

Honi Soit



Week 6, Semester 2, 2014

HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE

p.4 *#usydtownhall
in tweets*

p.11 *How shit is Andrew
Bolt?*

p.17 *Humans vs
Zombies*



ILLUSTRATION BY EMILY WOODS

Speaking out for students

It's time for University of Sydney alumni to break their silence on fee deregulation.

EDITORIAL

When Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence took to the Great Hall last Tuesday, he was armed with a PowerPoint presentation, a hands-free microphone and a few choice excerpts from the University budget.

Throughout his presentation, Spence steered well clear of the podium from which the evening's other speakers would make their cases for or against university fee deregulation. Instead, he paced the stage, and with visual aids and a liberal time limit, set out the case for why the university's current financial position is becoming untenable.

A few minutes into his remarks, Spence was interrupted by heckling from members of the student body angry at the format of the meeting, and at what they perceived to be Spence's lack of true consultation. MC Adam Spencer tried to put an end to the heckling, but, when the students refused to be quiet, Spence stepped in. "Why don't we have a vote?"

Spence turned to the room.

"People who would like me to finish my brief remarks, can you now clap?" His request was met with polite applause from the audience.

"People who'd like to listen to more shouting, can you clap?" This time, there was much louder, much more enthusiastic applause from the audience.

Spence looked momentarily bemused, but managed to maintain his game face.

"Well," he said, "I have the microphone." And so he continued. Eventually, the hecklers sat down.

It doesn't take too great a stretch of the imagination to read symbolism into the scene we've just described.

In the fight over fee deregulation, there is a power imbalance between the people pushing for fee deregulation, and the people

campaigning against it. In one corner, you've got the Vice-Chancellors of the Group of Eight (including our very own Spence) and the boys of the Federal Cabinet. These are powerful organisations and individuals whose opinions on higher education are regularly solicited, and afforded respect, by virtue of their positions. In the other corner, there's a motley crew of students, left-wing academics, and unionists. Surveys indicate that a substantial majority of Australians are actually on this side, but, in a political system where silence is tantamount to assent, there's a very good chance that this quiet majority could be overlooked.

In order to try to rectify this power imbalance, a few months ago, a number of fellows of the University Senate began petitioning the University of Sydney to hold a meeting of Convocation, which would call on University of Sydney alumni to debate the merits- or otherwise- of the government's fee deregulation policy. The significance of this move was

immediately noticed by the national media, with a *Sydney Morning Herald* report declaring that "a revolt inside the powerful ruling body of the University of Sydney is threatening to undermine the federal government's [fee deregulation] proposal."

The University, however, was extremely reluctant for Convocation to take place. Spence – who, with some qualifications, had already come out in support of fee deregulation – told the media Convocation was "an anachronism". Alongside Chancellor Belinda Hutchison, Spence worked against efforts to get it off the ground inside the Senate. Eventually, a compromise was reached, with the University agreeing to host a "town hall-style meeting" where select members of the University community would be able to speak to their concerns before an audience, the Chancellor, and the Vice-Chancellor himself.

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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.

LETTERS

It's spelt "latte-sipping", actually:

Dear Honi,

I am deeply disappointed at the University's recent decision to give in to bullying and take financial and investment advice from Christine Milne and muesli munching, late sipping activists.

Indeed, the University on its own website advertising courses states that 'The mining and resources industry is...intrinsicly linked to our economic future and global influence'.

What we have been seeing is nothing short of financial terrorism, with the likes of Jonathan Moylan more than happy to spread lies at the cost of everyday Australians and Australian business.

The divestment campaign is driven by environmental extremism and fuelled by scaremongering and misinformation. It is a slap in the face to the more than 20,000 coal miners in NSW. These same activists would be the first to call for government subsidy for failing industries, but ironically go out of their way to destroy an industry that creates real jobs and has huge flow on effect of real growth due to the availability of cheap energy for production to the rest of the economy; all without the need for government subsidy. These activists have no care for real jobs or real growth; their only concern is engaging in activism to cloak their narcissism.

Coal fired power has led to unprecedented increases in standards of living for millions around the world including in some of

the world's poorest areas, due to the availability of cheap energy. Were the radical agenda of the divestment campaign realised, it would lead to the consigning in impoverishment of the poorest in Australia and the world due to higher electricity costs and more expensive goods and services.

I have little doubt that in the future, technology will become greener with innovation. But current renewable technology is highly inefficient and until such time as the market decides that alternative technologies are more efficient than coal, then investors including the University should not give in to such financial terrorism. The costs for our society, particularly to the poor, will be high and for little gain.

I urge the University as a matter of principle to consider the message they are sending by their decision: that such bullying via misinformation and scaremongering is acceptable. The University has much influence, and no doubt its current decision will put pressure on other institutions to give in for the sake of positive PR. For the sake of our nation's well-being, the University should reconsider its decision.

