

Honi Soit



Week 6, Semester 1, 2014

HONI SOIT QUI BAGGE PANTZ

p.10 *Profile:
Alison Bechdel*

p.16 *Friday's action
at Villawood*

ILLUSTRATION
BY MONICA RENN



USyd students arrested at Villawood protest

Milly Ellen reports on recent anti-immigration detention action.

Last week three University of Sydney students were arrested outside Villawood Detention Centre as part of a protest held against the transfer of 83 detainees to remote centres in Western Australia.

The protest effort began at 4:30am last Thursday when around 40 protestors, including 15 USyd students, arrived at Villawood in an attempt to prevent the transfer of 16 detainees to the Yongah Hill and Curtin detention centres in Western Australia. Witnesses described violent skirmishes between protestors and police throughout the morning. One woman was allegedly dragged along the ground and received bruising to her back, and others suffered lacerations from handcuffs. Of

the USyd students in attendance, Brigitte Garozzo suffered a dislocated wrist, and Tristan Ofner and Steven Kwon were allegedly roughly pulled by police officers.

The protestors were unable to prevent the buses containing the detainees from leaving the Villawood complex.

Police disbanded the group of protestors shortly after 12pm and arrested eight, including Garozzo, Kwon and Ofner, for "failing to comply with police orders," according to a NSW Police spokesperson.

The protests continued early on Saturday, when a second group of refugees was slated to be moved.

Buses and police arrived at 1am in an attempt to circumvent demonstrations, only to find 50 protestors already mobilized. Details of the transfer were not disclosed to media outlets, with news of the midnight transfer raised on Twitter by RISE Refugee, an alliance of past and present detainees in the Australian detention system.

On Saturday morning, crowds of up to 100 protestors clashed with specialist police units, mounted officers and riot dogs for approximately eight hours. By 10:15am, three buses carrying more than 40 detainees finally broke through picket lines, after which three protestors were detained for "failing to follow

move-on orders."

USyd student and Students Thinking Outside Borders (STOB) member Kitty-Jean Laginha attended the protest and witnessed what she described as numerous fierce attacks carried out by the police.

"I saw my friend get hit hard in the head intentionally. [The police] don't stop and pause if someone is being injured," she said. NSW Police would not disclose the number of deployed police officers, but said "the number matched the volatility of the scene".

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We acknowledge that *Honi Soit's* office is located on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and pay our respects to the Elders past and present.

Editorial

As this paper hits stands mid-week, the University of Sydney community will commemorate the 30 year anniversary of the Great Quadrangle Fire of 1984. Our cover art this week pays tribute to the 27 students who died in the blaze.

The extensive damage to the Quadrangle may have been repaired by the end of 1989, but nothing has yet repaired the damage to our hearts. We can only hope the University has fixed, once and for all, the constant gas leak problems plaguing the structure.

The ban on open flames in and around the Quadrangle remains in place, just in case.

This edition of *Honi Soit* features comprehensive coverage of last week's protests at the Villawood Detention Centre in south west Sydney. The exploitation of asylum seekers by Australia's fourth estate, the resulting moral panic, and the failure to investigate the matter prudently has contributed to the status quo.

Where the media has failed, activism has stepped in to provide a voice to the powerless.

Honi Soit is, unlike almost all other newspapers, primarily written by its audience. Editorials usually reflect the beliefs and values of a paper's readership. The weekly content of this paper reflects a traditional editorial, fuelled by the consistent efforts and talents of the writers and artists who contribute to the paper. Without these contributors, *Honi Soit* would not make it to print every week.

Finally, we reflect upon the recent announcement of the Vice Chancellor's priorities for 2014. Much like how Ash Ketchum's Charizard ignored his battle commands on the way to defeat during episode 79 of Pokémon's first season, the VC has ignored our repeated pleas and doused our hopes for coke and beer in the bubblers. The University is falling behind in this field, as the only Go8 university without it. We hope the Chancellor finds room to add this issue to the 2014 agenda.

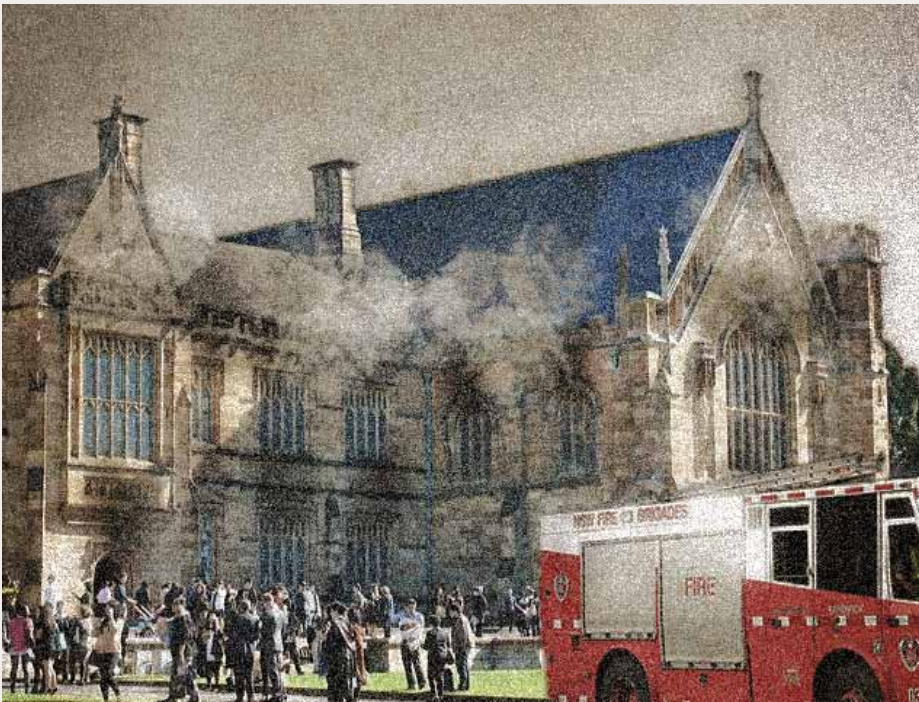


Image sourced from: NSW State Library archives, "Sydney Through The Lens: 1979-1989"

Letter of the week:

There's an ibis inside us all

Dear Honi,

As an ignorant first year, I have until recently had nothing worth writing to you. Reports on the ongoing public execution of Tom Raue, while interesting, left me confused rather than opinionated, wondering how on Earth I should pronounce Raue's surname. But I digress. I write not to ask for help with pronunciation, but to express myself. So I want to talk about Ed McMahon's article "Ibis intrigue".

The widespread hatred of our ibis population confuses and infuriates me. Furious may be a hyperbolic description of my feelings, but I believe hyperbole is warranted here. You see, I love the ibis.

It is a species which consistently appears to signal the better times in my life, it is the harbinger of my happiness, and for this I thank it. Let me explain.

I was 17 when, under the gaze of Hyde Park's ibises (who had dominated conversation that day) I kissed a boy for the first time. I was young, only recently out of the closet, and it was a powerful moment. I still remember the emotional contentment, the physical stimulation, and the ibis presence. Perhaps the significance I attach to those ibises in my memory is unwarranted (after all, it's not like they caused my date to kiss me) and if ibises had exited my life then and there, I'd likely think nothing of them. But they didn't.

Two years later, I began studying at USyd. I was thrust into the company of venerable academics, people who share my intellectual interests, and ibises. Strange though it may seem, I consider the lattermost integral to my uni life.

When I pass the Quadrangle's sandstone majesty, they greet me. When I show a modicum of consideration by discarding my rubbish, they greet me. When I lunch on Wednesdays with a copy of Honi Soit, they, stylised on the front page, greet me.

The connection is quite logical: uni makes me happy and there are ibises at uni. And don't tell me anything about correlation not equaling causation.

But Ibises represent even more than my own happiness. They represent us all. Their slender, elegant beaks penetrate the ground's surface, questing for nourishment beneath. Similarly, we students and academics are not content, like cattle, with what appears on the surface, but instead we probe deeper, like ibises, for nourishing scientific truths, philosophical explanations, sociological solutions, and so forth. This simile has endured thousands of years, first in the form of Egypt's ibis-headed knowledge god Thoth and today in the form of Honi Soit's ibis as a symbol in the search for journalistic truth. And that

symbol depends as much on USyd's real ibises, whose plight should move us all, as it does on ancient references.

The significance of the ibis, to me and as a symbol for us all, is why I find the hatred it receives so shocking. It is also why I am appalled by the systematic anti-ibis programs Ed McMahon alerted Honi Soit's readership to. I want my fellow students to love our ibises as I do but I don't know how to make them. I can angrily yell at whoever I hear disparaging ibises, but is that enough? Why is there no Ibis Appreciation Society for me and people like me? In truth I feel isolated and disempowered on this matter, not unlike USyd's ibises.

Yours sincerely,

William Edwards
Arts I

[Eds: It's row-ee (row as in 'Mary and John had a row', not 'row your boat').]

Let's have some facts about Wingara Mura

One of the great things about The University of Sydney is that it's a place of debate. Debate includes both opinion and facts. The article Uni Failing Indigenous Students (Webster and Blakeney Honi Week 5 Semester 1) is an example of two people's opinions about the university's commitment to Wingara Mura, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education strategy. I think it's important that I inject some facts into this debate because the good work of so many staff and students deserves more than uninformed derision.

The authors seem to have a problem with me being focused on Wingara Mura, my pet project as they call it. They think my effort and the effort of many has been a failure.

Unfortunately the article was just factually wrong about access to student support services. The move of Aboriginal student support from the Koori Centre to Jane Foss Russell has not meant Aboriginal students have lost out or that they are being left behind. The Koori Centre common room, library and computer facilities are still there and they are still used.

The student support team has gone from two to seven full time staff, providing enhanced individualised case management and targeted support. Contacts with students have improved dramatically and access to tutorial support and other academic advice has also improved. More Aboriginal students are engaging in events organised by Student Support. More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are talking to senior mentors in the university, helping their first year transition to university life. Wingara Mura supported students, including one of the authors, to participate in the National Indigenous University Games in 2013. These are all terrific initiatives.

When they say that Wingara Mura is not being implemented, that it exists only on paper, they are just plain wrong again. The fact is that in 2013 every faculty and many professional service units developed local implementation plans that to their credit are already delivering worthwhile gains.

The Wingara Mura Bunga Barrabugu Summer Program brought more than 200 university staff and students together with about 220 young talented Aboriginal people from all over Australia in an exciting on campus programme. These Year 9 – 12 high school students were excited and encouraged by their time at the University. The program and the university team really delivered; 98% of the program participants felt more motivated to achieve at school and 98% saw university as a real option for them.

I think the authors are confused about the \$60million mentioned in the article. We have received more than \$5million to support new scholarships for Aboriginal people who want to study at Sydney but couldn't because their families need their salary pay the bills. Successful negotiations have now paved the way for the implement this important Wingara Mura initiative.

We have received more than \$5million to establish the National Centre for Cultural Competence (NCCC), the first academic unit of its kind in the country. This is not just about research,

the NCCC will work across learning and teaching, student outcomes and research and scholarship. The NCCC is about working ethically and effectively in spaces where there is more than one culture in play. This is something Aboriginal people have argued for over many years. We are in the middle of recruiting staff to this exciting initiative. This innovation is all part of Wingara Mura.

We are keen to make the possibility of study at the University of Sydney a reality for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Why would anyone object to that? I thought that they would support more of our mob getting to the University. And we are seeing results. Over the last 3 years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander have shown more interest in coming to the University as a destination and we are increasingly a university of first choice. The number of offers to students is also increasing and the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enrolling at Sydney is also up.

Debate is important and it is something that is part of our DNA. But debate should be informed by the facts and unfortunately the article was not informed or factual. The authors of the article can attack me personally but Wingara Mura is more than me. It's about a great many people doing great things. Why are we all so committed to Wingara Mura? Because we believe Sydney can make a difference, we can be Australia's leading university in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education and because our mob deserve a fair go.

Shane Houston
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services)

An apology from Kyol Blakeney

Dear Editors and Readers of Honi,

I refer to the article printed on the front page of Honi Soit in week 5 of this semester. It has come to my understanding that some of the information printed was not factual, nor up to date.

Let me be clear about a few things. This article was written long before this semester starting. Since then I have found that the university has in fact not had a decrease in Indigenous enrollment as stated in the article. There has also been a misunderstanding of what the article was directed to. To make it very clear, I was not at all criticizing the work of the Indigenous Support Team. They do a fantastic job in maintaining connections with the Indigenous students.

I, personally, apologise for any misinterpretation for the article produced and hope to make it clear, once again, that this is an article which was written in a passionate moment when I was discontent with the managing of the Indigenous student body. It should also be noted that this article was an opinion piece and therefore should not be taken to represent the entire view of the Indigenous student body. Certain aspects of the article have changed since it was first written.

To make it clear, the University has actually increased its enrollments of Indigenous students and have propelled a consistent upward trajectory as a result of the Wingara Mura strategy. In the time this article has been published in Honi Soit, the University has taken measures to ensure that support staff are located in the student spaces of the Koori Centre for three days of the week. With their main officers in a different location

to us, there is also a rare time when we cannot give them a call or go up and talk to them in person. I would never insult the work they do because I have personally benefited from it first hand.

To focus on the positive characteristics of the student experience in the Koori Centre at the University of Sydney, there is no doubt that there is a strong bond between the students from the beginning of each semester. The support staff have always encouraged the involvement of new students as well as old with an unconditional support in what each student wishes to achieve whilst at university. Since the previous article has been written, to my understanding, the University has also employed an extra five support staff to assist with building connections between students and staff and organizing tutors for each student. The article also looks over some of the extra support the Indigenous student body receives such as funding for the Indigenous Games each year and Access Cards to all first year students. This happens as a result of the work from the Indigenous Support Team.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere apology to the University of Sydney's Indigenous Support Team and also apologise for any inconvenience or hurt caused by the previous article.

Regards,

Kyol Blakeney
Indigenous Officer

Before you wreck yo self

Hey Team,

Just a quick response to Helen Tong's overzealous note (Wk 4, letters page) in which I stand accused of blundering Week 3's cryptic crossword. Helen here draws readers' attention to the fact that the word "walrus" contains neither 7 letters or the letter H. Well spotted Helen! Next time, however, it might be wise to check whether any other words fit into the little boxes before you write to the editors with a heart filled with hate and a half-finished crossword on your lap. The seven-lettered, h-containing word used to designate a long-toothed sea-mammal (and the correct answer to 26-Ac) was in fact "narwhal".

Check yourself, Helen.

Paps
Crosswords V

Be pro-peace, not pro-Palestine

Dear Honi Soit,

I am unimpressed by Fahad Ali's one-sided letter which appeared in last week's edition.

