up Against the Cuts**

James Leeder

**AB Voice for Women**  
Eleanor Gordon-Smith

**AD Stand Up for Women**  
Hanna Smith

**AL Stand Up for Student  
Housing**

Eleanor Cooper Levi

**AM Grassroots for Queer  
Action**

Charlie Jackson Martin

**AO Voice for Diversity**  
Sama Rahman

**AQ Stand Up for Student  
Rights**

Jennifer Light

**AS Stop the Cuts**  
Erima Dall

**AV Grassroots for Social  
Justice**

Brigitte McFadden

**AW Stand Up for Fair  
Education**

Julia Robins

**AX Beat for SRC**  
Margaret Zhang

**BA Stand Up for Engineering**  
Nikhil Mishra

**BC Yolo for College**  
Jordon Smith

**BQ Stand Up for SRC**  
David Pink

**BR Jam for SRC**  
Bebe D'Souza

**BT Voice for President**  
Sam Farrell

**BW Grassroots for a Green  
Campus**

Amelie Van der Stock

**BZ Pokemon Liberation Front**  
Evan Gray

PAULENE CRAHAM  
ELECTORAL OFFICER 2012  
27TH SEPTEMBER 2012



Students' Representative Council, The University of Sydney Phone: 02 9660 5222 www.src.usyd.edu.au

@honi\_soit

# Looking out for Each Other

Teddy Cook - Community Health Promotion Officer, ACON's Anti-Violence Project

Anti-Violence Project you say! What's that!? Homophobia and Transphobia don't exist anymore so why would we need an Anti-Violence Project? Right? Not quite.

We support people who've experienced incidents ranging from serious physical harm to cyber bullying, domestic violence to neighbour harassment. We train the NSW Police Force's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs), advocate for our diverse communities, run campaigns and work closely with different organisations. The AVP team has a strong commitment to working with everyone within our communities and in particular with marginalised members including lesbians, Aboriginal, trans\* or gender diverse, sex workers or people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Over the last few years we've seen levels of street-based physical violence reducing and the NSW Police Force increasing their commitment to address our communities' needs. Across Sydney and NSW collaborative work is being done to help GLBTIQ-ers feel safer in their communities and able to access support when needed. Verbal abuse and harassment continue to be commonly

reported to the AVP, with domestic violence being one of the fastest growing areas of reporting.

It is encouraging that our communities are beginning to find a language to talk about abuse in relationships and that reports are increasing. This reflects more accurately the levels of abuse occurring in our relationships.

However, there are still big challenges. Abuse can be hard for us to recognise or discuss. We might not know where to go for support. Reporting or asking for help can be difficult. Friends or family might not get it. Or we may not trust services.

For info, support, referral or to make a report to us please contact ACON's Anti-Violence Project on (02) 9206 2116 or 1800 063 060 during office hours. To make a report or get tips on safety see our website:

[www.acon.org.au/anti-violence](http://www.acon.org.au/anti-violence)

You can also report violence via the Police Assistance Line 131 444. You can report any incident to the available officer, however Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs) may also be available. Call the Police Switchboard on 02 9281 0000 or the AVP for a GLLO near you.

For more information on LGBTIQ domestic and family violence go to:

<http://www.anothercloset.com.au/>



## Ask Abe



Hi Abe,

I know the big thing in the news at the moment is the fight for gay marriage. I don't want to seem negative about it all, but marriage is such a long way from where I am at. I just want to be able to live in peace, able to be who I am, not having to pretend to be someone else or have to put up with abuse for not being someone else.

Catching Up

Dear Catching Up,

When I read your letter I couldn't help but feel that there is so much in there that you are not saying. It sounds like your home is not a peaceful place, and that you are not enjoying support of your family (either your birth or chosen family). I am very sorry to hear this. If you feel that you are being abused at home, you may be able to find somewhere else to live. Of course this is no easy task if you do not have an income. Probably the best starting place would be twenty10, the service for young lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youths. My other concern is that you sound very depressed. This is quite understandable

in your situation. Please take the time to talk to a counselor about ways to cope. You can access the University's counselors (CAPS) or ask SRC Help to refer you off campus. Either way you need to realise that there are many people that you may not have even met yet who will not just accept but like you for who you are.