Yours in #realjobs and #realgrowth

Chaneg Torres
BPSS III
President, University of Sydney
Conservative Club

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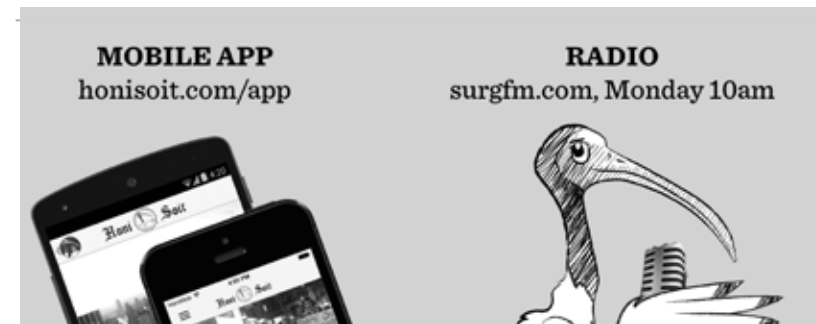
LETTER OF THE WEEK

So I heard that Roald's book has been cut
From Aldi, because he had to write "slut"
To make his fairytales rhyme -
seems he didn't have time
To find another word rhyming with nut.

Now the parents are all in uproar,
They won't have his poems in store.
But sadly they care
More that the word's a swear
Than that sexism is inherent in "whore".

Quite frankly, I'm going to be blunt:
As a fan of Dahl I take affront.
Just talk to your progeny
About sexism and misogyny
And stop censoring things, you [redacted]

Sam Langford
Psychology I



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No lack of queer people in Revues

Dear Eds,

Two weeks ago Georgia Kriz (very excellent performer – congratulations) made some significant claims about the Union's attitude to minority revues which struck me as unfair. I don't write this as a snarky director of another revue, but instead as a queer person who has been involved pretty extensively in the performing arts on campus, and I really resent the suggestion that we, on the grounds of our sexuality, "aren't worth enough" to the Union.

This is partly because there is not, as birthed the first and (reputedly) best iteration of the Women's Revue in 2007, a lack of representation of queer people in revues particularly, nor the performing arts on campus generally. This year, the Arts Revue had two queer directors. From 2011 – 2013, Sam Farrell was the crowning jewel of the Law Revue (his time at the helm culminating in one of the most beautiful, pointed musical numbers ever performed about sexuality). No major revues actively shy away from queer-progressive content, and those that push boundaries of homophobic bad taste are usually and rightly derided. I think Queer Revue might be the only exception to that.

The reason I auditioned for Arts, and not Queer Revue, is because my sexual identity has never involved huffing amyl, party drugs, drag shows or sequins – and even if it did, I struggle to understand the inclination to make a show that revolves around it. This is true of Sophia, with whom I directed The Arts Revue this year, as well.

I appreciate that there is value to a group of people having a good time together on stage; it is integral to the revue program and to that end Queer Revue is invariably a success. What's awful is that minority status seems to have conferred a kind of impunity. Predominantly, Queer Revue's content rarely goes beyond tiring gay stereotypes. This year, when it did, it was only to mock Gender Studies strawm*n, undermine legitimate criticisms of institutional sexism, and to make rape jokes about the very real abuse by those in positions of creative power. This year, as in the past, was mostly alienating.

Queer Revue's rightly lauded, truly funny stand outs, like 'The Secret Life of Brenda from HR, or the Ghost of Margaret Thatcher emerging in a fruit hat, are entirely removed from the cultural baggage attached to an aggressively sexual throughline. You don't need to make light of drug overdoses and 'waking up somewhere fun' to get a laugh, especially when productive cultural inversions are already done – more rigorously and discerningly – in plenty of other arenas.

I don't think that, in the event of rain, we should just shove the gays in a basement. Booking venues is nightmarish through C&S at the best of times – but that is no reason to accept that second-rate venues just fall to smaller groups – regardless of minority status. To use this administrative inadequacy to suggest systemic Union oppression is rubbish. For all its deficiencies, the USU is very loudly progressive – especially on questions of sexuality. But they are not infinitely resourced.

Christopher Hitchens was a chauvinistic arse, and the 2007 Women's Revue, Objectify This! not only proved him wrong again, but went on to sell out at the Edinburgh Fringe. This was a case of an entirely unprecedented show, widely acclaimed, going very far. It didn't matter that it debuted in the Sound Lounge, because it nailed a need and was hilarious.

Rather than support, what Queer Revue

actually lacks is a coherent artistic or social impetus. A show's worth is ultimately measured by how good it is, and ticket sales have never reflected quality.