Like most Israelis and Jewish people, I believe in a two-state solution – two indigenous peoples of the land, living side by side in parallel national self-determination. This should have been the case since 1948: a two-state solution was on the table in 1937, 1947, 2000, 2005 and 2008 and is still on the table today. Unfortunately, the West Bank PM Mahmoud Abbas walked away from the negotiating table again just this week.

That the Palestinian leadership has never stepped up has meant huge injustices on both sides, including, as Fahad points out, the dispossession of 700,000 Palestinian Arabs. What he chooses to omit is the fact that approximately 800,000 Jews also became refugees in 1948, when they were expelled from Arab lands.

LETTERS

I'm the first to tell you that Israel is not blameless, but neither are the Palestinian leaders. Not only have they continued to reject statehood if it means recognizing any state of Israel alongside them, but worse – they have continued to indoctrinate their people that the only way to self-determination is through violence and the genocide of the Jews. Go to www.palwatch.org if you want clear proof of this. This official policy of incitement has resulted in the suicide- and homicide-terrorism which has killed and injured thousands of Israeli civilians. Fahad likes to cite individual incidents, so I shall mention the 2011 massacre by two Palestinian cousins, one aged 18 and one a minor, of five members of the Fogel family in their beds, including 3-month old Hadass – decapitated.

Fahad talks about human rights, but why doesn't he count the Palestinian Authority's indoctrination of children to become terrorists as an abuse of their human rights too? He also fails to mention the fact that the reason for so many civilian deaths in Gaza is that Hamas hides and fires weapons from schools, homes and hospitals and uses Palestinian civilians as shields. (See proof from Hamas in their own words at<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0wJXf2nt4Y>).

Israel supplies Gaza with petrol and electricity. It was not Israel, but rather 23 Palestinian NGOs who, this week, blocked a joint UNICEF-EU desalination plant for Gaza which would have supplied 75,000 Gazans with fresh water.

I'm proud to tell you that in my 20 years, I have been to Israel four times. It is an amazing place, the third Commonwealth of the Jewish people, with a history of 3000 years. It is a tiny country (that fits into Australia 369 times), a home to 8 million people; Jews, Arabs, Christians, Druze and more, where both Hebrew and Arabic are the official languages. The country is far more 'normal' than what is seen in the press, with everyday Israelis being just people, like you and me. To see just a little of the country's diversity, check out the Australian Union of Jewish Students' campaign <http://iamanIsraeli.me/>.

It's possible to be both pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian – that is, pro-peace. Both peoples deserve peace. Both peoples need to look forward and not back. We should encourage any movement that promotes dialogue between the two peoples; every joint Israeli-Palestinian project, from "Combatants for Peace" to "Blood Relations". Google them to see what fantastic work they do bringing people together. This is why I oppose BDS, which punishes all those Palestinians and Israelis who want to walk forward into a future of peace and justice for all.

Lise Kempler
BSO/MBBS III

Not you again!

Oi,

Is it because you're sick of seeing my name? Of reading my words? Is that why you forgot to include my name in last week's reporters list, even though I contributed an article to the YIMBY section? Or perhaps you forgot that I, too, fought dozens of others to the death, drank my own urine, and scaled endless mountains of bovine manure in order to be accepted as a reporter for this year. Is that it?

If the Honi editors were my ex and I was a jaded ex-lover, this letter would be a Taylor Swift song.

Descending into madness,

Mariana Podesta-Diverio
Arts (whatever), don't even care, V.

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Please write to us, we're lonely
editors@honisoit.com

Overhaul of student administration system

Rebecca Wong reports on the university’s administrative priorities for 2014.

In an attempt to streamline and standardise Sydney University’s administrative policies, the Vice Chancellor Dr Michael Spence announced the imminent overhaul of the university’s administration system last week.

In a staff forum, Spence presented the rollout of ‘Sydney Student’, a new administration system as a priority for 2014, along with the reorganisation of student administration services. Spence stated that these processes would be guided by the key principles of maximising online functionality and providing students with a “one-counter experience”, improving efficiency for both staff and students.

Through the self-service platform students will be able to complete tasks such as enrolment, payment of fees and departmental requests online, making the harrowing five-hour ordeal of enrolment familiar to most Sydney University students a thing of the past.

A spokesperson for the university stated that the aim

of Sydney Student is to enhance students’ experiences from the “first enquiry through to graduation”. Increasing online accessibility will reduce the need for face-to-face interaction for standard requests and queries, particularly benefiting students who live far from the university.

Additionally, the self-service interface of the platform will lighten the administrative workload of university staff. This remains consistent with Spence’s assertion that “academics should only do as much student administration as genuinely requires academic input”.

These changes will occur amongst the other priorities announced by Spence, grouped under seven key initiatives, as agreed upon by the university’s Senate and Senior Executive Group (SEG) which include: education, research, health partnerships, leadership and staff development, and supporting faculty excellence.

Sydney Student is expected to come into operation in the second half of 2014.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Students arrested at Villawood protest

The plans for relocation were announced last Monday, along with a declaration from the government that future asylum seekers will not have the right to legal representation.

A spokesperson for Mr Morrison said the transfers were “to enable refurbishment works to be completed at Villawood”.

However, a number of protestors suggested the refugees were moved in order to prevent them from obtaining legal advice for legal proceedings due to be heard last Friday regarding an information leak from the Department of Immigration. “I’m not sure why they couldn’t place them in temporary housing until the renovations were finished. Why move them to the middle of nowhere with no access to their lawyers?” USyd student Clo Schofield said.

16 Villawood residents recently sought legal action over the DOI leak, arguing that it constituted a breach of the Migration and Privacy Acts.

A spokesperson for Morrison asserted that the Department

of Immigration and Border Protection had “no intention” of removing any of the asylum seekers involved in the legal proceedings. However, of the 83 detainees who were transferred on Thursday and Saturday, three were involved in the data-breach case.

Michaela Byers, a defence lawyer for the refugees in the case, has argued that the transfer from Villawood constitutes an obstruction of justice, but failed in her attempts to obtain an injunction that would prevent the relocation.

Officials from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection have not revealed whether the detainees will be returned to Villawood. In protest, asylum seekers from two compounds within the centre have begun a hunger strike, according to the Refugee Action Coalition. Using the account @asylumseekers3, detainees within Villawood tweeted a message of support for those resisting the transfer: “we love you all brave people standing out there for us.”

Well-off take uncapped places

Wealthier students are receiving the majority of uncapped places, writes Nick Gowland.

A forthcoming report has found that the vast majority of the new university places on offer since 2012 have been filled by students from medium to high socio-economic backgrounds.

The report by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), which is due to be released in May this year, examines whether increases in the tertiary education sector have had an impact on the uptake of apprenticeships.

“What we found with universities is that the people who were likely to take these new places were those who wouldn’t have previously done an apprenticeship or gone to university ... but they were more likely to be from the medium to high SES-background,” said Patrick Lim, senior researcher at NCVER.

The findings of the report echo claims made in a submission by the Group of Eight universities to the ongoing federal review of demand-driven funding. The Go8 submission found that domestic undergraduate enrolments increased by 32% since 2012, when the then-Labor government begun funding as many commonwealth-supported places as universities were willing to offer. However, the Go8 found that students from a medium to high socioeconomic background took up 80% of these new places. Furthermore, students with comparatively lower ATARs constituted the majority of these enrolments, with a 153% increase in the enrolment of students who achieved an ATAR between 30 and 49.

Sydney University’s Director of Social Inclusion Annette Cairnduff said that there has been “a sharp increase” in the

percentage of students from higher socio-economic backgrounds enrolled since 2012. However, she maintained that while there was a small increase in the proportion of students from underprivileged backgrounds, the overall number of such students had risen substantially.

“Achieving any positive change during this period of rapid overall expansion is a significant achievement. Many more students from low socio-economic and other targeted backgrounds are now participating in higher education as a direct result of the demand-driven reforms,” she said.

According to Cairnduff, Sydney University’s social outreach programs such as Compass and Bridges to Higher Education have provided promising early results in improving access to university for disadvantaged students. Nevertheless, she cautioned

that the proposed cuts to tertiary education funding would have a “devastating” impact on all such programs in the sector.

However, SRC Education Officer Ridah Hassan said that the results of the NCVER report are unsurprising. Hassan argued that demand-driven funding offered no solution to the problems faced by many low SES students in attending university, such as increasing course fees, cuts to student welfare, and inequality in primary and secondary education.

“It is still the case today that a persons’ post-code can be one of the most reliable factors in determining whether they will get to university. Working class and low SES students who go to public schools in poor neighbourhoods with little funding and resources are obviously disadvantaged,” she said.

Morris withholds info from Board on Senate-appointed Directors

Justin Pen reports on the Board directors that weren’t.

USU President Hannah Morris has failed to consult the Board in a recommendation to reappoint Senate-appointed Board Directors Emma McDonald and Simone Whetton, whose terms expired on 31 December 2013, according to information received by Honi Soit.

Four Board Directors, who wished to remain anonymous, have confirmed that Morris submitted a recommendation to the Senate, the governing body of Sydney University, without consulting the Board.

Morris’ recommendation has since been retracted, following the revelation of information to the rest of the Board.

Both Senate-appointed directors have had continued access to the Union’s mailing list and Dropbox. They have continued to receive messages and circular motions pertaining to Board decisions.

Minutes from the February meeting reveal that Whetton attended and voted on at least two motions, which pertained to the

“Reallocation of Student Space into Admin Space” and “Capex re Cellar Theatre and Upgrade”.

It is alleged that Morris was aware that McDonald and Whetton’s terms had expired at least a fortnight before other Directors were informed.

A number of USU Board Directors were independently informed that the terms of the Senate-appointed Directors had expired, prior to an informal, weekly meeting of the Board on Thursday, 3 April.

The four Board Directors also confirmed that Morris indicated she had already taken care of the issue and that a recommendation to Senate had already been made without the input of other Board Directors.

They also indicated that Morris had asked the Senate-appointed directors not to come to the March Board meeting. During the meeting, Morris told the Board that McDonald and Whetton had given apologies but remained otherwise silent on their absence.

Decisions which occur at ‘Board Weekly’ meetings are considered too inconsequential to require record or publication.

Notably, the reappointment of McDonald and Whetton would have impact upon the Board Executive’s capacity to remove USU Vice-President Tom Raue, by way of special resolution. The USU Constitution requires that two-thirds of Board Directors vote in the affirmative to successfully remove Raue from Board.

In a situation where 11 Directors are present and voting, Raue must raise at least four votes to save himself. If McDonald and Whetton were reappointed and present at the special meeting to sack Raue, he would instead need five votes to prevent his removal.

Though no formal regulations exist regarding the recommendation or determination of Senate-appointed Directors, this year the Senate emailed Morris to ask for the Board’s recommendation.

The process to appoint Whetton

last year was reportedly long and drawn-out.

Senate-Appointed Directors hold one-year terms, subject to the discretion of the Senate. The Senate has discretion to ask Board for recommendations, but may appoint Directors without consulting the Board.

“The recommendation for appointment or reappointment of Senate appointed Board Directors is an internal process that Board will determine”, Morris said.

“I will be providing all informational possible to assist the Board in making this decision.”

Four Board Directors, however, have claimed that requests for Morris’ email correspondence with the Senate have been ignored.

The decision to re-appoint outgoing Senate-appointed Directors McDonald and Whetton is now under the deliberation of the whole of the Board.

THE ██████ MANNING FILES ██████

WHO BLEEDS FOR BOARD?

In the first week of May, idealists from all corners of campus will take to Eastern Avenue in an attempt to win votes in the country’s greatest democratic contest. Once they have been elected to the hallowed halls of student government, they will sacrifice two years of their lives in pursuit of cheaper beer and more froyo.

We’ll be hauling skeletons from closets in the coming weeks, but for now we’ll just introduce you to this year’s candidates.

There appear to be three candidates running this year who are associated with Indie “faction”, which has been in recent years the most successful political group on campus when it comes to the Union Board. Current President Hannah Morris is an Indie, as well as three of the six Directors elected last year.

Olivia Ronan is one of the Indie candidates in the race.* Her campaign will be managed by Tim Matthews, a current Board Director who has his eyes on the top job, as well as Nicola Borton and Michael Rees.** A second name in the Indie mix is Jethro Cohen, who though he says he is “not 100% decided”

on whether he is running, *Honi* 100% expects him to do so. Cameron Caccamo will likely complete the field of Indie candidates.

From the left, Ed McMahon will be running and will be supported by Grassroots. NLS (little Labor Left) will be running Kate Bullen, managed by Board Director Eve Radunz and Amy Knox. Liam Carrigan, an NLS-Indie mystery, is undecided.

The right will be represented by Callum Forbes.

The unknown elements in this year’s race are Unity (Labor Right) and SLS (slightly bigger Labor Left). We’ve got one certainty: Alisha Aitken-Radburn will be Unity’s (Labor Right) primary candidate, and her campaign will be managed by current SRC President Jen Light and USU presidential-hopeful Robby Magyar.

From there on, we can only speculate about what they will do come May. These factions joined together to win last year’s SRC election. Unlike 2013, we suspect that SLS will not field a candidate, but instead support Alisha and another Unity player to be named later. Magyar’s presidential ambitions will lead Unity to run

another candidate alongside Alisha.

SLS have very little interest in the Union Board, and no obvious candidate. Their political desires lie in the corridors of the SRC instead, and they will seek to trade their support for Unity in May for Unity’s backing come the SRC elections in September (Eds note: learn the smooth contours of James Leeder’s face now, because you will not be able to walk down Eastern Avenue without seeing it in September). Look out for signatures on paper before too long.

** Olivia managed SEX for Honi’s campaign last year and as a result, Honi will be asking a reporter who hasn’t been drunk with her to interview and profile her.*

*** Editors Michael Rees and Georgia Kriz are both involved in Olivia Ronan’s campaign and therefore will be conflicted off all discussions and reporting of the Union Board elections.*

AN INCONVENIENT REAPPOINTMENT

One theory as to why Morris submitted recommendations to the Senate, to reappoint in-limbo Board Directors Emma MacDonald and Simone Whetton, concerns her

continued attempt to sack USU President of Vice, Tom Raue.

Above, we have outlined the facts surrounding Morris’ concealment of information. Below, we speculate as to why this could have occurred.

The recommendation to re-appoint MacDonald and Whetton was circulated via email among the Senate on Thursday, 3 April. Confirmation of their reappointment was expected to occur by Monday, 7 April.

On the same Thursday, it is alleged that Morris consulted with other Directors on their availability to attend a meeting on Tuesday, 15 April to determine the motion that would expel Raue from Board.