### Abe is the SRC's welfare dog.

If you would like to ask Abe a question send an email to [help@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:help@src.usyd.edu.au). Abe gathers his answers from experts in a number of areas. Coupled with his own expertise on dealing with people, living on a low income and being a dog, Abe's answers can provide you with excellent insight.



## Have you liked us on Facebook?

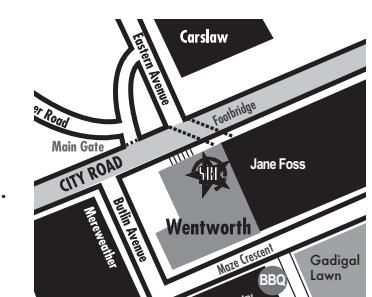
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# Sports and Health

## No rainbow card for football players

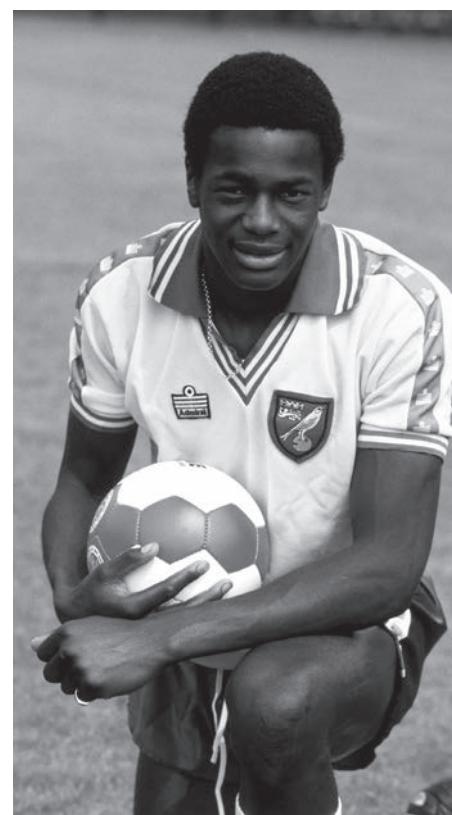
Precious few of our athletes are choosing to make their sexuality public, writes **Thomas Poberezny-Lynch**

There are currently more than 5000 professional soccer players in Britain. Not a single one is openly gay. In Australia the same story applies, and out players in any of our football codes are few and far between. To paraphrase one British commentator, there is more chance of the next Pope being black than a footballer publicly coming out. Clearly something is wrong. The law of averages states that gay footballers must exist, so why have so few publicly declared their sexuality?

Homophobia in sport is the common answer. Yet this answer ignores the fact that the representation of queer athletes is at an all time high. A quick Google search reveals the sheer number of LGBTQI athletes around the world, competing in a diverse range of sports from boxing to cricket to fencing. In Australia for instance, Matthew Mitcham and Natalie Cook are but two of many famous and successful queer athletes.

This is not to deny that homophobia is not a problem in sport. Go down to your local football field and you will hear a range of abuse being thrown around: 'poofter', 'fag', 'homo' to cite the most common slurs. Or take the tragic story of Justin Fashanu, the only ever openly gay English Premier League footballer. A truly phenomenal player, Fashanu came out 22 years ago to the disgust of his family. His career and personal life quickly deteriorated as opposition fans and the media turned on him. Justin Fashanu committed suicide in 1998.

Yet despite this, more and more athletes are coming out as gay. Take for example, rugby union player Gareth



Justin Fashanu, the only ever openly gay EPL footballer. Photo credit: The FCF.