Patrick Morrow
MECO III

An absolute farce, I tell you

Dear Honi,

The "Town Hall-style" meeting about fee deregulation organised by VC Michael Spence and the Senior Executive Group has to be called out for what it is: an absolute farce.

The terms of the debate have been cast completely in favour of the pro-deregulation executive group: Instead of debating the "pros" and "cons" of fee de-regulation in an open, public forum, the speakers will speak to the executive's own carefully worded topic that commits to "economic growth" and an "equitable balance between students and government contributions".

They will speak to a room of 250 people, who pre-booked, at an event held at night, when most students are unlikely to be anywhere near campus. The list of 25 speakers, who each have 2 minutes to make their case either way, whom only a handful will be students, have been cherry-picked by the executive. There can be no doubt that the exec's idea of "balanced" input will not reflect the 70 per cent of the public who disagree with the changes to universities.

The nature of the meeting itself is also such that, while staff and students may be given some very limited time to speak against fee deregulation, they will have no opportunity to influence the decision making process in an official capacity. In other words, they will come, they will speak, and the executive committee will make its decision the way it was always going to.

The benefit of a convocation is that staff are able to put official recommendations to the senate, which the executive is then forced to consider after a substantial debate. There are limitations even to this, in that only academic staff and alumni can do so, to the exclusion of students and general staff. But to say that Spence's alternative to the "anachronistic" convocation originally proposed by some members of the senate, with support from the NTEU, is somehow more democratic or "modern", is completely misleading.

Last week's Honi editorial said that Spence had been forced to take on the role of "community consultant". But Spence, along with the other VCs of the G8 unis, has been fighting hard for years to have uni fees deregulated. Where was the "consultation" when he started lobbying the government to uncap fees four years ago? What about when he tried to cut courses and fire over 300 academic and general staff in 2012? Or when he decided to fire 150 library staff and do away with thousands of books and study spaces?

This stage-managed meeting has been nothing but a fig leaf for Spence and the executive's own agenda. While giving the impression of allowing open discussion, they made the decision years ago, not in the interests of staff and students, but with the intention of further corporatising our university and raking in ever bigger profits from student fees.

It was only widespread opposition to fee deregulation from staff and students that forced this meeting on Spence, otherwise it would not have happened. We have to be clear that he is our opponent, not our ally, in the fight for equitable, quality education. Students will be meeting out the front at 5.30 with placards, leaflets for a speak-out.

Students Bust the Budget Group

Just having a cheeky nap

Dear Honi,

Does the USU President's job description include excessive drinking (with student funds) before attending revues (with student funds) and falling asleep, or did Tara Waniganayaka just decide to go that extra mile out of respect for campus culture? We'd have asked Waniganayaka after the show, but said booze-scented President had to be escorted home during intermission.

Yet we didn't just write to complain. You see, a few of us happen to be job-searching ourselves, and since student leadership roles seem to require so little of those in them we may as well give them a go. We just have some questions first.

How much does it pay to drink away students' SSAF and ACCESS contributions? Is disrespecting student performances the norm, or is politeness usually expected? And are insipid, grating puns mandatory for election campaigns, or could we just run on a platform of not discouraging people at their own shows?

If you could get back to us sometime soon that'd be great. We'll be around campus, trying hard to respect our fellow students (even if that doesn't make us USU President material).

Yours sincerely,
Several Members of:
Queer Revue MMXIV

Preaching to the choir

Dear Honi,

Thank you for drawing to my attention the seminal production of God's not Dead in your week 5 issue. As a devout follower of Jesus I was shocked and horrified that such a film could have slipped by me. I don't go to a mega-church, but I am reasonably aware of the wider Christian community. I was therefore appalled that I had missed the memo of such an important film that mega churches apparently want me to see.

As a Christian who has studied philosophy, I have personally experienced being "outed" as the crazy religious guy, receiving stares in my philosophy tutes whenever anything vaguely religion-related was uttered. It's a real thing and I sincerely thank Mary Ward for raising this issue.

I am therefore puzzled that instead of highlighting defensible and rational public figures of the Christian faith (the names Timothy Keller and John Lennox spring to mind) Mary Ward has chosen to bemoan a whack-job film dripping on Americana that I would suggest most Christians probably haven't heard of (I certainly hadn't.)

Indeed, it is worrying that Mary seems to think that the word "Christian" is synonymous with "white American". I suspect churches in other parts of the world (particularly in persecuted regions like Iraq, China and South Sudan) would find this equation slightly offensive.

Unfortunately, I feel picking on such an easy target as a God's Not Dead will only serve to convince the converted (pun intended). Doing so only entrenches pre-existing stereotypes about religious (esp. Christian) students on Campus.