The Constitution of the USU requires at least 4 full-working days “due notice” to call a meeting to entertain a special resolution.

This means that an announcement on Tuesday, 7 April – one day after the confirmed reappointment of Senate-appointed Directors – would provide due notice for a meeting to be held on Tuesday, 15 April.

And she would’ve gotten away it with it too, if it weren’t for those meddling kids.

Up for debate

Hannah Ryan and Felix Donovan on the privilege that permeates USyd debating.

Over the last few years, one of Sydney’s most successful debaters has given a seminar on liberty to debating’s new recruits towards the start of first semester. He describes the difference between negative liberty (the freedom from interference) and positive liberty (the capacity to enjoy that freedom). There’s an anecdotal question he asks every year: If you cannot afford a meal at Quay restaurant in Sydney – and trust me, look it up, you can’t – are you still free to eat at Quay?

* * *

Debating is not like any society in the University of Sydney Union (USU). Instead of an unpaid president, the program is managed by a student Director of Debates (DoD) who receives a \$5,000 annual honorarium, more than the compensation of most Board Directors. The DoD is assisted by a full-time staff member and a Debates Committee, made up of students and the USU Treasurer.

Unlike other groups who have to contend with the regulations of the USU’s Clubs & Societies program, debating’s funding is not contingent on the size of its membership. In 2013, the Debates program received \$330,208 in Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) funding from the University. To put this in context, this is almost seven times the budget of UNSW’s DebSoc, and more than seven times the budget of the 2,500-member Sydney Arts Students Society.

Exactly where the money goes is unclear. USU President Hannah Morris declined to share the Debates budget with *Honi* or speak about the priorities within that budget. As the President is the USU’s official spokesperson, neither the DoD nor the staff members who are involved with debating were able to comment.

A leaked copy of the 2014 debating budget revealed only \$135,320 had been allocated. The most significant outlay was on tournament registration, amounting to \$44,820. The USU sends teams and adjudicators internationally to the World Universities Debating Championships (Worlds) and the Australasian Intersivity Debating Championships (Austral) every year, funding registration, accommodation and flights. The budget does not indicate how much is spent on the famously generous bar tab at the Royal every Wednesday night.

* * *

Clearly Debates has been singled out as a special and important



activity by the USU. The funding it receives is equivalent to 1,210 people’s compulsory SSAF fees, or the revenue from 4,403 ACCESS cards.

Morris referred *Honi* back to the history books in telling us why the USU values debating. “The USU was founded as a debating institution in 1874 and the Debates Program is significant to us as it is an important part of our history,” she explained.

A spokeswoman for the University attributed the University’s support of debating through its SSAF allocation to the fact that debating “enables students to improve their public speaking and debating skills”, and to USU debating’s international standing.

The success of Sydney’s debaters benefits the University’s reputation and recruitment. USyd is currently ranked first in the world, with Oxford in second. This reputation — not only advertised in rankings but also in the profiles of people like alumni former Womens champion Naomi Hart and former USU Board Director and debater Melissa Brooks in USyd’s marketing material — attracts ambitious high school debaters to USyd.

Debaters argue, as they are wont to do, that their hobby is worth the money. “Debating is fundamentally an activity that promotes rationality, critical thinking and learning about the world around you,” says 2014 Worlds grand finalist Paul Karp. The sponsorship of tournament registration and travel is seen as vital to the debating program, to ensure that access to the benefits of high-level debating is based on merit and not wealth. Karp argues against a user-pays approach. “That’s a system where the most vibrant and interesting activities at university wither and can only be accessed by cashed-up elites,” he says.

Former Worlds competitor Eleanor Gordon-Smith adds that international intersivity debating tournaments are not just about skills, but are also “recruiting

grounds for law firms and consultancy groups.” If these were only accessible for rich students, she tells *Honi*, we’d have “snowballed the problem” of entrenched privilege.

* * *

“But my concern kicks in,” she continues, “when we give the same amount of funding to all debaters regardless of their own capacity to buy flights.”

The USU has a generous but not particularly discerning hand when it comes to the debating chequebook. Alexi Polden, who has debated at Easters for USyd, told us that “the vast majority of students in debating at Uni come from private or at least selective schools ... debating is certainly particularly privileged.”

That seems to bear some truth. Of the six debaters that the USU sent to this year’s Chennai Worlds, five came from elite private schools.

In part, as Alexi notes, it would be unfair to lay the blame for that at the feet of the USU. USyd debating is not “actively discriminatory”, says Polden, and its inequities are “more a symptom of the inequalities in the education”. A student from an elite private or selective school who was provided with well paid coaches and adjudicators is likely to do better in university debating and be better placed to take advantage of the USU’s financial support.

And yet, the funding priorities of debating budget seem to benefit those at the top. If you were selected to debate for the USU at Chennai, you got hit up with \$2000 for flights. Berlin Worlds, the year before, \$2500. Last year’s Australs, in Malaysia, \$800. Wellington Australs, 2012, \$420. Korea Australs, 2011, \$900.

Australs and Worlds teams are filled with experienced debaters, people who’ve likely debated at those same tournaments for years before that. Four of the six debaters who went to Worlds in Chennai hung out together in Berlin too; all six had

been in Malaysia midway through the year.

Brooks told *Honi* that “some people doing five or six year degrees would have received over \$20k in debates scholarships”.

If you were selected to debate at Easters in Melbourne in two weeks time, you received nothing for flights or petrol. The same is true for the Easters last year, and the one before that. Easters is a tournament for debating beginners, known as novices.

If you wanted to go to USyd’s internal novice-only tournament, Grand Slam – billed as “a great place to start your university debating career” – you were expected to pay \$40 for the pleasure. That’s unlikely to mean your next bank statement is printed in red ink, but for people needing to take weekend shifts off to debate it’s an added disincentive.

Debating prioritises sending the best people to the most prestigious tournaments. It’s something that Brooks takes issue with. “It’s students’ money being spent and I do think there’s an issue with how much goes on something that is unavoidably, because of its competitive nature, a pretty closed shop.”

It’s not as though nothing could be done. “In a system of finite resources it seems obvious that you should only get union funding if that funding is what determines whether you can afford to go,” Gordon-Smith says. Asked if they were considering something like means tests or strict limits on how many flights to Europe one debater can claim, the USU told us it was business as usual this year for the debating budget but, as always, “the USU constantly strives to make our programs as accessible to as many students as possible”.

Brooks told us that she raised means tested debate funding “quite a few times with different people and there was huge resistance.”

* * *

Every year, the Nozicks and the Gibbises fight over whether an individual, free to walk into Quay, able to order but without the money for foie gras and a glass of Moët, is actually at liberty to eat at the restaurant.

And that’s where the conversation about wealth is left in USyd debating: in the abstract.

Noble aspirations

Ben Brooks laments the imperfect reintroduction of Australian knighthoods and damehoods.

The whole point of a Round Table is that it has no head. King Arthur’s knights would sit collegiately with one another, and with the king himself, as equals. It is faintly ironic that in restoring knighthoods to the Order of Australia, Tony Abbott consulted with none of his Cabinet barons. But the move is hardly as elitist as panicking Fairfax reporters suggest.

Properly designed, a system of knighthoods would be a valuable capstone to our otherwise obscure, acronym-laden honours system. An important objective of any honours system is to elevate meritorious members of the community to prominence. This is difficult when our existing awards consist of a Sesame Street parade of the letters AC, AO, AM and OAM, in a country which has a proud, pathological disdain for postnominals.

Knighthoods are nothing like the classist anachronism described by Labor. The reality in Britain and elsewhere is that knighthoods turn the idea of hereditary nobility on its head. They are a peculiarly democratic institution based on meritocracy, not aristocracy, recognising success and commitment in all its forms. In its 2014 New Years Honours list, for instance, New Zealand awarded knighthoods and damehoods to businesswomen,

fashion designers, horse breeders, and Maori educators. The equivalent UK list bestowed knighthoods on geneticists, sculptors, journalists, and theatre producers. Only two politicians featured among the 20 recipients, and one was from the opposition Labour party.

Unfortunately, the restored Australian system is not well designed – perhaps fatally so. Only four appointments will be made each year, and it is the Prime Minister’s intention that only those who accepted (rather than sought) public office will receive the honour.

The strength of the British and New Zealand honours systems is that they are accessible, transparent, and recognise that merit manifests itself in diverse ways. Over the past twelve months, the UK has awarded some 50 knighthoods, and New Zealand almost a dozen. In other words, that is one knighthood for every 1.2 million Britons, and one for every 400,000 Kiwis. In the equivalent period, Australia would have received a paltry one knighthood for every five million people.

Knighthoods cover the full spectrum of human endeavour, from education to medicine to art to sport to charity to entrepreneurship to military

service. The greatest meritocracy is one in which scientists and soldiers alike can be installed as Sirs and Dames. Confining the Australian system to a mere four public office holders a year – as if the Governor-General is not sufficiently glorified already – will only exacerbate the perception of knighthoods as unrepresentative and exclusive, if not totally redundant.

Most troubling, the Prime Minister alone will select appointees. He will consult the Chairman of the Order of Australia Council but not the Council itself. Ordinarily, the Council – which approves other awards in the Order – consists of nineteen members. These presently include biochemists, artists, Defence Force leaders, and the world’s first officially acknowledged same-sex ambassador.

Like their global counterparts, including the hundred-strong UK honours committee, the Council enhances the diversity of the Australian honours system, and protects it from political favouritism. Australia has unpalatable experience with Liberal office holders conferring honours on undeserving or corrupt cronies. That diversity means that awards are routinely conferred on librarians, surveyors, or architects, not just officers and judges. Circumventing the Council is an unwise move for a policy which already struggles against

allegations of political elitism.

The problem is not, then, knighthoods themselves. Rather, the problem lies in their thoughtless implementation.

Some criticism is unavoidable. Knighthoods clearly smack of surreptitious Anglophilia (some might call it ideological necrophilia). That is no more objectionable than the incremental, Anglophobic Labor republicanism which abolished them in the first place.

Yet on the whole, the rhetorical skirmish over knighthoods is a distraction. There are other, very real problems with the honours system. Between 1997 and 2007, women constituted a bare third of all honours awarded in Australia. In 2012, only a quarter of Companions and Officers to the Order of Australia were women. It would be interesting to see how indigenous nominees fare.

But in principle, knighthoods are indeed what Abbott calls a ‘grace note’ to the honours system. A grace note botched in translation. In lampooning Abbott for his sycophantic British nostalgia, we forget that the UK and New Zealand honours systems are a model for diversity and accessibility, and that the Australian reforms are a politicised, shallow imitation.

Diversifying theatre

William Xi explores the insufficient diversity of Australian theatre productions.

A quick browse over the productions that Sydney’s best and most famous theatre companies sees three dominant, generic types of plays that you can choose from: Absurdist European theatre, well-done ‘classics’ (Shakespeare, Chekhov, Ibsen) or New Wave Australian theatre from the 70s and 80s. Whilst performing great theatre with historical relevance domestically and overseas is understandable, the sheer number of such productions, put on year after year, seems disproportionate — especially when compared to the number of multicultural, modern Australian stories that are told on stage. As Lee Lewis, artistic director at the Griffin theatre, quipped, the local theatre scene is “reprehensibly white”.

Every year, the Nozicks and the Gibbises fight over whether an individual, free to walk into Quay, able to order but without the money for foie gras and a glass of Moët, is actually at liberty to eat at the restaurant.

And that’s where the conversation about wealth is left in USyd debating: in the abstract.

of ‘The Comedy of Errors’ is seen as revolutionary because it features a diverse cast.

The larger issue doesn’t seem to be a clear inequality of casting within plays that are already performed, but rather, when an ‘ethnic’ actress lands a significant role, the stories that they’re placed in are very rarely ‘ethnic’. Even when they are, such roles are often stereotypical, inaccurate or ineffectual.

This is something that theatre companies genuinely have the power to change. Good multicultural writers are out there. They’re just overwhelmingly sectioned off to smaller community theatres without commercial pressures. The plays are there, too — the history of multicultural theatre in Australia goes all the way back to early Chinese migrant performances in the Gold Rush era. And considering that a quarter of Australians

were born overseas, modern Australian theatre companies that pride themselves on showcasing diversity need to justify that pride.

Marginalisation of certain groups is rarely conscious. Chris Mead, literary director at Melbourne Theatre Company, pointed to deeper issues of a lack of engagement between play publishers and ethnic writers. According to Mead, without those plays “on the shelf” and major theatre companies like the Sydney Theatre Company or Belvoir “content to wait for Australian plays to come to them”, the chances of mainstream audiences empathising and connecting with non-white stories remain slim.

The history of Australian theatre shows a community that isn’t passive, either. The influential New Wave of Australian theatre (epitomised by writers such as David Williamson) sought to challenge what they saw as a

‘complacent nationalism’ at the heart of previous Australian theatre, which had failed to encapsulate and challenge a more turbulent and liberal 1970s Australia. Williamson and his contemporaries brought a grittier, more urban setting to theatre that reflected its time. Indigenous theatre has had a long and active tradition, with companies like the Black Theatre setting a precedent for more modern companies like Ilbjerri.

Most recently, the critically acclaimed ‘Jump for Jordan’ at the Griffin Theatre featured a diverse cast, a writer from a Maltese background, a story about Jordanian immigrants settling into Sydney, and a scene that opens with the line, “It’s like SBS in there”. Considering the delightful ethnic plurality that informs much of SBS’s programming, maybe that isn’t such a bad idea for theatre.

Hymens are a girl’s best friend

Sarah Mourney examines the science of hymens. ILLUSTRATION BY LAURA PRECUP

“Joan of Arc Red” is the largest selling fake hymen product in China. These small packets of virginifying proteins are designed to dissolve in vaginal secretions and then bleed at the point of penetration. Users are instructed to insert the prosthetic membrane into the vagina 5 minutes before sex, and to appear “shy” and “in pain” to convince your unsuspecting partner. If you’re keen, visit [hymenshop.com](#).

Cultural myths around virginity fly in the face of scientific reality.

Here’s the truth: hymens don’t always break. Oestrogen released during puberty elasticises the hymen, so – if proper foreplay is carried out – the hymen should stretch, not tear. For many women, the hymen is only going to tear if your sexual partner thinks that penetration should be akin to scoring a touchdown and believes in friction to no end. Only in rare cases does the hymen fully cover the vaginal opening. This is called an “imperforate hymen”; women who have one need to undergo a minor

surgery in order to be able to menstruate and fornicate. Usually, the hymen is a small crescent shape which comes in many different sizes; sometimes it has holes, sometimes women don’t have one at all. It may tear during vigorous activities like sport and sex, and depending what study you look at, more than 40 per cent of women don’t bleed at all during their first intercourse. This means the idea of the hymen as some obstructive barrier (for the hetero-women out there, at least) to be slain and conquered by a gallant penis, is a weird cultural by-product from history.