Thomas, NRL referee Matt Cecchin, and Australian tennis player Rennae Stubbs. All are highly successful sportspeople who are open and confident about their sexuality. If homophobia has not prevented these sportspeople from coming out, why do queer athletes remain under-represented in numerous Australian and British football codes?

I believe the answer stems from the failure of sport administrators to create an environment supportive of sexual diversity. As Gareth Thomas said, one

of the reasons he publicly expressed his sexuality was because the Welsh Rugby Union governing body had long been proactive in creating an environment of LGBTQI acceptance.

Gus Johnston, the Australian hockey player who came out in 2011, expressed similar sentiment. Prior to Johnston's coming out, Hockey Victoria established a program 'Fair Go, Sport', to promote an environment where LGBTQI hockey players felt safe and secure.

It seems as though the message is finally reaching sports administrators. Following a recent online petition which garnered over 26,000 signatures the AFL screened anti-homophobia ads on the big screen before the two preliminary finals. Amazingly, the administration is now considering a gay pride round next season. Rainbow boundary lines anyone?

In Britain the Football Association recently launched its four year 'Opening Doors and Joining In' action plan to increase the involvement and wellbeing of LGBTQI individuals in football. Time will tell whether these initiatives are successful.

However, we should not forget that sport's treatment of queer athletes does not operate in a societal vacuum. It reflects the socially sustained prejudice and assumptions of the time. Only when society genuinely understands that some people are gay will queer athletes be truly accepted. Indeed, when such a time arrives, being queer will be normal, not newsworthy, and homosexuality will be as irrelevant as heterosexuality is today. When such a time arrives I hope that the Pope is black too.

## Blood donation

**Fahad Ali** supports the science

An independent report on MSM (men who have sex with men) blood donations has found "there is sufficient evidence to support reducing the deferral period of 12 months to six months for all sexual activity-based deferral criteria without compromising the safety of blood and blood products in Australia."

I will be clear: I do not like the idea of a deferral period. I would like the freedom to donate blood whenever I choose, regardless of any sexual contact I may have with men. However, the science speaks against me. The results are objective and reasoning is sound.

But what if I'm a gay man in a monogamous relationship? The report explains: "The main point of concern from the evidence-based risk assessment is the risk of acquiring HIV from a non-monogamous partner in an MSM relationship is significantly greater than the risk of acquiring HIV from a non-monogamous partner in a heterosexual relationship because the risk of transmission of HIV is greater in the MSM community."

These results are disheartening, but I believe they are rational. According to a 2011 surveillance report published by the Kirby Institute, between 2006 and 2010, 86 per cent of newly acquired HIV infections were through sexual contact between men. However, there is much we can do to change the situation.

Have safe sex. It's not that hard. Free condoms are available in the Queerspace and in the SRC office. Get regular STI check-ups. Don't engage in any risky behaviours. Once the numbers are in our favour, then we'll have reason to call for a change in the Red Cross policy.

## Fear of the smear

**Clare Sullivan** got one, and you should too

Today I had my first pap smear. Having been sexually active since I was fifteen, it was a good seven years overdue. "WHAT?! You've never had one?" I can hear you say, adding "but your cervix is a ticking, HPV time-bomb waiting to explode into full blown cancer" if you're my mother. Or maybe, if you're another twenty-something year old: "Yeah, me neither. They sound so awkward and painful...I'm never going to get one."

It is not unusual for young women to have an aversion to pap smears. Whenever the topic comes up in conversation, an ominous silence enters the room, which is quickly ushered out by a rapid-fire of excuses for putting it off. For me, it was a combination of laziness, confusion and fear of the general unpleasantness, but it wasn't always this way...