If you want to challenge the erroneous equation of secularism with intelligence and religion with idioy then stop confirming the stereotype. Picking on a straw-man is, well, patronising and pathetic. I, like most other considered Christians, am not scared of justifying

what I believe.

Come at me, bro.

Much love,
Luke Tucker, Arts II

Got faith?

Dear Editors,

I am writing in reply to the interfaith officers report which, when I started reading, it was with a trepidation that turned out to be fully founded and then some.

I can copletely side with the idea conveyed that people need to listen to each other and research other peoples religious belief systems and world views. What really shows the intellectual decrepitude shown in the article this week is the way they treated faith. The approach that faith is somehow a good thing is an abhorrent approach and should be completely rejected by any semi-educated individual, let alone people who have made it into a university.

When talking about a claim, religious or otherwise, faith is the acceptance of this as true in the absence of, or opposition to, evidence. This use of faith as a justification is a deeply damaging and detrimental to any society and it is time that it was recognised as such.

That the interfaith directors talk about faith in terms such as "beauty of faith" and "we need to approach faith with an open mind" truly shows the intellectual sabbatical that they have been on this year. I can only hope that we all start to demand a higher standard of justification for everyone and stop giving a free-pass to religious claims.

Yours Sincerely,
Alex Rothman

Porque no los dos?

Dear Honi,

According to Matilda Surtees, writing in the last *Honi*, charitable consumerism takes away from institutional change. As the girl from the Old El Paso ad asked us, 'Porque no los dos?' – bastardised Spanish for 'why can't we have both'? I don't know enough about the Homepage for the Homeless to rely on the logic that every time you shop there, issues of homelessness gain more prominence in your head, but I am aware that the division between charity and institutional change is much blurrier than Surtees imagines. That's pretty obvious when she cites John Falzon of St Vincent de Paul, a charity, advocating for institutional change. If ethical consumerism funds charity, what's to stop charities advocating for institutional change?

Apparently, the problem is that charitable consumerism leads to the idea that individuals have control over their circumstances. That's 'an ideal, not a reality'. Sure, but so is an equitable society with a great social safety net. Charitable consumerism is not a silver bullet, but the programs that the Homepage for the Homeless supports give people a little more control over their circumstances by providing things like training programs. In the same way, we get closer to an equitable society by funding people to lobby for big changes, like the NDIS. Charitable consumerism could be a lot better; more money could go to advocacy, for example. However, simplistic sentences like 'Systemic inequality requires systemic change' ignore the people trying to actually make that change happen and others trying to improve lives on the margins in the mean time.

Nick Bonyhady
Arts/Law

Editorial

Lane Saintry @lanesaintry · 17m

#usydtownhall in tweets

Reply Retweet Favourite More

The meeting begins. Several people make the error of recommending @honi_soit for "legitimate political commentary".

Mary Ward @marywardy · Aug 25
(Also, if you want legit political commentary, follow @honi_soit. I'm currently planning my wedding.) #usydtownhall

Cameron Caccamo @C.Caccamo · Aug 25
I'm at #usydtownhall for the fee dereg debate. For real commentary, follow @honi_soit. For a good time, follow here #debitsentence

Michael Spence gives an impressive PowerPoint presentation.

Todd Pinkerton @toddpinko · Aug 25
Some excellent panoramas in this preso, that's a credit mark at the least #usydtownhall

Meeting inexplicably descends into a shouting match between radio host Adam Spence and Education Officer Eleanor Morley.

John Gooding @JohnGooding · Aug 25
Seeing Adam Spence argue with Ely Morley is a scene from an absurdist dream #usydtownhall

Spence makes a grievous error.

Tom MacDonald @tommacdonald · Aug 25
VC calls for a vote by applause for him finishing, or "more shouting". The latter wins, solidly. #usydtownhall

15 minutes in and students already thinking with their stomachs.

Todd Pinkerton @toddpinko · Aug 25
Does anyone know what Manning food closes? #usydtownhall

A lone voice pipes up in support of Spence...

Arghya @arghsyd · Aug 25
Well I for one like Michael Spence. #usydtownhall

While another lurks in the audience.

John Gooding @JohnGooding · Aug 25
A sea of anti-dereg speakers so far, but Alex "Prince of Libs" Dore is watching and waiting. #usydtownhall

Mon Droit puts quotation marks around the word sex as though it is not a real word.

Retweeted by Alisha
Mon Droit @MonDroitNews · Aug 25
Ed McMahon: points out "sex" shirt #usydtownhall

Patrick Massarani takes a photo of the back of Michael Spence's head.



PhD student Jun Tong goes totally rogue.