Even if the hymen does tear, it doesn’t mean it is gone, *per se*. You still have your hymen for the rest of your life: it’s an elastic collar sitting at the entrance of your vagina that will stay stretchy as long as you’re having sex regularly. If you don’t have sex for a while, it may stop being so stretchy and you might have to go slow and stretch it out again. It is also possible for older,

postmenopausal women who haven’t given birth vaginally and who don’t have penetrative sex frequently, to have their hymen close up again. The science behind hymens needs to be added to the discourse around virginity. As it stands, myths are being used as a tool to police female sexuality in horrific ways. In 2013 a Saudi Arabian cleric raped, tortured and killed his five-year-old daughter after a doctor’s report cast doubt on the child’s virginity.

Women and girls are killed each year when they don’t bleed on their wedding nights. Doctors around the world conduct ‘virginity tests’ looking for tissue that might never have existed.

Women are paying thousands of dollars for a hymenoplasty, which entails using the vaginal lining to create a false hymen. Les Blackstock, an Australian cosmetic surgeon, said



on Insight, “I know that my hymens have passed inspection in Australia and overseas and not been detected”.

As long as people believe the hymen is a true marker of virginity, women will continue to suffer from shoddy practices, only fuelling sex negativity and double standards for women. \$29.95 fake hymens are nowhere near the worst of it.

Beyond the bounds

Leigh Nicholson thinks para-athletes should dope on technology.

Premiering a dramatic trailer reminiscent of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the Swiss National Competence Center of Research in Robotics announced their plans to hold Cybathlon – the first championship for para-athletes using advanced supportive technological devices.

The Cybathlon is a Paralympic-style championship with disciplines such as powered exoskeletons and brain-computer interfaces. Each awards two medals, to the “pilot” (for athletes) and the device provider.

In the past, Olympics committees have fought tooth and nail to ensure that competitors do not exceed “able-bodied strength” from the advantages of drug doping and, in recent years, technology doping. With all the controversy surrounding the advancement of uniform design and disability support technology like prosthetics, it seems obvious that people are not yet ready to think of human capabilities as being inclusive of technological advancements.

It is confronting to imagine an athlete’s performance as solely dependent on tech-gear access and financial funding. However, it is equally frustrating that, in a condescending structure of control, the performance

of disabled athletes and their supporting devices must be kept at the same level as their “abled” opponents.

On the surface, the championship seems like an interesting conglomerate of Paralympic events unhindered by technological constraints. On a broader scale, it will hopefully look at the future of disability support design available for a wider market.

That performance is inclusive of augmentation is an assumption that that freaks a lot of people out. In an article in *The New Yorker*, writer Tim Wu wrote about people’s intelligence being inclusive of their smart phones information, commenting, “we are now different creatures than we once were, evolving technologically rather than biologically”.

Becoming “part machine” is fear-mongering and should not steer the argument away from the fact that at its most basic, the competitions are providing funding and awareness for supportive devices for those who need it. The event’s founder Robert Reiner is aware of this, citing his aim as “delivering the best possible assistance for paralysed humans, thus trying to improve their quality of life”.

Breaking the ice

Salvation is only a sing-a-long away, writes Mary Ward.

I am sitting in a suburban cinema with my two teenage sisters and roughly six birthday parties’ worth of eight-year-old girls. I am nervous, but ready. I have been training for this moment since I purchased the film’s soundtrack; those songs now occupy ten spots in my 25 Most Played on iTunes.

“Elsa?”

There is a five-beat silence in which I manage to have an intense existential crisis. Will I be the only one singing? How quickly can someone give themselves nodules? Should I be putting more energy into smoking pot in the back rooms of pubs while discussing Foucault instead of trawling through the “Frozen GIF” Tumblr tag?

My fears are instantly alleviated when as one, raspberry slushie-fuelled choir we sing the protagonist’s inspirational first lyric: “Do you wanna build a snowman?”

I have found my people.

Frozen, Disney’s latest effort, is equal parts musical film and religious text. The movie’s feminist plotline and catchy, Academy Award-winning songs have earned it quite the cult following.

So it was a stroke of pure marketing genius when Event Cinemas decided to run ‘Sing-a-Long’ *Frozen* screenings across Sydney at just \$6 a head (because, apparently, people should be charged LESS for [a] a limited edition

song sheet, [b] the ability to sing/recite dialogue/openly weep in the cinema, and [c] self-actualisation).

I am a serious member of the cult. So serious that I feel a wave of nausea when the opening notes of the film’s iconic ‘Let it Go’ invites a young girl to exclaim, “This is my favourite song.”

Puh-lease, kid. My favourite song is ‘For the First Time in Forever (Reprise)’, closely followed by the instrumental ‘Vuelle’, which plays during the opening Disney animation. ‘Let it Go’ was cool back in January. Spend some more time with the text you filthy amateur.

Oh, and that note that Tony award-winner Idina Menzel murdered at the Oscars? You know, the one that lasts for actual days? The kid in the reindeer antlers with a mouth full of popcorn absolutely nails it.

Together we belt our way through Princess Elsa’s journey of self-discovery and sisterhood. The girls from Jessica’s birthday party transpose Kristoff’s ‘Reindeers are Better than People’ up an octave with ease. My sisters and I sing ‘Fixer Upper’ in twenty-nine perfectly executed parts. The whole cinema wonders if the woman up the front actually likes singing, or has been forced to attend sing-a-long screenings of films due to her screeching laugh.

And then, it is all over. Demi Lovato plays and we exit the cinema. Best \$6 I have ever spent.

An unexpected bloodsport

ILLUSTRATION BY MARIA MELLOS

Rupert Coy explores the running feuds of the chess world at the recent Candidates Tournament.

The only sound that punctuated the tense silence in the hall was the ominous ticking of the clock. Spectators in their hundreds sat expectantly, waiting for the next move, analysing body language.

Then the players started kicking each other.

That was the 1974 edition of the Candidates Tournament — one of the highest-profile, hardest fought, and best paid chess competitions in the world. A win at this tournament grants a player the right to challenge the current world champion for the title.

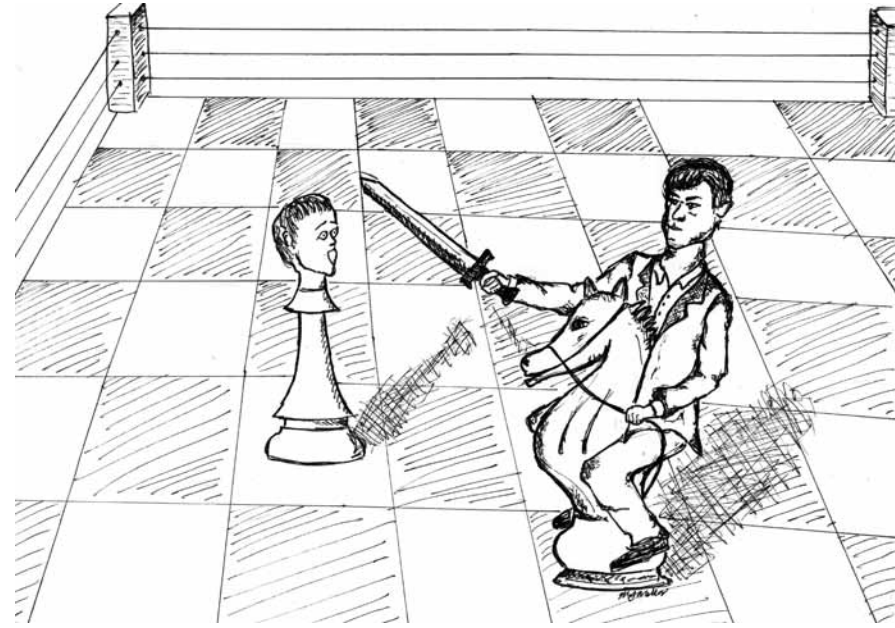
The 2014 tournament, contested last month in the central Russian town of Khanty-Mansiysk by eight of the world’s best players, was marred by a different scandal. The enduring animosity caused by ‘Toiletgate’ was on show.

This scandal dates back to 2006, when Russian Vladimir Kramnik and Bulgarian Veselin Topalov—two of the favourites in this year’s Candidates—competed for the World Championship. Kramnik, a nerdy, spectacled Russian known for his very solid style, and Topalov whose short, jet-black beard makes him look suspiciously like a vampire, had little history before the match.

That all changed on the first rest-day of that championship. Topalov, 3-1 down, accused Kramnik of hiding a tiny chess computer in his bathroom and consulting it for moves on his frequent toilet visits. The toilet was searched and nothing was found, despite Kramnik’s camp fearing that the

Topalov team would plant a device.

Both players were apoplectic. Threats of boycotts and legal action ensued, and Kramnik forfeited the fifth game in protest. Kramnik eventually won the contest in a tie-break: he and Topalov have not been on speaking terms since.



This year’s Candidates tournament was their first high-level meeting since. Their game in Round 6—a crucial stage of the tournament—was highly anticipated. Crowds flocked not just to the hall, but to websites which streamed the chess live to millions (last year, GQ’s piece on the World Championship had more hits than their coverage of the concurrent Victoria’s Secret fashion show). Eight players ambled onto the stage, sat at their tables, and readied themselves. Kramnik and Topalov comically avoided eye-contact, adjusting their

pieces and score-sheets, pouring tea from their flasks, staring at the ceiling.

At the commencement of play, three pairs of players shook hands. Kramnik just pressed the clock and Topalov played his first move, a tremendous sign of mutual

a quirky but immensely talented Armenian known for his sense of humour. Instead, forty-three year old Indian veteran Vishwanathan Anand claimed a clear victory and set up a rematch with Norwegian wunderkind and male model Magnus Carlsen, twenty years his junior, for the world title.

Anand seemed finished after convincingly losing the 2013 Championship to Carlsen, who astounded the cognoscenti with his ability to exploit the smallest weakness and win seemingly drawn games. He won the match, the title, and \$1.5 million with two games to spare. Anand was surely too old for a game where players typically peak in their late twenties.

But Anand is the Madonna of the chess world: both stand out among far younger peers and remain successful thanks to constant reinvention. He began with a convincing win over Aronian and played energetically and creatively throughout, the antithesis of his lacklustre performances against Carlsen and at various tournaments since. While his rivals lost at least two games each, ‘Vishy’ was undefeated. Carlsen, keenly watching from Norway, praised his “tenacity”.

Carlsen vs. Anand this November may just be a repeat of last year’s match. Something in Anand’s Candidates performance suggests it’ll be better than that. Kramnik, Topalov, and Aronian should watch and learn.

Neither Kramnik nor Topalov won this year’s tournament. Nor was it world number two Levon Aronian,

Once in a red moon

Issy Comber reviews a different kind of cupping.

Hey everyone, I’ve got my period! That happy crimson hug which proclaims me a baby-free zone for the next month. I usually celebrate for around twenty minutes, then I remember that when I’m on the rags I blow up as big as a house, become gassier than a gluten-intolerant burrito enthusiast and just generally enjoy a Tarantino death scene in my pants. Womanhood, hooray!

But this month, I tried something different to aid me, something that came in the post, dressed in silicon. Presenting: the Moon Cup! A small medical-grade silicon cup which one inserts to catch all of that menstrual madness, the Moon Cup has been hailed as cost-effective, highly sustainable (it lasts up to 8 years) and generally progressive

femme product.

First of all – how does it feel to put in? Well, the circumference of the cup’s widest part is just larger than a 50c coin. To put it in your vagina you need to bend it in half, insert, and it opens inside you. This was a strange experience to begin with – and only hurt slightly because I wasn’t expecting it – plus I had been doing stress kegels that day, y’know? When it was in, it stayed in unbeknownst to me for the next six hours.

During those six hours I went to Fisher, ate a banana and then potted off to my job. I work behind the bar in a reasonably up-market cocktail venue. There are no staff toilets so when I went to empty the moon cup – a strange

process where you pull on a small stem and the cup comes out with a small ‘pop’ – I found myself caught (literally) red handed in a bathroom full of upper-middle class cougars. Hurriedly, I bypassed the rinsing of the cup and washed my hands as discreetly as possible. I went back out to the bar and then bent down to the fridge to survey the pale ales. The cup shifted in me and I let out a yelp – not having put it in properly in my haste. Bloody Marys, anyone?

In an average cycle, gals supposedly bleed out around six tablespoons of blood. That’s funny because I feel like when I’m on the rags my vagina becomes the elevator doors in ‘The Shining’. Having the cup gave me perspective on that – and seeing exactly what was coming out

of body was a strangely comforting feeling.

As the week continued, other perks of the cup emerged. It carries no risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS), which tampons do, and it also lacked that dry ‘cotton-y’ feeling. It had its awkward moments (removal/application with burrito hands, hurried wash outs in Fisher bathrooms), but these could have been avoided with some simple planning. Overall, the cup was cool.

A feminine product that encourages sustainability, saves me cash and encourages connection to my body? It’s a bloody ripper of an idea, and something that I’ll continue to use for years to come.

A dyke to watch out for

Lane Sainty chats to Alison Bechdel.

PHOTO BY ELENA SEIBERT

Alison Bechdel rarely draws herself smiling. This is perhaps unsurprising, when you consider the content of the two graphic memoirs that propelled her to cartoonist stardom: themes of sexuality, neuroses, and suicide underpinning the complicated relationship between Bechdel and each of her parents. All the same, it's not until halfway through our interview that I realise what feels amiss: I was expecting somebody stern.

Bechdel, 53, is not stern, but she does talk the way she writes: carefully, without an errant or superfluous word. We meet on a grey, uninspiring Sydney morning in Ultimo, a couple of days before Bechdel is due to speak at the All About Women Festival at the Opera House. She's giving a solo talk on her work, and also appearing on a panel titled Pictures Of You about women's representation in the media — an intimidatingly broad topic, I put to Bechdel.

"It is, and I feel not terribly well-equipped to address it," she says. "They put me on there because of that Bechdel Test thing, but I feel very out of touch with pop culture. I don't know what I'm going to say on that panel."

For the unaware, "that Bechdel Test thing" is a rule to gauge the presence of women in any given film. In order to pass the test, a film must fulfill three basic criteria: one, at least two women characters, two, who talk to each other, three, about something other than a man.

The test is named after Bechdel because it appeared, once, in a 1987 comic from her long-running strip titled *Dykes To Watch Out For*. The idea was borrowed from a friend of Bechdel's named Liz Wallace, and, after publication, was largely ignored until feminist film students rediscovered it circa 2005. It went viral, and in a strange twist, the Bechdel Test is now a household phrase, but Alison Bechdel, cartoonist, is not.