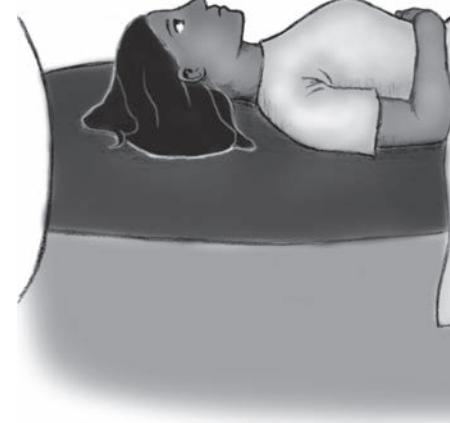
As a diligent, seventeen year old hypochondriac, I called up the local medical centre and made an appointment. Against my mother's advice – "go to Susy, she's great. She even does your father's prostate checks" – I opted for a doctor who I had never seen before. After deliberating over whether or not waxing was required for the occasion and consulting google about what exactly the procedure entailed, I was ready to go.

The doctor grilled me on my sexual history, and after finding out that the bulk of my experiences had been with other women, gave me a pitying little smile, said that the procedure wasn't really necessary, and sent me on my way.

It wasn't until a few years later, when university had moulded me into an aware young queer, that it became clear just how incorrect – and screwed up – that statement was. It doesn't matter what kind of sex you have, HPV can be spread through any genital, or even mouth, skin-to-skin contact. Furthermore, queer women have the same infection rates as their hetero counterparts.

But still, more years passed, and while I happily joined the chorus of liberated feminists who believe that women's bodies and sexualities have been hidden away for too long, I remained smear-free. By then it had become an issue of feeling too busy (but strangely having enough time to go to the dentist), too broke (what about bulk billing?), and too complacent that those three needle jabs at high school would do the trick (surely having a dead arm for days meant that those little vials were doing something to my body?).

The recent realisation that many of my friends – and even my twenty-five year



old partner – had never had a pap test, or even made plans to, finally hit a nerve. The aversion has become a fully-fledged denial: Young women, particularly queer young women, are not getting pap smears. So, today I got one, and I've been telling everyone about it.

How was it? Fine. Apparently my cervix was uncooperative and hard to locate, but that's something you work with in the name of early diagnosis of cervical cancer, and besides, you can't expect it to eagerly greet a cold speculum.

How long did it take? 10 minutes max. Was it awkward? Not really. When I told the receptionist my name she didn't loudly proclaim "Clare! You're here for your first pap smear," and even if she

did, who cares? The procedure comes part and parcel with being born with a vagina and being sexually active, and there is a first time for everything.

Oh, and 'pap' is just an abbreviation of 'Papanicolaou,' the doctor who discovered in 1928 that cells in the cervix change slightly just before they become cancerous, and not clinical, medical-speak for vagina.

So, if you haven't had one, go and do it. Regular pap smears can help prevent up to 90% of the most common type of cervical cancer. While it's amazing that we live in a time where women can have more sex, and different types of sex, than ever before, we need to look out for our cervixes while we're doing it.



# CHASING THE RAINBOW DRAGON

It is a place where sham marriages are common and male-to-male rape is not a crime. Despite a progressive Generation Y, the queer community of China is still held back by conservative tradition and state indifference, writes **Zhiming Yu**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTQI) activists rallied on a sunny Saturday morning in August in front of Sydney Town Hall, wishing the government could finally legalise same-sex marriage while thousands of miles away in metropolitan China, gays and lesbians are still struggling to get their social status recognised.

Only a few are brave enough to come out to society, while the majority remain silent. Many choose to suppress their individual desire for sake of the "common good"—a term that was used frequently during Mao's period.

While baby-boomers born around the time of the Cultural Revolution (1960s-70s) are approaching middle age, their offspring (often one child per household, a result of the One Child Policy) are in their twenties, the age to find a partner and get married.

Younger generations are not prepared: they got their diploma after four years of diligent study and took an overnight train back to their hometown, to be greeted not only by their parents but also a ticket to a 'speed dating event' hosted in the local park. The biggest one, held in Shanghai World Expo Park in May, attracted more than 20,000 singles.