Favorited by Clo Schofield and 4 others
Jun Tong @CaptainKakapo · Aug 25
Spence stands up, yells "enough I've heard enough! How blind I was! Why didn't anyone tell me all of this before?!" #usydtownhall

#usydtownhall hashtag becomes so popular that people start sharing Fairfax Media news stories on it.

bueno jor @buenojor15 · Aug 25
#usydtownhall Mid-flight incident forces pilot to make emergency landing - Sydney Morning Herald

Nina Khoury advocates for SUSF to receive more money, entire room is too bewildered to heckle.

Retweeted by Edward McMahon
Patrick Massarani @PatMass · Aug 25
Croquet will suffer. The fascist mallet of capitalism as described by SUSF. #usydtownhall

Favorited by Radson Wright and 1 other
Donherra @Donherra · Aug 25
I think this speaker has picked the wrong audience to speak to about the importance of sport funding... #usydtownhall

Favorited by Tom Joyner and 2 others
Mary Ward @marywardy · Aug 25
"Sport brings people together." Not sure if talking about fee deregulation or giving Year 6 Voice of Youth speech... #usydtownhall

Favorited by Alisha
Radson Wright @radsonwright · Aug 25
Fuck yeah sport... Right? Who's with me? #usydtownhall

Jun Tong remains in his alternative universe.

Favorited by Clo Schofield and 1 other
Jun Tong @CaptainKakapo · Aug 25
Extraordinary scenes. Spence promises to stand against Pyne reforms. Protestors apologise for noise. Spence is crowdsurfed. #usydtownhall

Todd Pinkerton gives credit where it's due.

Todd Pinkerton @toddpinko · Aug 25
Well played sir, an asleep audience can't heckle #usydtownhall

Former Honi Soit editor Max Chalmers on the REAL Barry Catchlove.

Favorited by Edward McMahon
Max Chalmers @MaxChalmers90 · Aug 25
Good to hear Barry Catchlove got a go at #usydtownhall hey remember that time he tried to help the university take over the @USUAccess?

Yes, his name is made of the two words 'catch' and 'love'. It is very funny.

Georgina Swenson @baccalinemaybe · Aug 25
Dude's not going to Catch any Love from me #usydtownhall

We don't know, Clo. We don't know.

Favorited by Liam Camigan
Clo Schofield @clo_schofield · Aug 25
what is this guy even saying #usydtownhall

CAN PPL JUST BE A BIT MORE CLEAR PLS SO I KNOW WHETHER TO HECKLE OR NOT

Favorited by Alisha
Clo Schofield @clo_schofield · Aug 25
can ppl just state whether they are Tories before they start talking #usydtownhall

BREAKING: Students confirmed to be "not people".

Favorited by Madison and 2 others
Donherra @Donherra · Aug 25
Are students customers or products OR UM I DONT KNOW HOW ABOUT PEOPLE? Guys? Anyone? No? No takers? Ok... #usydtownhall

A USyd academic takes to Twitter with a scintillating explanation for her absence.

Favorited by Dr Chris Neff
ariadne women @ariadne_wyd · Aug 25
I've been following #usydtownhall here on twitter. Prob better than sitting there in grt hall (as got to cook dinner & feed dog too lol)

#priorities

Damian John Kelly @damianjohnkelly · Aug 25
Now that #usydtownhall is over I can get back to Simpsons: Tapped Out

As usual, everybody came away thinking the same thing.

Favorited by Charles Foster and 1 other
Charles Foster @theCfos · Aug 25
Uni alumni = un illumina = illuminati. IT'S SO CLEAR NOW, DAMN IT #usydtownhall



There is a very good reason that this "town hall-style meeting" was offered as a compromise by the University to the rebel Senate Fellows. As long as the debate about fee deregulation is taking place on the same terms as debates about staff cuts and enterprise agreements, the University is in well-charted territory. By now, opposition to University change proposals from groups such as the SRC, the NTEU, the CPSU and SUPRA is virtually a given, and the University knows that, as long as opposition is confined to only these groups, it commands sufficient resources and respect to win nearly all the fights it chooses to pick.

While the town hall meeting was open to all members of the University community, it was, unsurprisingly, dominated by USyd's most familiar faces. The speeches were generally excellent, but entirely predictable; precisely no one in the room was surprised when a group of current and former student activists, academics, and

union representatives argued against higher university fees, preaching to a chamber of the already-converted. Truly novel contributions were absent. More importantly, so too were new contributors.

Ultimately, the town hall meeting did little more than situate a debate that is occurring anyway in a more auspicious-looking location than usual. It allowed the University to avoid opening a new front in the ongoing conflict over fee deregulation, while still giving the impression of consultation and engagement.