"I resisted it in a way for a long time," she says. "It was kind of annoying — like, I didn't invent this test. And people are asking me to talk about it all the time. I don't even watch that many movies." But now, Bechdel is trying to embrace the test, using it for publicity. She agrees with me that it's a low bar, but says the feminist ideal is spot on. "What the test stands for is something I have really devoted my career to, so that feels really consonant and right."

Although Bechdel doubts the relevance of her contributions to a debate about women's

representation, I think her life-long stint as a chronicler of lesbians renders her an expert.

Her outfit for the All About Women panel — a button up shirt, blazer, and chinos, complete with sensible shoes and a masculine haircut — makes her stand out like, well, a butch dyke sandwiched by 'conventional' femininity. The striking rareness of such an image, even today, is perhaps the strongest indication of the ongoing need for comics like *Dykes To Watch Out For*, which Bechdel has said she started drawing because she didn't see herself or her lesbian friends reflected anywhere.

She's the first to admit that *Dykes*, which she wrote from 1983 to 2008 for various fringe publications in the north east of the US, is not for everyone. In her solo talk at the Opera House, she flicks through drawings on an enormous projector screen, cracking jokes about the niche nature of the 'lesbian feminist comic' genre. "I never wanted to water anything down," she says, dryly, with an enormous illustration of a lesbian sporting a ribbed strap-on dildo looming on the screen behind her.

I ask Bechdel whether the use of 'dyke' was a bold choice, and she's surprised to hear that my encounters with the word have primarily been as slurs. "Yes, it was consciously taking this slur, this negative epithet and reclaiming it, but... I wasn't part of the generation that did that. I was slightly late," she says. By the time Bechdel came out of the closet in 1980, dyke was just a word lesbians called themselves. "I thought it was a nice, descriptive word. Like, yeah, I'm a dyke," she says with emphasis, as if testing to see whether the word still makes her feel empowered. Then she laughs. "It was easy for me to use that as the title of my work because it didn't have too much baggage. It felt to me like a positive term."

Although *Dykes* is fiction, I can't help but notice one of Bechdel's dykes — a politically correct, judgmental, holier-than-thou, and thoroughly neurotic lesbian named Mo — bears an uncanny resemblance to Bechdel's replications of herself. It's hardly a flattering connection, but I have to ask.

"Is that deliberate?"

"Oh, yeah," she says, offering the maxim 'write what you know' as justification. "I actually thought I was disguising myself. I intentionally made Mo not look like me, then I grew to look like her. I didn't have glasses when I started, and then I got glasses. And then my



haircut looked more and more like hers. It was like I turned into her."

A former girlfriend was horrified to spot the similarities in real life, Bechdel says. "Eventually we started having fights about something or other, and she said 'You sound just like Mo! You sound just like your character!' and I said 'Well, what did you expect?' and she said 'I thought Mo was a joke!' and I said 'No! No, Mo is real,'" she says. "That relationship did not last very long."

Although *Dykes* contains biographical elements, it's in Bechdel's graphic memoirs that she puts an unflinchingly honest version of herself on the page. *Fun Home*, about the sexuality and suicide of Bechdel's father, was published in 2006 to great critical acclaim, taking out the *Time* Book of the Year award and earning a place on the *New York Times* bestseller list. After years of etching out a quiet living creating *Dykes*, Bechdel was thrust into the limelight. "I had been pushing on this door for my whole career," she says. "One day they opened the door and I came tumbling into the room."

It's impossible to distil the complexity and brilliance of *Fun Home* into a short description, so you'll just have to trust me: the novel is superlative. It is narrated via a series of literary analogies, including references to Fitzgerald, Camus, Wilde, and the myth of Icarus. Bechdel says the technique was unplanned, arising through her efforts to understand her long-dead father through his favourite authors.

She employs the same method in *Are You My Mother?*, published in 2012, but Bechdel questions the strength of the literary connections the second time around, describing *Are You My Mother?* as "murky and indefinite". "I think that's kind of the nature of our relationships with our mothers. As opposed to our relationships with our fathers, which I think are somehow more distinct and clear cut. Mothers are more complicated."

In both memoirs, Bechdel — who, coincidentally, is almost exactly the same age as my mother — attempts to unravel the mutual influences between her and her respective parent. But at the end of *Fun Home*, there's a distinct feeling that Bechdel has made peace with her father, while the end of *Are You My Mother?* implies a letting go of a different kind, a type of resignation.

Although it was the success of *Fun Home* that pushed *Dykes* into the world of well-known comics, it is impossible to overstate the cultural significance of the 25-year-long strip. However, the enduring message of Bechdel's work is still up for debate.

In the preface to *The Essential Dykes To Watch Out For*, a compiled book of the strip, Bechdel asks, "Have I churned out episodes of this comic strip every two weeks for decades merely to prove that we're the same as everyone else?"

Well?

"The truth is, when I was young, I always thought gay people were superior to other people," Bechdel says, citing the outsider status of queer people as something that lent a special insight. "So part of me has been disillusioned to learn that we're not. We don't have special powers; we're not inherently revolutionary at all. We just want to do what everyone wants to do."

She describes the lesbian and gay rights movement as being in the inevitable process of making itself obsolete; the march towards normalcy slowly dismantling the need for queer culture. For Bechdel, the victory is bittersweet.

"There was this very vibrant queer subculture when I was young. It was like a ghettoized, separate world, which I loved. It was fascinating to me, so exciting to be a part of that," she says. "And now it's not really there anymore. But that's the price of progress."



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Sydney Biennale: blood on all our hands

Subeta Vimaralajah questions the implications of the 2014 Sydney Biennale Festival boycott campaign for the wider art scene.

In the Art Gallery of NSW (AGNSW), amidst an artificial forest lives Yingmei Duan. The forest has a certain dreamlike sensibility to it, producing natural sounds of wind and water that Duan accompanies with his non-descript noises. As gallery goes approach, he emerges and hands out small folded pieces of paper with wishes written on them. Duan is not a mere eccentric art enthusiast; he is a prominent Chinese artist exhibiting as part of the Sydney Biennale for 2014. His piece Happy Yingmei is one of the most pleasantly bizarre works on show. By creating a surreal and intimate experience between the artist and audience member, Duan challenges the often-alienating and hierarchical gallery space in the art world. The delicate moment of receiving his paper note, although a momentary distraction, does little to silence the political squabbles that have usurped the Biennale this year.

Not too far from Happy Yingmei, tucked next to the gallery gift shop, hangs the AGNSW donor board. A dozen or so squares of clean cut glass, it lists the members of the President's Council and their companies. It is seemingly a shopping list of Sydney's corporate elite: KPMG, National Australia Bank, Optus, Westpac Banking Corp, Fairfax Media Limited, Qantas Airways. The Board of Trustees is similarly high profile. Atop members that are gambling millionaires, venture capitalists and CEOs of multi-billion dollar hotel chains, sits

"President: Mr. Guido Belgiorino Nettis".

Mr. Guido's surname is suspiciously similar to that of ex-Biennale director Luca Belgiorino Nettis. It's his brother. Luca is the CEO of Transfield Holdings and Guido, the Managing Director.

* * *

Neither Happy Yingmei, nor any of the other artworks on show will define the memory of this year's Biennale. Instead, it will be remembered as an example of boycott efficiency and leftism in the Sydney art scene. For those with little interest in art, or with an apolitical Facebook newsfeed, here's what you missed: the Sydney Biennale is an Art Festival held every two years in the main public gallery spaces of Sydney, as well as in Carriageworks and Cockatoo Island. The festival was founded in 1973 and has since been supported by the Belgiorino Nettis family. In 2014, this partnership came to an end after refugee rights activists launched a boycott campaign. Luca Belgiorino Nettis is the CEO of Transfield Holdings, an infrastructure company contracted by the Australian government to manage detention centers on Manus Island and Nauru. Belgiorino Nettis initially encouraged artists to voice their frustrations through their art, but following alleged abuse to members of his family and an increasing list of artist boycotts, he withdrew financial support

and involvement in the Festival.

* * *

Approximately four years ago, the question of clean sponsorship arose in London at the prestigious Tate Modern Museum, a beacon of Western culture and home to the fruits of many a modern aesthetic labour. Tate Modern is sponsored by BP Oil Refineries, an arrangement that prompted the formation of art collective "Liberate Tate".

The collective has done a range of work to raise awareness about BP's sponsorship of the gallery, most notably delivering a naked member of the collective drenched in an oil-like substance following the Deepwater Horizon spill in 2010. The extent of BP sponsorship has not been released, but one can assume it is in the millions. Although not needed to keep the museum afloat, it has probably helped that Bacon or Rothko acquisition at whose sight the average art student would weep.

The Tate is not alone in this. In May 2013 at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), where the Biennale now exhibits, hung a series of works sponsored and commissioned by Rio Tinto. Embedded by Craig Walsh was inspired by the time he spent in the Pilbara region, where iron ore is mined. Working with Rio Tinto staff and the traditional Aboriginal custodians of the

land, Walsh created a series of photographic portraits and films, accompanied by twenty-one industrial bins filled with iron ore.

This is not the first time that Rio Tinto has sponsored a major art project in the Pilbara region. The Pilbara Series is amongst the most highly regarded of Australian landscape art, a series painted by Fred Williams and commissioned by Rio Tinto. Rio Tinto was also the 2012 sponsor of the MCA's inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Program. This is the company that is responsible for hacking into the beautiful Pilbara that Walsh and Williams depict. This is the company that pillages the sacred land of Indigenous Australians, simultaneously sponsoring art that celebrates s aid land and culture.

The question of ethical corporate sponsorship is not restricted to the public art world. Australia's very own answer to the avant-garde, MoNA, raises similar questions about the relationship between art, ethics and class. Its founder and funder, David Walsh, is now praised as one of Australia's greatest philanthropists and the single-handed revivalist of the Tasmanian tourist economy.

Walsh's fortune was literally won out of his career as a professional gambler and later, his development of a gambling system to bet on horse racing. His initial investment in antique art was a means to ship capital internationally. In 2012, he was involved in a dispute with the Australian Taxation Office for an alleged \$37 million owed in gambling related profits.

Despite Walsh's questionable ethics, we are yet to hear of his gallery being picketed or his staff being heckled with insults. In fact, the vegans that stage protests on Melbourne Cup day probably considered MoNA the highlight of their most recent Tasmanian bush land adventure.

The history of art and blood money is not new. The great artists of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were mere artisans beholden to patrons that dictated the subject matter, style and content of their works. The works of Titian and Raphael that the Western world flocks to are the mere pretty playthings of past oppressors.

This is not to say that art does not have a revolutionary history. The opening of the Louvre in 1793 as the first public museum is testament to an alternate history forged by artists wanting to universalise art by liberating it from class constraints. This revolutionary history persists through modernism. From early names like Courbet and Manet, through to Duchamp and his infamous Fountain (a porcelain urinal), it would be naïve to say that art is entirely void of class-consciousness. The question is whether this dialogue has persisted, or whether these figures are token examples

of leftism in a bourgeois art world.

The counter-culture '60s reflected the emerging relationship between art and class in a world increasingly beholden to capital. The idealism of the young artist who loathes oppressive institutions but ultimately panders to them has become a tried and tested narrative in the postmodern era.

Case in point, Yoko Ono. Once a radical fluxist, peace activist and neo-Duchampian, her anti-establishment manuscripts now sell for over \$400,000. At a recent exhibition held at the MCA, a starving art student was expected to pay \$15 to see her show, and then led through to the gift stop to buy a postcard, puzzle, mug, t-shirt or button emblazoned with "War is Over" as memory of the experience. Ono, a previous notable member of a movement founded on being against an increasingly commercial art world, now uses the gallery gift store to challenge the establishment.

Yayoi Kusama tells a similar story. In 1969, Kusama was instructing a naked performance artwork through the Museum Of Modern Art (MoMA)'s sculpture garden to condemn the existence of exhibit entrance fees and gallery hours that restrict artistic freedom. Sotheby's auction house sold her most recent canvas for over \$5 million, and two years ago she paired with Louis Vuitton to sell her visual trademark on high heels for a thousand bucks a pop.

Art is not void of class dialogue; it merely discards this dialogue when the market requires it to.

The Biennale saga seems blind to these patterns. The image of the proletarian art life is ever pertinent, but yet to engage with the vertical systems of privilege the art world is structured around. Robert Wellington, a member of the University of Sydney Art History and Film Studies Department, affirms these trends.

He identifies that, although most of his colleagues are on the political left, they "come from reasonably privileged upbringings," as there are "fewer opportunities in academia for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds simply for practical reasons". These "practical reasons" are not exclusive to academia. Ascendancy in the art world is still based on a culture of unpaid internships, gallery opening cocktail parties and social connections. Art may seem socially conscious, but there is a corporate sponsor or privileged curator signing the cheque for every minority voice that gains recognition.

Without that cheque, the art world is left in a questionable place.

For its \$53 million renovation, the MCA received only \$13 million from the various levels of government. All tolled, governments provide close to 60 per cent of funding for galleries and museums in Australia. It's hardly insignificant, but the support of the state for projects sought after by Australia's art aficionados is limited. Some artists have recognised this tension. Douglas Gordon, creator of mixed media installation Phantom currently exhibiting at the MCA, was didactic in his political response to the boycott. He defended his right to participate in the Biennale, labeling a boycott "ineffective" and "irresponsible" in an art world still reliant on corporate sponsorship.

What is more concerning than the state's inability to buy Cezanne's is the comparative means of self-interested private buyers. The Belgiorino-Nettis family is peasantry compared to the plutocrats and billionaires that saturate the global art market and drive up price tags, housing their unique collections in tax-exempt warehouses. In Zurich, Geneva, Luxembourg and Changi, the world's wealthiest lock away priceless artworks and antiques

in confidential, highly secure and economically efficient warehouses whilst they accrue value.

The issues of tax evasion aside, hidden away in these warehouses are some of the world's greatest masterpieces that will never be appreciated by their owners, let alone be seen by the public. A single warehouse in Geneva alone holds art worth over \$100 billion, including dozens of Picassos'. In this way, art is no longer a public good, but a private investment. For these investors, art isn't analogous to film and music, but gold and oil. They see themselves not as donors, but as shareholders.

As lovers of art and activism we are posed with a dilemma: art, politics, or both? The moral high ground is not so clear-cut. Not only is boycotting masochistic, it is likely unproductive.

Even with the success of the Biennale boycott, Luca Belgiorino Nettis will not cease his passion for the arts. He will instead cease being passionate about philanthropy. The canvases and installations we once enjoyed will instead be housed in the living room of his McMansion or worse, locked away in a climate-controlled storage unit to accrue value alongside his Porsche.