The parents were obviously the most active participants compared to their indifferent, nail-biting children—most of them are surprised and perhaps a little bit overwhelmed by the scale of the event. Though enjoyable for some, many found themselves uncomfortable about being objectified and commercialised, not by others, but by their own parents.

Apparently, there is no place for gays and lesbians, because for the people of contemporary China, they simply don't exist. I can't help but pity those children who are too afraid to come out, and their parents as well. Some of them are deceived, some of them choose to be blind about the issue, and others simply deny their existence.

"Many gays and lesbians follow their parents' will. They get married, have children, and establish a heterosexual family," Jiwen Chen, a gay interior designer, tells me. "See, I don't know what will happen to me or the gay community in general, but heterosexual marriage is always an option for me, and indeed a very good one."

"But you're not attracted to girls at all. What kind of a family is that?" I ask.

"You have to sacrifice your own happiness for the welfare of your parents who kindly fed you and brought you up," Chen says. "They are going to lose face if you happened to be deviant from the norm. I don't want to hurt them."

"So you can hurt a girl instead?"  
Silence.

Peter Shen, an openly gay civil engineer from Hunan Province in south China, shares a similar view. "If I can't get married with my partner, mutually-consensual 'fake marriage' is the best option. It is the only way to keep every member of my family, albeit voluntarily or involuntarily involved, fairly happy."

Why not? If the concept of marriage can be ridiculed and deconstructed by

"You have to sacrifice your own happiness for the welfare of your parents who kindly fed you and brought you up."

- Jiwen Chen

post-structuralists as something unnatural and heteronormative, why not just play around with the institution of marriage, joking around with its sacredness and perhaps testing its solidness by undermining the system from within?

It looks good in theory. However, the real world is more complicated, especially for people in China. In the past, getting married has been a must, rather

before the interview, a pretty unusual choice of make-up for a Chinese girl. She has just turned 21, but has already come out to her mum and been with her girlfriend for more than a year. She wants to take her girlfriend to Australia and hopefully settle there.

"Call me a selfish person. I mean, thank you very much mum and dad for bringing me into this world, but I get frustrated, day by day about those ridiculous traditions that they hold. This is my life and this is the real me. So they'd better accept it," she says.

"My girlfriend's parents are both members of the Communist Party, highly respectable figures in Xinjiang Province. What makes things worse is the fact that her family belongs to a minority community, and the majority of the populations are dedicated Muslims".

She addresses this dilemma with an awkward smile. You can almost hear a long sigh coming out of her chest. This is too complicated a matter for a person of her age to think about.

It is a dilemma that is faced by millions of LGBTQI people in China. Estimations on the numbers of LGBTQI population vary, however, China Daily (the Party's official English newspaper) estimated an approximate 30 million, or 2.3% of the entire population. Homosexuality was not legal in China until 1997 (prior to



Above and top: scenes from Shanghai Pride, 2009. Photo credit: Kris Krug via Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

than an option. Producing an heir or a helping hand, preferably a plump healthy boy, can grant both husband and wife higher status in the family.

Gen Y seem to have a whole different take in terms of family values and marriage, demonstrated when I meet Regulus Zhang, a lesbian student from Xijiang Province in northwest China.

She is wearing black eyeliner and has applied blood red colour on her lips

that gays and lesbians were put into prison for their 'hooliganism'), and in 2001, homosexuality was officially removed from the Ministry of Health's list as a mental illness. However, the law on homosexuality produces more restrictions than protections. An unofficial statement summarises the government's stance on homosexuality in China: the government is not to support, not to object, and not to promote homosexuality.

A terrifying truth under the current law: male-to-male rape is not a crime. "There's no point of calling the police because there is no law to punish their wrongdoing," says Jiwen Chen. "If you are unfortunately raped, which is quite often if you are cruising around public bath-houses, think about the fact that you are still alive and be careful next time. That is the only thing you can do."