A meeting of Convocation, by contrast, had the potential to prise open an entirely new space in this debate, a space that the University has never had to figure out how to navigate before. This would be a space where thousands of USyd alumni could add their voices. It is perhaps, optimistic to think that Convocation would have drawn Michael Kirby and Germaine Greer back to the sandstone halls of their youth

to fight Tories like it's 1962 again. However, every year, thousands of these alumni are prevailed upon to donate vast amounts of money to this University, suggesting that they realise their ongoing vested interest in improving their alma mater. They need to leverage that position. From public statements to boycotting donations, the alumni can put pressure upon the University's management, and also upon the government, in a way that student activists cannot.

The importance of the alumni in this debate shouldn't be underestimated. Graduates of this University, as we are often reminded, hold positions of power and influence across Australia's political, corporate, and cultural spheres. They command far greater respect in the public imagination than student activists, and many of them possess the means of exerting actual influence over political and policy processes. Opposition to university fee deregulation is a mainstream position. But while it continues to be articulated in the public

sphere almost exclusively by student activists, it will continue to be perceived, and treated by the government, as a marginal one.

Less than twelve hours after the conclusion of the town hall meeting where Michael Spence had heard almost unanimous opposition from staff and students to fee deregulation, he joined his fellow Group of Eight Vice-Chancellors in Canberra to lobby the Federal Government to pursue the policy. Student activists who had hoped that Spence's willingness to listen to all 26 speakers at the town hall meeting might have indicated a willingness to actually pay attention to the will of the University of Sydney community threw up their hands in frustration.

But, as Michael Spence reminded us last Tuesday, we are not the ones with the microphone. That privilege and power lie elsewhere. Much of it lies in the hands of USyd alumni.

They need to use it.



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THE MANNING FILES

THE (NOT SO) AMAZING RACE

Hide yo kids, hide yo wife – the SRC election campaign period commences this Friday at midnight. Get excited for the forthcoming flurry of Facebook profile picture changing, late night chalking on Eastern Avenue, and empty promises.

The Presidential Race: BLAKENEY vs. KNOX

Grassroots presidential candidate Kyol Blakeney (Education III) says that he really believes in “direct action”. With a wealth of experience in campus activism, including the portfolio of the SRC Indigenous Officer and co-founding the Wirriga Indigenous Students Society, Blakeney receives support from a broad coalition of Grassroots, Independent and several former members of Sydney Labor Students (SLS). His campaign team is heavily stacked out by University of Sydney Union (USU) Board Directors, including President Tara Waniganayaka, Vice President Bebe D’Souza and Directors Edwards McMahon and Liam Carrigan.

On the other side of the presidential race is National Labor Students (NLS) candidate Amy Knox (Arts/Law III). Knox says that she is all about striking “a balance between activism and engaging all students” with the SRC. Knox has been active in various SRC campaigns, including the recent lobbying of the closure of wom*n’s-only services. She is hoping to join a long list of Labor heavyweights who have dominated the SRC presidency for years. Knox is being supported by the two current Labor left factions, NLS and SLS, as well as Labor right faction Student Unity, and, bizarrely, Socialist Alternative (SAlt).

When it comes to policies, Blakeney’s focus is on “lifting the transparency of the university and making sure that students have more opportunity to participate in the decision making processes”. To this end, Blakeney says he would like to allow SRC Office Bearers to have a say in the University’s Senior Executive Group (SEG). He would also

like to provide students greater access to more textbooks.

Knox believes in fighting for a “fair education for all,” giving somewhat unoriginal policy suggestions such as providing more lecture recordings, more study spaces and once again, more textbooks. She also speaks of improving student services like free tax help service, a rental appliance scheme for students living out of home, and an emergency food bank.

When asked why he was better than his opponent, Blakeney said that his direct action activist strategies are more important and effective than what he sees as Labor’s tokenistic focus on creating awareness and symbolism. “While it’s a really good idea to have stickers that promote equality and gender, the fact is that it is still going to happen. One of the best things I’ve seen with direct action is the idea of starting self-defence classes because that empowers people to stand up for themselves,” he explained.

However, Knox believes that this strongly activist approach needs to be balanced with a focus on broader student engagement. “I think activism is a huge part of the SRC... but I also understand that a lot of students don’t engage in the activism. ... I can’t see how students will defend the SRC if they don’t know about it. We need all students behind it,” she says.

Both candidates refused to indulge us with the details of where support from their factions would go in the Council’s Representative Election (during which SRC Office Bearer positions are divvied up between factions) and at the National Union of Students (NUS) conference later this year, mutually deferring the question to their campaign managers. According to them, “the faction decides” on these matters.

As for NUS, Blakeney said that he wasn’t for “a bunch of NUS national office bearers flying around the country for symbolic campaigns funded by Sydney Uni students”. Knox, a strong unionist, admits that NUS is “not as effective as

it could be,” but blames the shortcomings of funding and structures, not the people.