This is not a question of whether the boycott campaign for the Sydney Biennale was a good idea. Rather, that such a boycott cannot operate in a vacuum. The Biennale has started the discussion, in a way it has never existed in Australia. If we as viewers of art believe it has a social purpose, this dialogue needs to continue. The likely implication of continued boycotts is that we have less art and that our galleries can't exhibit the most innovative and historically significant art. This is either a sacrifice we make together, or the Biennale becomes a slight and inconsistent victory in an art world that still has blood on its hands.



Review: Sydney Culture Walks App

Sam Jonscher sees the city through new lens.

Last month the City of Sydney launched the Sydney Culture Walks App, a compilation of ten virtual walking tours that cover the city's history and art precincts. It's easy enough to use; linked with Google maps, the app tracks your progress along the route and, as you pass sites that have been deemed historically worthy, a blurb pops up on your screen to tell you more about them. The tours have most of inner Sydney covered, with The Rocks, Chinatown, Newtown, Glebe, Pyrmont, Oxford Street, Kings Cross and Redfern all included.

Curious to see how City Hall imagines Sydney and its past, I set out on an adventure through Clover Moore's vision of Sydney.

I started with our colonial past. Following the tour from Custom's House to Millers Point, the route meanders up Phillip Street, across Bridge Street and then does a loop of the Rocks. "The earliest European Sydneysiders, convicts, soldiers, whalers and traders walked this route," the app says.

While there is an overbearing focus on architecture and the historic use of buildings that old white men built, the app does make an honest (albeit sanitised) attempt at including parallel histories. I learn that the first Government House in Sydney (now the Museum of Sydney) was where Bennelong, a senior member of the Eora nation who became an interlocutor between Indigenous Australians and the English, was held after being kidnapped near Manly. The app is sure to write some happy endings into history, assuring me that after escaping, Bennelong and his wife Barangaroo often dined with the Governor and "maintained cordial ties".

Overall though, this tour focuses its attention on colonial Sydney's booming commercial trade, making

only scant mention to any sort of economic disparity. It imagines the area as a collection of government buildings, pubs and churches where the British hung out and made money.

I move next to 'Hidden: Sydney's Little Laneways'. It quickly becomes apparent that this walk is trying to cash in on Melbourne by association, and the laneway theme doesn't translate so well Sydney. Most of the 'laneways' were historically loading docks that are now unused and aren't much to look at.

After getting into the heart of the city centre, this tour does encourage you to reflect on how much the city has changed. The route makes its way from Circular Quay to the MLC Centre, where skyscrapers now dominate an area that was once warehouses and factories. Many stops describe the history of refurbished exterior; Establishment Hotel was a lumberyard and the laneway that is used to access The Ivy was at various times a piano manufacturer, a music school and home to the Australian Liberal Party. This tour concludes at the MLC Centre (formerly the hive of Sydney's artistic community) and in an uncharacteristic backhander the app describes it as "a cautionary tale against over development and wholesale destruction of the fine grain fabric of the city".

Next I head to Kings Cross to walk 'Passion: Sydney's Wild Side'. From the get go this is a considerably more lively tour - it opens with the story of Juanita Nielsen, a woman who started a radical newspaper, vocally supported Green Bans and then "disappeared... assumed murdered". Green Bans crop up a number of times on this tour as residents repeatedly protested real estate development and high-rise

apartment projects. Here the app comments that "some places were saved and the new development was not as intrusive as had been planned."

Championing grassroots protest and the woes of gentrification, this tour is much more interested in class divides. It points to a number of stairs that physically divide wealthy Potts Point from the poorer population of the 'loo'. The app proudly notes that Woolloomooloo is mentioned in Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* and that "the name couldn't be more Australian... derived from the local aboriginal language". The end of this walk is tales of social non-conformists, community movements and a celebration of a number of buildings that used to be artistic squats.

Next up is 'Parade: Oxford street'. This tour tells the story of 20th century Oxford Street - a shopping precinct that grew to be Sydney's gay cultural precinct. Around 1970, drug and prostitution induced "hostility", according to the app, pushed the gay community from The Cross and to Oxford Street. It points out a number of historic shop fronts famous for innovative drag shows, "back rooms" and the 253 Sauna, which "ironically direct[ed] clients to enter at the rear." At least the app has a sense of humour.

The tour is proud to promote Sydney's gay and lesbian community, but it has very little to say about its early treatment as an illicit sub-culture. Only brief mention is made to any sort of police brutality or social stigma,

referring to the first Mardi Gras in 1978 as merely "confrontational". The tour only mentions in passing the police raids on Club 80 that targeted homosexuality.

After a day traipsing around Sydney, I'm left with an image of a city looking for identity in diversity. The app rarely acknowledges the city's ongoing struggles to embrace difference.

The next day, I do the 'Barani: Redfern' tour. It starts at Carriageworks, the old site of Eveleigh Rail Yards and tells the story of how Redfern became the heart of Sydney's Indigenous community. Most noticeable about this tour is its focus on the present. It emphasises ongoing community projects like the Eora Centre, the Redfern Community Centre and the Aboriginal Housing Company. Whilst the app acknowledges the traditional owners of the land as people of the Eora nation, it fails to deal with the historical or ongoing oppression faced by the community. It imagines them as a thriving minority group, something any brief talk to a local activist will call into question.

Interestingly, the app is ill-suited for tourists — there is too much assumed knowledge. On the app's website, Clover Moore is even quoted saying "this new app will allow us all to ... explore Sydney in a new way". But what is that new way? One guess would be "multicultural" which seems to be a favourite buzzword for describing our city. Though after walking through these tours, and seeing what they leave out, to what extent is that true and not just aspirational?

ILLUSTRATION BY JUDY ZHU



Dressing the Iron Throne

Bernadette Anvia speaks to Game of Thrones costumer embroider Michele Carragher.

Having just completed work for the fourth season of the *Game of Thrones* series, costume embroiderer Michele Carragher finds time to fit me into a schedule that is largely consumed by costume work for a series of ball gowns to feature in Nicole Kidman's upcoming historical biography, *Queen of the Desert*.

Carragher has been in the textile industry for over 15 years. After completing her studies at the London College of Fashion, Michele worked in textile conservation. Following this she entered the field of TV and film costumes, and began working on *Elizabeth I* and *David Copperfield*, amongst other productions.

Since 2012, she has been working alongside *Game of Thrones* costume designer Michele Clapton to create four seasons of outfits and accessories.

"Each costume is a very important narrative tool that can express much to a viewer," she explains. "I myself have to understand what is appropriate in order to reveal and portray each character's personality, so costume embroidery

for film and television is not necessarily just making a pretty image on a garment," she says.

In season three, audiences were treated to a particularly exquisite wedding costume worn by Sansa Stark for her marriage to Tyrion Lannister. The wedding band depicted the initial alliance of House Tully and House Stark marriage, between Catelyn and Ned, evolving to show the Stark dire wolf joining with the Lannister lion, with the two eventually merging to show a final image of a triumphant lion.

Michele tells me that the band was used to "reflect the conflicts and battles within the show; [to have] something that told Sansa's life story [while being] wrapped around her ... the dress colour was still very much Sansa Stark and the embroidery had pale golden tones but woven through the story are ripe red pomegranates, the red colour symbolising the growing Lannister influence over her."

Sansa's wedding band alone took Carragher around 140 hours, over 14 days, to complete. Catelyn Stark's collars each

take about three days to produce (30-35 hours), while Daenerys Targaryen's dragon scale dresses can take anywhere between three to seven days.

It's a lot of work, especially considering Carragher's insistence to complete it all by hand.

But she's not complaining. Indeed, she praises Michele Clapton for sticking to the use of traditional techniques in making costumes for *Game of Thrones*. "She is a great supporter of artists and craftspeople, she really pursues the costumes being made with traditional processes, and luckily for me she loves to have hand embroidery."

I ask Carragher what it is about Game of Thrones, with more than its fair share of blood and gore, that appeals to her.

"I am inspired in my design work by decay and beauty in equal measure. I would say *Game of Thrones* would be close to Tennyson's "Lady of Shallot" [both of], which encapsulate themes of love and death," she says.

"There is certainly a battle in the *Game of Thrones* series to see what wins over, love or death, but I am sure the latter is winning at the moment ... I would say death is the true winner over love. I suppose it has always been."

Carragher playfully declines to comment on the storylines in season four, but gives away some tidbits.

"Daenerys Targaryen's dragon scale costumes continue to develop, and as Cersei Lannister's narrative evolves we see this reflected in her embroidery on her costumes."

I press her for more, but her jovial decline is in true *Game of Thrones* fashion.

"If I did tell you too much then I may get a scratch on my house's roof. [And if I was to] go out to investigate I'd find a bloodthirsty dragon from HBO waiting to devour me.

"It is best that I be more like the character of Jon Snow in my answer to you: I know nothing!"

The emperor's new art

Is the Sydney Biennale really an art festival? Patricia Arcilla finds out.

I spent my Saturday in a penal colony. Not Kafka's, though the comparison may be apt. The torture device was notably absent, but the underlying confusion and despair were not. The colony that I am referring to is the World Heritage-listed Cockatoo Island, which hosts a portion of the 19th Biennale of Sydney's exhibition until June 9. The source of confusion and despair is less easily identified, traceable to the exhibition's composition of art, eliciting tenuous interpretations or scathing remarks that an infant could do better. The root of my despair, thus, was the realisation — as I stood on the upper island contemplating Yael Bartana's 'Inferno'— that my own reactions erred towards the latter. Odd, coming from someone who will vehemently defend Anish "Giant Wax Blobs" Kapoor and Marina "Made James Franco Cry" Abramovic.

Like these two artists, the Biennale is marketed as the

vanguard of revolutionary and thought-provoking contemporary art. And yet in a world oversaturated with content, where anyone with a smartphone, sketchbook, or skin thick enough to emote before a crowd can call themselves an artist, fulfilling such promise is no easy task. Cockatoo Island unsurprisingly falls short, acting as a sort of beginner's field guide to avant-garde and the associated 'edgy' aesthetic.

Foremost of these distinguishing features is manipulation of scale, as in Eva Koch's "I AM THE RIVER", a 12x6.75m version of the animated waterfall pictures you admire at your local Chinese restaurant. You would suspect such a kitschy inclusion in the exhibition to be ironic, were it not for the nearby 'The Village' by Danish artists Randi and Katrina, whose anthropomorphised houses satisfy humanity's continuing and confounding obsession with putting faces on everything.

Kitschiness, presented as innovation, makes an appearance alongside other signs of the aspirant avant-garde in the participatory elements of Gerda Steiner and Jörg Lenzlinger's 'Bush Power', where skeletons dance and paper flowers rustle in time to audience movements on gym equipment below. In other works it is sidestepped in favour of reliance upon pre-existing cultural knowledge, as in Kate Daw's Fitzgerald-esque 'Green Light' (in name and nature).

Other rooms stand empty except for ice-filled glasses arranged with deliberate indifference. I posed the whispered question, "is this an artwork?" to my companion. Neither he nor the venue map were able to provide answers (though, given affairs, the answer was probably yes). The guesswork and Emperor's New Clothes syndrome which afflicts the corpus of contemporary art reared its head in Matt Hinkley's 'Untitled'; it featured wire and polymer installations so inconspicuously

tiny that the audience feigned interest in a blank brick wall perpendicular to Hinkley's work. Their confusion was not unique: in an apocryphal tale, Jackson Pollock stood before his own work and asked, "is this a painting?"

To whom is this utterly non-threatening version of the avant-garde marketed? Probably those with a living room like Jack's in *Fight Club*— modular furniture and magazine-industrial interiors. The powers on Cockatoo Island know their market: one of the ship workshops has been converted into a furniture showroom that would make Palahniuk weep. Long after the artworks have been uninstalled and the Dog Leg Tunnel divested of the tiny Google Ghost Train (Callum Morton's 'The Other Side'), bourgeois art lovers can compare fabrics and timber veneer samples for their wall mounted bed frame, then gaze upon the nearby remnants of convict silos. If that isn't Surrealism, I don't really know what is.

“No foreseeable end”

Clo Schofield writes about her experience at last Friday’s action at Villawood.

I ran behind the buses. Inside, they touched their hands to their lips and pressed them against the glass. They raised an arm in salute, or held them to their hearts.

“Thanks for trying.”

There is almost no opportunity to directly impact the detention system and the twisted ways it inevitably affects the lives of refugees in Australia. The “refugee problem” is being exported, deported, outsourced, and then placed out of our reach. Out of state, out of mind. Thursday morning was an opportunity to put a foot in the door. We did, for a few hours, disrupt and delay the insidious operation of the Department of Immigration’s ice-cold bureaucracy. I watched the buses drive away. They slipped through our fingers.

Older, more experienced anti-detention campaigners tell me that centres with high concentrations of asylum seekers have been strategically shifted in the past decade to suppress protest. They are now geographically positioned to avoid being subject to both everyday scrutiny, and to the mass actions of detainees and civilians that physically destroyed Woomera and Baxter Immigration Detention Centres in 2002 and 2005.

There are a number of dehumanising discourses functioning within public debate. One that casts them as members of a self interested, poor, brown hoard, taking advantage of Australia and seeking to somehow affect the economic circumstance of Australian citizen, by stealing your “jerb”, or your children, or something. Or that they’re cargo — handled, processed, transferred — managed by an industry contracted by DIBP making huge profits

on “detainees”, people referred to by number.

But the one that I’ve been thinking about recently is a discourse amongst “refugee activists”; discussions about the future of refugees, where refugees don’t have a seat at the table, let alone its head. Refugees aren’t given agency or subjecthood - they are victims of a determinist system, the exemplification of someone’s praxis. They are passive.

“Asylum seekers will still be waking up in a remote desert prison day after day isolated from their friends, their spouses, their families.”

Yesterday reminded me that this is total bullshit. The people in the centre disrupted the transfer from the start. They refused to get on the buses, the people left in the centre conducted sit-ins and a hunger strike has been initiated. RISE, a refugee advocacy group run by refugees

and detention survivors, reported that one asylum seeker slashed his wrists, but was swiftly bandaged, packaged up, handcuffed, and shoved onto the bus.

When the buses first arrived at Villawood, I was shocked. There were two huge coaches. Our source had told me that only 32 people were being forcibly transferred. It was only as we faced down the buses at the front gate that I realised why — there was

of deportation to Manus Island or Nauru, had they engaged in anything the Department of Immigration and Border Protection considers unsavoury.