The other implication of the policy is that anything to do with homosexuality must be done underground. There are more than thirty NGOs aimed at educating LGBTQI people and their supporters across major cities, however, their visibility is still low. Financially dependent on a small sum of money that the World Health Organization grants every year for prevention of AIDS, these NGOs can barely sustain themselves, let alone get their message across.

Despite the fact that one can hardly get any information concerning homosexuality in the mainstream Chinese media, the Internet has proved an educational tool for young gays and lesbians.

"I am a big fan of BL novels (BL is short for Boy Love) and I've been writing my own novels on-line since high school," says Regulus Zhang. "Some girls around my age, heterosexual and homosexual, love reading them."

In addition, discussion groups are created on QQ, the Chinese MSN, to reappropriate characters that are widely seen on mainstream media. Between straight characters, homoerotic elements can be discerned by a pair of sharp eyes, or simply recreated by anyone who feels the need to fill the void of what they cannot see in mainstream culture.

So, the Internet becomes the place they come out to their parents, the place they queer the mainstream culture, the place they fall in love. But still, thousands of years of Confucian tradition (filial piety), Daoism (ying/yang dichotomy), as well as the influence of Buddhism (empty one's desire to attain personal salvation) is still constituting, perpetuating, and even haunting generations after generations of Chinese.

"Let's hope something good will happen to us when our parents' generation deceases and when we are the leading minds to influence society. Let's just hope that we will not become uptight and narrow-minded as our parents did at that time," says Peter Shen.

For the moment, members of the Chinese queer community are struggling to have their existence recognised officially, so they can at least fight with identity and dignity. However, it is destined to be an exhausting battle.

# The Stonewall Report

a message from the



evangelicalunion

As a Christian, I was very glad to hear this year's edition of the Homosexual Agenda is open to submissions from non-deviants. I've decided to use this opportunity to break up what I presume to be 24 pages of back to back pornography, with a few words from our Lord Jesus H. Christ.

Unlike homosexuality, accepting Jesus as your savior is not a choice. I admit, even I've faltered at times, having browsed through the skinny jeans at Target in one of my weaker moments,

but thanks to Jesus' love and twelve weeks of reparative therapy, I'm back to shopping at Lowes, just like you could be too if you would just declare your love for Jesus Christ! But not in that way you filthy perverts.

Just think of the perks, like marriage. Sure, there's been attempts to destroy marriage and include deviants, but everyone knows the only person who can truly define marriage is our King in heaven, his Holiness, Henry VIII. You might call it "homophobia", but we know what



Just don't give in to temptation and you'll be fine.

think they're unnatural, sinful sodomites that should be outlawed. Get your facts straight.

I'm glad we finally had this opportunity to have a frank and open discussion without you all shouting over me about "rights" and "equality". I mean, why even have the debate if you're not going to consider the side that's speaking the unquestionable truth? They don't call our word the gospel for nothing, you know.

## The Midnight Shift with Felicity Fag-Hag

Saturday night, LOL! So I'm at Nevermind and it gets to about 4:30. My G.B.F. and I are stumbling around on the df and this 40 year old lesbian goth approaches, points at some dude in the corner, and says: "Go ask his name". OK Helga, that sounds like a great idea.

Turns out he's French and almost as hard to understand as the lesbian goth. It also doesn't help that we're standing in front of a stack of speakers. Next thing I have him up against the wall gyrating with the vibrations of those same speakers, with my knee between his legs for that little extra grind.

I look back at my G.B.F to make sure he's alright - I see him and lesbian goth are deep in convo - whatevs. Fabrice and I take it to the couch until a muscley security guard tells us the club is closed.

We trek down the steep Nevermind

stairs. Conversation is somewhat difficult due to the language barrier, but we cope. We go up to his apartment, enter his room where there are two bunk beds with one guy up on his laptop gaming. WHAT HAVE I GOT MYSELF INTO?