“I guess having people who are putting things on their resume is part of general student politics,” she responded to the suggestion of Labor students filling up NUS positions for future political ambitions. (At least she’s upfront about that one.)

The only thing both presidential candidates agreed on was that neither Grassroots nor NLS would deal with the Liberals in this election. We won’t protest.

THE LIBERALS: WHODUNIT?

A third presidential candidate, Sydney University Liberal Club (SULC) member Damian Kelly, originally joined Knox and Blakeney on the presidential ballot paper. However, both he and the Liberal-backed “*Mon Droit for Honi Soit*” ticket have since mysteriously disappeared from the elections. Rumour has it that their exclusion was due to an administrative fuck-up by Liberal party head-kickers with their candidates’ application forms. SULC Vice President (and Liberal party head-kicker) Dean Shachar declined to comment when asked if this was the case. He also declined to disclose which tickets the Liberals would be supporting now that their own candidates are out of the race.

HONI UNFOLDS

Returning Officer Paulene Graham has ruled that people on SRC tickets may not campaign for *Honi Soit* tickets as part of the new regulation brought in last year that prevent *Honi* and SRC tickets from swapping preferences.

While we offer our sincere condolences to the many hacks who have been upset by this news, here at *The Manning Files* we welcome a wedge of any kind between students running for political office and those running to edit a paper.

And, as promised, we bring you a long-awaited update on the t-shirt colour dispute of yester-week. (Drum roll, please). Heist’s appeal to allow them to

campaign on the colour orange was successful. Swag will be running on the colour pink.

A SOCIALIST DILEMMA

Tensions were raised in the Education Action Group’s Facebook group this week, as Education Officers Ridah Hassan and Eleanor Morley (both of Socialist Alternative, or SAlt) were accused of kicking members of Solidarity – SAlt’s rival socialist faction on campus – out of the group. A post on the group’s wall slowly descended into angry EAG members and supporters protesting against Socialist Alternative’s occupation of the group. Hassan wrote, “this space is for constructive organising of the education campaign not for people who’ve never been to an EAG meeting all year to snipe,” to which several responded with “SALT give no shits about this group unless it functions as theirs”, and “a lot of people don’t attend the EAG because of the authoritarian, bureaucratic and sectarian behaviour of SALT”. We have nothing to add to this discussion.

SENATE ELECTIONS: WON’T SOMEBODY THINK OF THE CHILDREN?

As reported in recent weeks, voting to elect one Undergraduate and one Postgraduate Fellow of Senate will commence on September 10. The candidates for each position have been released and are as follow:

Undergraduate: Nicholas Fahy, Dalton Fogarty, Patrick Massarani, Denise Ong, Annabel Osborn, Dean Shachar and Aryan Shahabi-Sirjani.

Postgraduate: Lee Coulson, Alex Dore, Simon Hill, Christian Jones, Robby Magyar, Benjamin Marsh, Mark Newcombe, Michael O’Donnell, Arunan Siravindrarahaj, and Zachary Benjamin Thompson.

The Manning Files team was disappointed to learn only two women would contest the Senate elections among a field of 17.

Go8s shouldn’t be GoM8s *Christina White is a bit worried that USyd is part of a cartel.*

If eight businesses set up an exclusive organisation, collaborated on projects and shared information about pricing arrangements, the Australia Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) should come knocking.

The Group of Eight (Go8) calls itself “a coalition of Australia’s leading research Universities”. Right now, the collaborative practices of this group make the Go8 look a lot like a cartel (aside from the obvious fact that undergraduate fees are set by the government - for now). If deregulation happens and this behaviour continues, then the Go8 could be at risk of breaching competition laws.

Cartel conduct occurs when businesses agree to act together, instead of competing, to drive up profits. It includes price fixing, market sharing, and controlling output, or otherwise cooperating to shape the market in a way that benefits businesses at the expense of consumers.

The ACCC normally takes notice when competitors start sharing information. Medical professionals aren’t allowed to talk about their fee structures at conferences, for example. But the Go8 boasts about “offering a trusted network through which the leaders and administrators of Go8 universities share ideas and expertise”. De-wanked, this means that the Go8 acts as an exclusive information-sharing network to the mutual advantage of its members.

Arguably, the cooperation of tertiary institutions is vital for research.

It might even get them an exemption from the ACCC in the name of the national interest if they bothered to apply. But if they share data – or anything else they use to set prices – then it could look like they weren’t setting their prices independently.

Joint marketing can also draw ire from the ACCC because it distorts the way competitive options are presented to consumers. All their glossy brochures and the planned joint PhD program could lessen competition. Similarly, Go8’s agreement with China’s top universities (the China 9) could be seen as anticompetitive in the domestic market.