If you google “Villawood protest”, the news coverage of our action will come up. The focus is on the gate of the detention centre, not the inside. Eight of my good friends were arrested outside Villawood yesterday. It was hard for me to watch, and must have been a thousand times harder to experience. They screamed with pain as cops wrenched them apart. They made a physical sacrifice in solidarity with the people who sat watching in the buses, their cuffed hands raised above their heads. I’m proud to know these people, but I want to know why this action was lent so much visibility, from News Ltd., Sky News, the ABC, SBS, the Guardian, whilst the resistance of asylum seekers saw practically none.

I think it was one of the most effective refugee actions in the past while. It got a lot of media attention, and saw many other people planning actions energetically — noise protests to express solidarity to our brothers and sisters in Villawood prison, further obstruction to the forced transfers that will be carried out over the next few weeks.

But after it was over, I felt terrible.

Traumatized from seeing my closest friends whacked into the ground by huge cops, shocked from the fear and the violence of it all, and despairing that even after an eight hour blockade, after ten people put their bodies on the line to disrupt the Department’s move, asylum seekers will still be waking up in a remote desert prison day after day, isolated from their friends, their spouses, their families. There is no foreseeable end.



ILLUSTRATION BY ANJALI VISHWANATHAN

Your Assessment and Appeal Rights

2001 BACHELOR OF NURSING STREAM: 1996 RESOLUTIONS			GRADE	MARKS	UNITS
NURSING 1B			P	52.0	6.0
NURSING PRACTICE 1A			F	46.0	
BEHAVIOURAL/SOCIAL SCIENCE IN NURSING 1A			F	44.0	
BEHAVIOURAL/SOCIAL SCIENCE IN NURSING 1B			F	41.0	
NURSING 1A			F	40.0	
BEHAVIOURAL/SOCIAL SCIENCE IN NURSING 2			DNF	52.0	6.0
LIFE SCIENCES IN NURSING 2A			P		
2002 BACHELOR OF NURSING STREAM: 1996 RESOLUTIONS			YEAR 2		
NURSING PRACTICE 1A			P	59.0	6.0
LIFE SCIENCES IN NURSING 2B			F	42.0	
BEHAVIOURAL/SOCIAL SCIENCE IN NURSING 1A			F	46.0	
BEHAVIOURAL/SOCIAL SCIENCE IN NURSING 1B			F	39.0	6.0
			P	50.0	
			YEAR 1		

As a University of Sydney student you have many assessment rights. Policies entitle all students to full information about course goals and requirements and this information must be given to you before the end of the first week of a course. Information you are entitled to includes:

- assessment criteria
- attendance and class requirements
- weighting – breakdown and calculation of assessment marks
- explanation of policies regarding ‘legitimate co-operation, plagiarism and cheating’, special consideration and academic appeals procedures
- early and clear statement of sanctions and penalties that may bring your mark down, and fair application of these penalties
- balanced and relevant assessment tasks
- fair and consistent assessment with appropriate workloads and deadlines
- written consultation before the halfway point of the unit if assessment requirements need to change
- changes must not disadvantage students
- adequate arrangements to cater for disabilities and other requirements
- access to staff out of class time at reasonable hours
- fair and relevant marking procedures
- anonymous posting of results (or arguably de-identified at least)
- timely return of assessments
- helpful feedback
- access to exams up to four months after the result
- the right to appeal up to three months after an academic decision
- enough time for remedial learning when there is reassessment

Appeals - University Procedures

If you believe a mark or University decision is wrong and you want to appeal you must lodge an appeal within 15 working days.

The first step is to talk to the person who made the decision – often your lecturer or subject co-ordinator. See if you can go through the assessment and discuss your performance with them. Make sure you know how the mark was worked out – including any scaling or marks deducted or changed for reasons not directly related to that particular assessment. This may mean attending an exam review session or making an appointment with your lecturer. Your questions and concerns may be resolved

If you believe a mark or University decision is wrong and you want to appeal you must lodge an appeal within 15 working days.

at this stage, helping you understand how you can improve in the future. Alternatively, you may feel the matter is still unresolved and wish to continue with your appeal.

1. Make your appeal in writing and make sure it is easy for other people to understand
2. Listen to or read staff comments and reasons for a decision closely. Keep these in mind when you write your appeal letter.
3. Base an appeal on a process matter rather than an academic judgement.
4. Know your desired outcome
5. Familiarise yourself with the relevant policies
6. Know who you are appealing to
7. Lecturer/Unit of study Coordinator; someone higher in the appeal chain within the Faculty; and then the University Student Appeals Body (Academic decisions only, and only where there has been a breach of process); You must be given reasons for each person’s decision.
8. If you cannot resolve appeals internally, you may be able to approach external bodies eg. NSW Ombudsman, the Anti-Discrimination Board etc.

Administrative decisions made outside of the Faculty have appeals to different people. Speak to the SRC for advice.

Your Appeal Rights

According to University policy, appeals should be dealt with:

- in a timely manner
- with confidence
- impartially and not disadvantage you in the future
- procedural fairness
- free access to all documents concerning your appeal

For help drafting your appeal talk to an SRC caseworker.
help@src.usyd.edu.au | 9660 5222



Ask Abe

Hi Abe,

I had an absolutely shocking time last semester and failed every subject I attempted. I have previously had an excellent record, but had a lot of family problems last semester. Is there any way that I can have last semester wiped off my record so my bad marks don’t spoil my record?

DS

Dear DS,

If you had a serious illness or misadventure (your family problems may be described as this) that was out of your control, became worse after **deadline for DNF (end of week 7)** and seriously affected your ability to study, you can apply to have those fails or absent fails changed to DNF (Discontinue Not Fail) grades. You will need to be able to explain how your illness or misadventure affected your study. Naturally you will need documentation from a doctor or counsellor, a community leader or someone else who knows about the issues your family have been dealing with. Remember that this is not just a method to “clean up” your transcript, but rather for students who have not had a genuine opportunity to demonstrate their competency in the subject.

You may also consider talking to an SRC caseworker about having your HECS/fees refunded. The deadline for applying for a fee refund if you are a local students is 12 months, but it’s so easy to forget that you’d be better off dealing with that straight away too. Fee refunds for international students have only recently been changed by law. Talk to SRC HELP for more information.

Abe.

Abe is the SRC’s welfare dog. This column offers students the opportunity to ask questions on anything. This can be as personal as a question on a Centrelink payment or as general as a question on the state of the world. Send your questions to help@src.usyd.edu.au. Abe’s answers can provide you excellent insight.

Are you studying at a Sydney University Satellite campus?

An SRC caseworker is available at every Sydney university campus. Call 9660 5222 or email help@src.usyd.edu.au for details or to make an appointment.

President’s Report

Jen Light



The growth of the Palmer United Party

The projections of the WA senate election on Saturday demonstrate a swing towards the Greens, and Palmer United Party with 6.7, and 7 per cent respectively. While the majority parties received a swing against them, a 5.6 per cent swing

against Labor, and a 5 per cent swing against the Liberal.

But why are people voting in such mass?

The Palmer United Party is the newest venture from Clive Palmer, a former Liberal Party member and owner of mineralogy. Clive Palmer’s net worth is estimated at \$895, with iron ore, nickel, and coal holdings.

Palmer spent big on the WA senate election mainly on television ads, and the biggest question now is whether the Palmer United Party’s success can be attributed to the money spent, or the policy?

The Palmer United Party’s policies are an interesting combination of social progression and economically and environmentally conservative.

The reports on these pages are wholly the work of the SRC Office Bearers. They are not altered, edited or changed in any way by the Honi editors.

- Party officials should not be lobbyists, thereby taking a strong position on paid political lobbyists, saving tax payers dollars and introducing fair policies

- Abolish the carbon tax

- Revising the current Australian government refugee policy to ensure Australia is protected and refugees are given opportunities for a better future and lifestyle

- Creating mineral wealth to continuously contribute to the welfare of the Australian community.

- Establishing a system where people create wealth in various parts of the country and for that wealth to flow back to the community that generates the wealth. For example,

if a particular region creates wealth, a significant percentage of that wealth should go back to the region.

- Closing down detention centres for asylum-seeker boat arrivals

- Moving towards free trade and closer economic relations with Asia.

- Decentralisation and regional self-government, such as a new North Queensland state.

- Encouraging competitive markets by restricting monopoly and prohibiting unfair trading practices.

- Abolish higher education fees.

Minority Parties are increasing their primary votes which was seen particularly in the Federal Parliament.

Wom*n of Colour Autonomous Collective Conveners’ Report

Shareeka Helaluddin and Tabitha Prado-Richardson



Though we are a relatively new and small collective, this autonomous space has proved to be positive and liberating for those of us who constantly have to negotiate between

issues of race and gender. This is a space for those of us whose feminism and race are necessary parts of our identity. For those of us who – at some point – have been forced to choose between one of these sides and realised that we cannot.

This is a safe space for those of us, who have been victims of various systems of patriarchy, colonialism and whiteness. For those of us whose experiences are marked by unique conflicts and challenges. For those who have been made to feel different, alienated, stereotyped, fetishized, ashamed, Orientalised,

invisible, commodified, patronised and/or tokenised, because of who we are.

The creation of this space allows us to reclaim our individual identities and find solidarity. It also allows exploring, validation and a celebration of our intersecting identities. It is difficult to find networks where one can explore such complex identity issues, but this collective was set up because we deserve to be heard and we deserve to take up space in this world, and should not be made to feel otherwise.

It’s set to be an exciting year ahead, with our first event occurring on the 25th of April at the Newsagency in Marrickville. If you identify as a wom*n of colour, please join us for our good vibes dance party! It would be amazing to see so many inspiring wom*n of colour in the same place! We’ll be providing more details as the date approaches.

You can keep up with events on the ‘Usyd WOC Autonomous Collective’ Facebook page, and follow us on Tumblr at <http://womenofcoloursydney.tumblr.com>

General Secretary’s Report

Mariana Podestá-Diverio thinks sports is cool but please don’t stop reading at this sentence. Also, citrus.



The management of Sydney University Sport and Fitness (SUSF) are gluttonous corporate scumbags and it disgusts me that their organisation is the recipient of the largest amount of SSAF money every year.

SSAF, as many of you know, is a fee you pay or defer at the start of

every academic year. This money gets distributed to the different student organisations around campus, including the SRC, SUPRA (postgrad) and the USU among others. I’ve rambled about this a lot, but it bears repeating. The SRC, who publishes this newspaper, provides a free legal and casework service funded by your SSAF money. This is how we give back to students. Even the USU is accessible, despite the requirement of an Access card to get discounts. They provide an extensive social program and there’s something for everyone. Sure, the term “Funch” for their “fun at lunch” program is seriously misguided and downright absurd, but it’s so ridiculous you’ve got to give them some comic credit, those scamps.

SUSF, however, gets millions of dollars of student money every year

and doesn’t give anything back. Memberships cost \$60 per year, but you have to buy an additional gym pass on top of this in order to access facilities. These come at different ‘bronze’, ‘silver’, and ‘gold’ levels, and cost several hundreds of dollars per year. I came to this horrid realisation in second year, having purchased an SUSF membership in order to participate in the Canoe Club’s activities (they were better days, yes), only to find out that my card literally got me nothing else.

Why does SUSF get so much money? Because it looks good when our university produces athletes that compete on an international stage. It’s bloody good marketing. I’m not saying people shouldn’t receive funding for their athletic pursuits, but these pursuits should be funded directly by the university

or purely though SUSF’s commercial operations. SSAF money should be for student organisations only, and calling SUSF a student organisation is a farce.

Boycott SUSF. Go to Victoria Park gym instead if you want to go to a gym. Or abstain from travelling with anything with a motor and buy some hand weights.

SUSF is Satan.

On a lighter note: mandarin season is around the corner. Remember that the best way to tell if a mandarin will be delicious is by piercing the fleshy north pole bit ever so slightly with your thumbnail and raising it to your nostrils for a whiff.

Prosperity, comrades, and purity. Till next we speak.



There can be no more gratifying sight for mature age students than seeing hundreds of youngsters participating in activism and protesting for their rights. It is often said that this generation is apathetic, more focused on the brand of beer than the human rights of the marginalized, or the quality of our own education system. And while not every student participated in

the national day of action on March 26, a strong contingent did so, despite Wuthering Heights-inspired weather.

On top of the hundreds that protested, more were supportive from the sidelines, clapping and cheering as we marched past. And many more would have come except they had work – which is a feature of modern university life, as so many students have to juggle with study in order to make up for the abysmal welfare system.

But student activism has always been at its best when it focuses not only on campus issues, but on questions of broader social justice. On that note, we show full solidarity to the refugees on hunger strike in Villawood Detention

Centre, and the protesters who have attempted to picket the camp and prevent their removal to Curtin Detention Centre (400kms from anywhere) twice now.

As mature age reps we are old enough to recall with fondness the time when detention centres were being torn down, both by refugees inside and their supporters on the outside. Were such events to happen again we would be very, very supportive. Though we want to make it clear that we’re *not* inciting that kind of behaviour, which would be truly shocking to any law abiding citizen.

Speaking of law abiding citizens, how about the NSW government’s attempt to destroy the lives of working class people living in

the public housing at Miller’s Point? The Tories want to socially cleanse the inner city, and replace the precious public housing with luxury apartments for yuppies. We have spoken to a few mature age students who currently live in the housing, and have attended two demonstrations against the sell-off.

The most hopeful aspect of the campaign so far is that Paul MacAleer of the Maritime Union has threatened to introduce Green Bans to save the properties. We hope he’s prepared to follow through, because when the BLF did it in the 70s it was fucking cool. Look it up, it’s worth it.

Yours for the Revolution, Omar H, Kay D, and James C.

Education Officers’ Report

Ridah Hassan and Eleanor Morley



Sydney University management is prosecuting a student for supporting staff strikes in 2013. The student received a letter earlier this month warning of a possible one semester suspension if they did not respond to accusations of misconduct.

Management alleges that during the 48-hour strike in March last year, the student made chalk markings on a wall (contrary to the university’s advertising policy), pushed and stole the cap of a NSW police officer, was arrested on campus and then returned the following day after being issued with a ban.

It will set a dangerous precedent should the student be disciplined. There are a number of reasons the charges should be rejected.

First, the notion that students could face a semester long suspension for chalking on a wall is ridiculous. Hundreds of students every year advertise in this way on campus without receiving any form of punishment, which suggests there are alternative political motives

driving this allegation.

Second, the allegations referring to misconduct relating to the police are also a political power play. Cops have no place on campus, and were used during the strikes to break picket lines and allow scabs to enter the campus. The police were actually the instigators of violence throughout seven strike days last year.

Finally, the student is being prosecuted for contravening a notice issued for the university at which they are studying. These notices were used repeatedly by management to weaken the picket lines and undermine the strike. The notices are arbitrary – there was no formal warning or any opportunity to challenge the notice.