He takes me out on the balcony and it dawns on me that this is one of those places you see advertised on telegraph poles. He brings a chair out and we strip off and get to business.

It's alright, nothing special - although we almost break a glass table when he insists on slamming me up against it. Then we go back to his bunk bed (WTF?), but he's not satisfied. He aggressively finger-bangs my vajayjay — kind of like a horny teenager — and because of the language barrier I can't get him to slow down. Plus, Mr All-Night-Gamer is still plugging away on the top bunk.

Into the shower next. He insists on washing my hair, and can I just put on the record: it's NOT SENSUAL, it's just VERY AWKWARD. When daylight properly strikes he says I have to leave in case his landlord catches him, so we go grab a coffee nearby. He starts to stroke my face, stopping and asking when he can see me again. He asks for my number, so I get my eyeliner out and write it on his arm in a smooth move as I leave. I'm such an awesome sluzbag!

An hour later he's already messaged me. "Hi Princess. So great meet you. You beautiful and I'd love to see you more. xx" (sic). Jesus Christ. A barrage of texts and voicemail messages ensues, most of which I don't reply to.

WHY CAN'T STRAIGHT MEN  
FUCK LIKE THE GAYS? DON'T GET  
SO ATTACHED YOU WEIRDO!



I solemnly swear I am not compensating for my deep-seated fear of straight men.

## Privilege and Politics with Queer Activist Quinn

Hey peeps, this column has been designated a safe space. I respectfully ask all homophobes/heterosexuals to please refrain from assaulting it with their eyes as doing so would exponentially increase discrimination amongst queer-identifying student journalists. I almost choked on my fair trade, soy, tofu-substitute, gluten-free Panini last week when I heard the editors of *Queer Honi* had decided this year's edition would be non-autono-

mous. I convened a meeting of my Judith Butler study group last week to discuss the issue and after several days' worth of motions, amendments, and clarifications, we decided our discussion space would be sex-positive. A complete list of all the motions passed will be released as a Facebook note in early 2014 and the editors better watch out because I'll be tagging all of them.

In the meantime, I would like to express my complete and utter disgust with the editors' despicable display of their privilege. As a differently-abled, queer-identifying w\*tr\*, it is an affront to the queer community as a whole that I was not consulted on the matter. Too often, voices like mine are marginalized by cis-gendered, white males who feel they are

entitled to make decisions without first considering my views. In order to address this gross abuse of power, I will be spending the next few days attaching a progressive reading list to each edition of *Queer Honi* to ensure that submissions of minorities are read first.

Now, I urge you all to take a minute to brace yourselves for the dramatic spike in homophobic violence that will inevitably result from the publishing of heterosexual submissions alongside queer-identifying ones. For years now, the autonomy of *Queer Honi* has afforded us some protection from the hate-filled aggression of heterosexuals, but the editors of this year's edition have ensured they are now all free to pick us off one by one.

My Judith Butler study group and I will be holding a pre-emptive vigil to coincide with the *Queer Honi* launch to commemorate the many deaths that are bound to occur.

As a result of the pogrom the editors



Tofu: the breakfast of champions and queer activists.



Judith Butler, revered by Sydney Uni queers.

have just launched against us, come join us as we take a stand against the fascists editing our death warrant and stay for a drink with some cool peeps.

## QUEER QUIZ

1. What is the name of the lead female character in *But I'm A Cheerleader*?
2. Which was the first country to legalise same-sex marriage?
3. From which film did the main plot of this year's Queer Revue take inspiration?
4. What year was SHADES founded?
5. Which was the last Australian state to decriminalize homosexuality?
6. How many people should be on the track at any one time in a game of roller derby?
7. The queer children's book *And Tango Makes Three* is about a family of which animal?
8. What colour in the original design of the rainbow flag has been removed?
9. In which US city was the original Stonewall?
10. What is the name of Elton John's husband?