By prosecuting one student for supporting the staff in their demand for better wages and conditions, the administration hopes to deter others from offering similar solidarity in the future.

The NTEU is currently taking industrial action on a number of campuses across the country as part of EBA negotiations. We support student solidarity actions with the staff and reject the presence of police on campus during this process.

The Education Department of the SRC stands in full solidarity with all students facing disciplinary actions as a result of the 2013 staff strikes, whether it be legal cases, prosecution by management or the continuing campus bans.

Queer Officers’ Report



We started the year with a successful float in Mardi Gras, which was organised by queers from universities across NSW and available to queers across Australia. Students and allies, including many from USyd, had the chance to march, many for the first time.

We created a buddy system to

introduce new queer or questioning people to the collective. As a result there are a lot of fresh faces at collective meetings, creating an awesome space to share ideas and skills.

Members of the queer collective also participated in a pink bloc at the recent National Day of Action (NDA) against the Liberal government’s cuts to higher education. Such blocs serve to make broader political actions relevant to minority groups. As queers, we formed our pink bloc- identifying ourselves with pink triangles- to highlight the importance of a fully funded education for those who experience systemic oppressions on the basis of their gender identity and sexuality. Courses such as gender studies and

David Shakes, Holly Parrington, Edward McMahon and Elsa Kohane discuss Semester 1, 2014: the year in queer.

services such as counselling are two examples of things that are important for queers at uni and threatened by consistent cuts to our education. We had students from all over NSW contribute to the bloc, which made it very successful. Be sure to look out for many more pink blocs throughout the year.

At the campus level, the collective has learned of an issue involving the names used on the Blackboard eLearning discussion boards. As it currently stands, people are required to post content under their legal name/name at enrolment. For trans* students in particular, this can mean outing yourself to classmates. This discourages participation in online education from queer students. We’re building a campaign

to try and change this. To get involved, come to a meeting (1pm on Tuesdays in the Queerspace), or indicate your interest on the (secret) collective Facebook page - if you haven’t been added yet, get in contact (queer.officers@src.usyd.edu.au) and we’ll rectify this immediately!

Sadly, this is the last queer report that Honi will permit us this semester, but look out for more next semester. In the meantime, the autonomous group for queer non-cis men called “Queerkats”, which meets on Thursdays at 1pm in the Queerspace, will be occupying the Wom*n’s Officers’ report at points later on in semester. Thanks to the Wom*n’s Officers for sharing their weekly space.

Honey Soy

Far-Left Productivity Drops as Remainder of the Alphabet is Replaced by Asterisks

*B*nn*tt Sh*ld*n nailed a Year 4 spelling quiz for no reason.*

Following the united left conference held in Melbourne last week, little else has been accomplished by the far-left, with many members citing their difficulty in correspondence as a major source of the efficiency drop.

“Sure, it’s going to take some time to get used to, but so have all major changes. It feels good to be at the forefront while others are stuck in the dark ages,” said ***** through his pageboy, unable to communicate electronically.

“The problem with English is its origins in a colonial patriarchy. We considered taking on Hindi, but cultural appropriation’s a *****.”

The need for change was realized after a survey was

conducted at the conference in which it was found that for the first year every letter was considered offensive. Other notable results were ‘x’ topping the list for the fourth consecutive year, and ‘h’ finally breaking into the top five.

The group hopes the movement will pick up in momentum, but so far gaining a social media presence has proven problematic. Some lifetime left voters have criticised the change, claiming that leftist publications now only make “marginally more sense than those of the liberals.”

In related news, the far-left spelling bee has moved into day six with all contestants remaining.

Omg, Gen-Y Can Read *Luca Moretti counts shit.*

Having noted the success of clickbait in attracting internet traffic, and in particular the popularity of lists of everything from the ‘12 silliest super foods’ to the ‘six most endearing Johnny Depp haircuts of the 90s’, Penguin Books today reasserted the continued validity of literature by announcing that it would be releasing condensed and edited versions of classic works in the form of lists.

Upcoming titles will include ‘Seven Crazy Facts about Anglo-Catholic Aristocratic Decline’ (Brideshead Revisited), ‘Four Cutest Couples of the 1810s’ (The Pride and Prejudice/ Sense and Sensibility compendium edition) and ‘10 Things the Young Man in Your Life is Doing Right Now’ (Portnoy’s Complaint).

In a statement a spokesperson for Penguin Books said, “Readers and publishers are engaged in an extended, ongoing dialogue with historical writers. It’s entirely valid for us to adapt literature into forms that are relevant to the modern world. The writers themselves would recognise that they certainly don’t have a monopoly on the meaning of their works, and these editions are just reflections of that. I mean some people had problems when we released ‘Cake Recipes to Treat Ennui: The Marcel Proust Cook Book’ but the critical reception on Oprah’s Book Club was overwhelmingly positive so I think the Academy has spoken.”

Outspoken literary critic and well-known source of easy copy Antoine Vyse said that this new publishing strategy “marked the final abdication of the publishers



WHO WILL THE LIBS INVITE TO DINNER NEXT?

elements’ in Aronofsky’s ‘Noah’.

Saunter—a Tinder-clone for people with foot fetishes—closes after tinea outbreak.

After son fails L’s test, parents consider 51st trimester abortion.

Classifieds

WANTED

Astute and informed cultural commentary
Contact: SURG FM

Taboo subject for sixteen part magnum opus
Contact: L. Von Trier

Horny teenage girl
Contact: James Franco (it's really me)

FOUND

Myself in the third-world
Contact: Private school voluntourist

SERVICES

Graphic designer. Desperately in need of employment. Previously worked on Palmer United campaign. Good with primary colours and Times New Roman font.

OBITUARIES

The USU’s mechanical bull passed away last week after a successful career bucking off first-years on Eastern Avenue. Abbott is expected to knight the bull posthumously for teaching first years where they fucking belong.

HODOR

Hodor

IMAGE BY PETER WALSH



Breaking: Abbott Stands Down Following Small Student Rally *Cameron Smith stood alone at the pickets.*

Not even the most optimistic of political dissidents foresaw the dramatic turn of events that was to take place late yesterday, with Prime Minister Tony Abbott standing down as head of the Liberal party in response to a small student protest at Sydney University. The rally, catchily dubbed ‘The National Day of Action Against Tertiary Education Cuts By Abbott and/or Pyne (*not associated with the National Day of Action Against Bullying happening two days before this event)’ is said to have been one of the largest student protests in years. It amassed almost 80 disgruntled protesters to a small park in central Sydney, a mere 300km north of the nation’s parliament.

“We never in our wildest dreams imagined that this protest would actually accomplish this, or anything for that matter,” said a shocked participant found eating her lunch on the merging lane of Parramatta Road. “At most I’d hoped to get a cool Facebook banner out of it, maybe get a libelous mention in the Murdoch press, but having the Prime Minister step down is pretty good too I guess. It’s a pity though, I’d already organised another 50 protests this month, from ‘Abbott get your hands off the ABC’ to ‘Abbott stop saying umm every second word’ to ‘No Abbott, we don’t want your negativity’, it’s a shame that we’ll have to call them off in light of our accidental success. Really, that man’s been the best thing to ever happen to the rally movement. We’re going



TONY AHAB ABBOTT GOES AFTER REFUGEES.

to miss him. We’re already organising a ‘Come back Abbott’ rally for later this week.”

The shock resignation is said to have come after the Prime Minister caught sight of a protest sign in a copy of the Daily Telegraph reading ‘Tony Abbott, more like Tony A-butt!’, a play on the fact that Mr Abbott’s name can be misspelled and hyphenated.

“In the face of such cutting and witty criticism, I couldn’t help but re-evaluate my entire political outlook,” said Tony in a candid interview with his second least favorite red-head Leigh Sales on the *7:30 Report* last night. “It was at that moment I said wait, they’re right, my flagrant breaching of the convention of international law through mistreatment of people fleeing persecution in their home countries really is completely unjustifiable by any ethical measure. That sign really opened my eyes.”

But this revelation was just the beginning, with Tony saying he had completely re-evaluated his political stance in the days that followed. He even went so far as to switch off the lights in Parliament House during Earth Hour, much to the horror of the touring schoolgroups at the time.

“The problem is I surrounded myself with yes men,” said Tony during his final speech in Question Time. “And I mean yes men because there’s more sausage in this government than a german supermarket. I mean, I seriously made myself Minister for Women? Man what was I on?” Abbott chuckled, before being ejected from the parliament by Bronwyn Bishop for laughing.

Stepping outside to finish his concession speech, Mr Abbott continued to rally against himself exclaiming, “What the hell is wrong with you people, you seriously voted for me!? I mean Jesus, look at my track record with women’s rights alone. Considering I got 53 per cent of the two party preferred vote, at least eight per cent of women must be masochists. And don’t think I haven’t

been looking into what else I’ve been up to since I came into power! I mean, did you know apparently I approved dumping waste on the Barrier Reef AND I removed world heritage listing from Tasmanian forests within a month of being elected? And that I was planning to pass laws to allow hate speech? Hate speech!?! I even approved stealing incriminating evidence from a court proceeding against the government! And holy hell, look at these warnings from the UN about how the world’s about to end! This is insane why didn’t anybody stop me!?”

However the change of heart has not been a complete turnaround for Mr Abbott, with the former Prime Minister still convinced the country should remain the only English speaking nation still outlawing same-sex marriage. “It’s just an issue I feel strongly about,” said Mr Abbott. “Not only does it provide us with a rich historical artifact that few other modern countries can boast, but it also teaches my sister a valuable lesson for beating me up in the third grade.”

Although it has not yet been confirmed that Malcolm Turnbull will be once again in the running for the top job, witnesses have reported seeing the the “leather fox” exiting Woolworths with a trolley full of jacket polish late last night. However, if he does run, Mr Turnbull is expected to be challenged for the top job by living cockney-rhyming slang Greg Hunt, who has gained much popularity within the Liberal party since taking on the role of Minister for the Environment, and the Destruction Thereof.

Much speculation is now circling about Mr Abbott’s post Liberal party career. Whether or not Mr Abbott will go so far as to join the rival opposition party, *Friends of the ABC*, remains to be seen.

Members of the Labor party were unavailable to comment in relation to this piece due to the entire party currently appearing before a hearing of the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

THIS IS A REAL ADVERTISEMENT.

USyd Becomes Zoo After Buffalo Infestation

Sarah Mourney plays around on Noah’s Ark.

Many people might be frightened by buffalo, but Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence plans to capitalise on the majestic creatures by turning most of Sydney University into a zoo. Spence decided on this plan of action after realising that money could be made, telling the press “cash money is good cha-ching cha-ching”. He also stated that students shouldn’t worry about being overlooked by animals, because “all animals are equal, but fee-paying animals are more equal than others”.

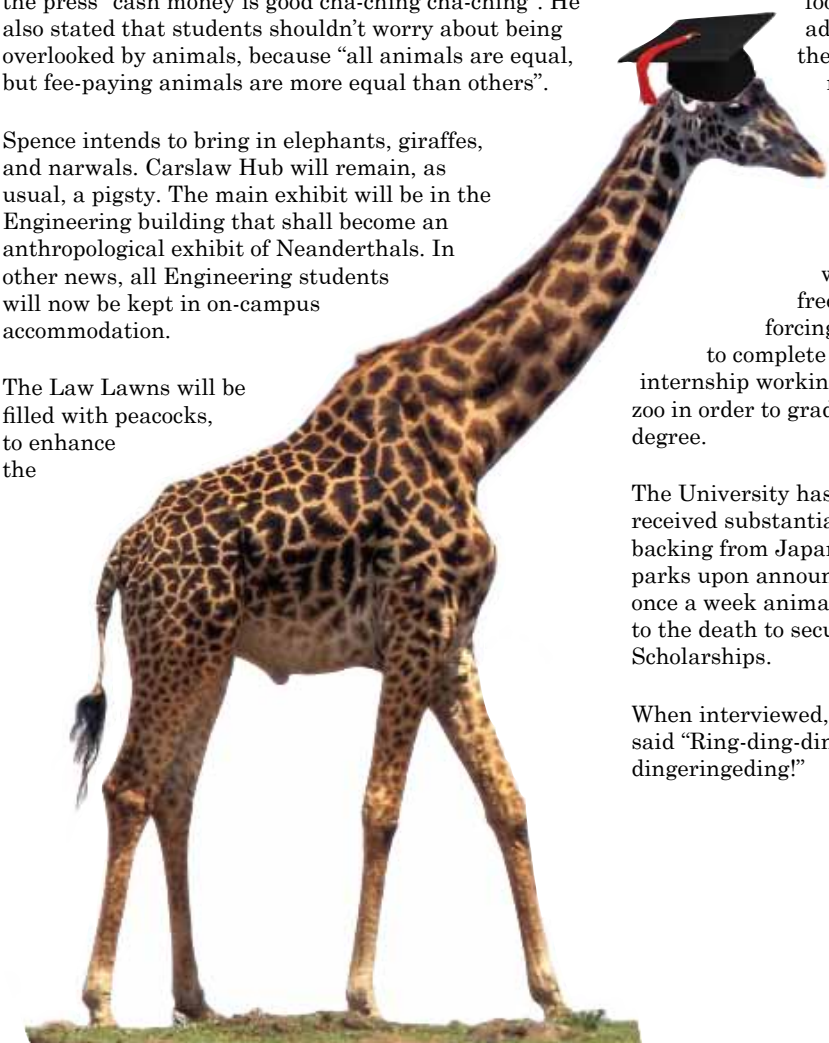
Spence intends to bring in elephants, giraffes, and narwals. Carslaw Hub will remain, as usual, a pigsty. The main exhibit will be in the Engineering building that shall become an anthropological exhibit of Neanderthals. In other news, all Engineering students will now be kept in on-campus accommodation.

The Law Lawns will be filled with peacocks, to enhance the

peacocking that already occurs there. Hermann’s will become a special ibis enclosure. Unibros has already agreed to be the main provider of zoo food, and has advised that there will be no changes to their menu. The School of Veterinary Science will provide free services by forcing all students to complete an unpaid internship working at the zoo in order to graduate their degree.

The University has recently received substantial financial backing from Japanese game parks upon announcing that once a week animals can fight to the death to secure Merit Scholarships.

When interviewed, the Fox said “Ring-ding-ding-ding-dingeringed!”



In other news...

Jet Star passengers treated to impromptu performance by cast of ‘Nymphomaniac’.

Comedy group refuse to take risk, submit 130 ‘What’s the Deal with Taste Baguette?’ jokes.

Biblical literalist outraged by inclusion of ‘fantasy





ILLUSTRATION BY KRYSSA KARAVOLAS