10: Four for you, Glenn Coco!  
 7-9: How very queer of you!  
 4-6: Average to middling.  
 1-3: Cory Bernardi.



Lesbians in their natural habitat: a game of Roller Derby.



Left: Penny Wong  
 (Credit: Penrith Sustainability Uni via Flickr), Below:  
 Magda Szubanski  
 (Credit: Eva Rinaldi Celebrity Photographer via Flickr).



The names of 16 influential LGBTQI Australians are hidden in this Find-A-Word. Can you spot them all?

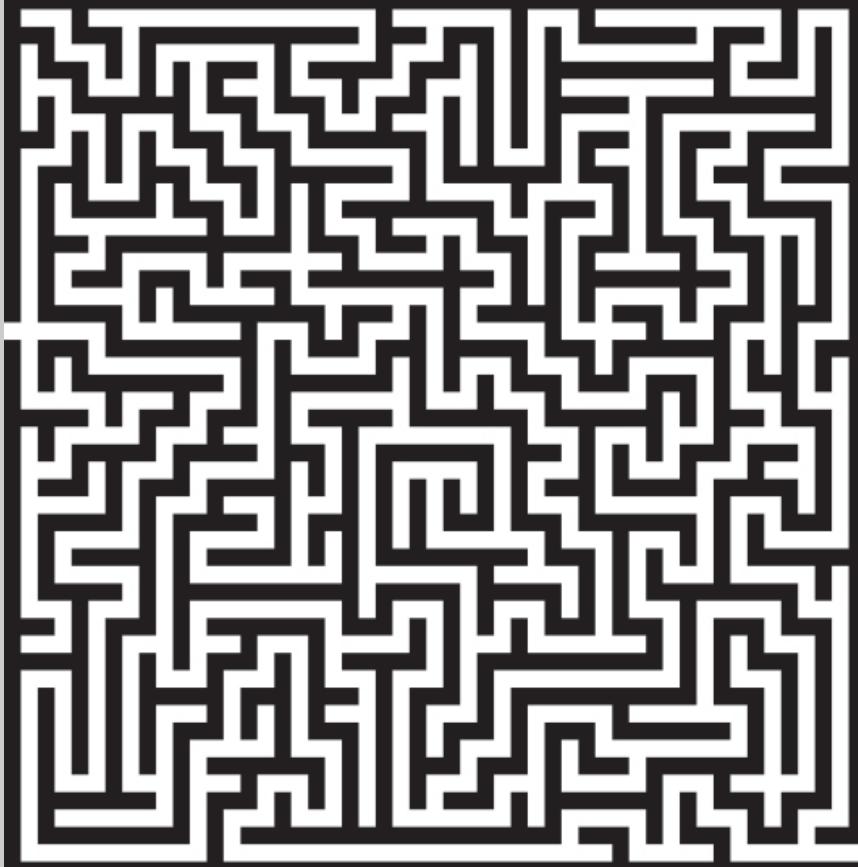
BOB BROWN  
 PENNY WONG  
 RUBY ROSE  
 MICHAEL KIRBY  
 ALEX GREENWICH  
 KERRYN PHELPS  
 PORTIA DE ROSSI  
 TOM BALLARD  
 MOLLY MELDRUM  
 ALAN JOYCE  
 MAGDA SZUBANSKI  
 JOSH THOMAS  
 MATTHEW MITCHAM  
 DAVID MARR  
 RENAE STUBBS  
 NATALIE COOK



## QUEER MAZE



Susie and Sarah have lost their cat! Help them get through the maze to find their beloved pet.



This is not Susie and Sarah's cat.



This one might be.

# HONI SOIT OPINION COMPETITION 2012



## AWARDS NIGHT

Join us at the Verge Gallery at **6pm on Monday 8 October**  
to award the winners of the 2012 Opinion Competition.  
Free drinks and food! With special guest **Joe Hildebrand**.