When the Go8 formed, USyd’s then Vice-Chancellor Gavin Brown said “it is far more important to ensure that Australia has universities which are world class, than any petty competition between individual institutions”. When the Go8 speaks of collaboration, they don’t mean facilitating a community of scholars; they mean exclusive collaboration to become internationally competitive.

In a deregulated market, the Go8 could grossly inflate degree costs. Believers in neoliberal providence might argue that a real cartel wouldn’t last because there is always an incentive to undercut others’ prices to attract more students. According to game theory, cartels are inherently unstable because each cartel member is in a prisoner’s dilemma; each member could boost their profit by breaking the agreement, by lowering their price or increasing output.

The problem comes when universities play this prisoner’s dilemma game an indefinite number of times. With information sharing, they can credibly threaten that if any other university deviates from the cartel’s mutual best interest they’ll be punished. Such a threat could be levied against a university that wants to lower fees or one deciding whether to accept NTEU demands.

Go8 universities won’t need more students if they can squeeze more money out of their current ones. Go8 degrees have inelastic demand – students with the highest ATARs

will always want to go there. The high cost of living in Australian cities means students rarely move interstate. Hence, USyd has a group of Mosman kids who will want to come here for its reputation alone, and Spence is ready to cash in. All Go8 universities have a communal interest in safeguarding their collective reputation (or as they put it, “sustaining quality brand recognition”) because that’s what they’re trading on.

The ACCC has a section on its website called ‘How to avoid joining a cartel’. Have a look, Spence.

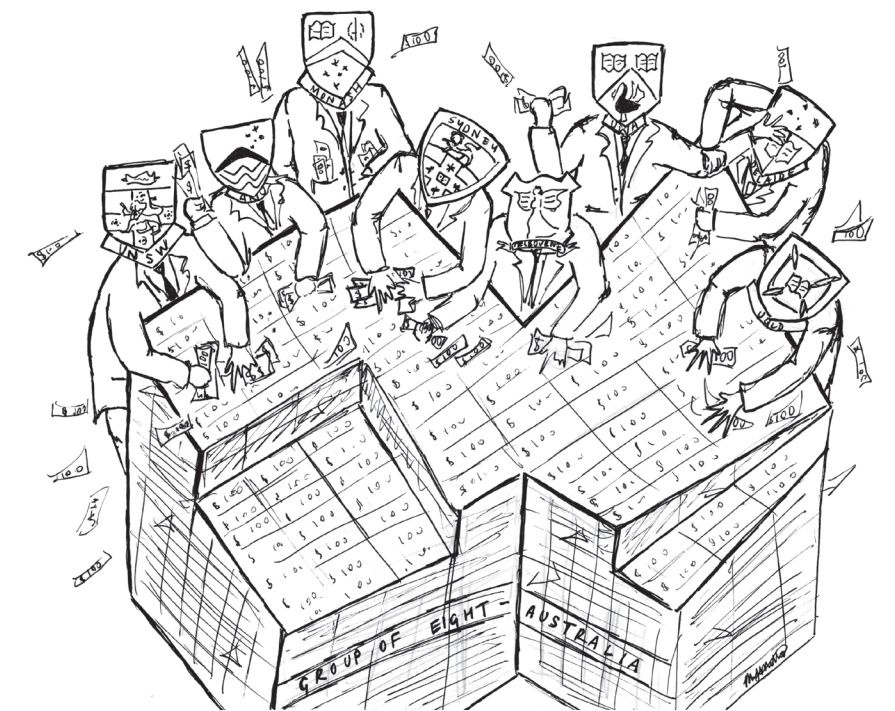


ILLUSTRATION BY MARIA MELLOS

Labor club motion sparks BDS row

An attempt to send students to a reception of an Israeli MP has prompted debate over what it means to breach BDS, writes Matilda Surtees.

A failed motion put forward at the Sydney University Labor Club’s AGM last Monday has attracted attention and condemnation from members of the USyd Students for Justice (USJP) in Palestine, who consider the intended outcome of the motion to be in breach of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel (BDS).

The motion proposed to send a contingent of students from the Labor Club to a reception and speaking date for Israeli Labor Party (ILP) MK Hilik Bar, which is being hosted on September 8 by the Australia Israel Labor Dialogue (AILD), an advocacy group with the objective of fostering links between the ALP and the ILP.

Though defeated 7-5, with one abstention from USJP Treasurer Chris Warren, the motion – and Warren’s abstention – was quickly condemned by members of the USJP. Both Warren and David Pink, the member who moved the motion, have responded to criticism by contesting that sending a

contingent to the reception wouldn’t constitute a breach of BDS.

Pink told *Honi Soit* that “supporting the centre-left coalition” in Israeli politics is “the only hope” for achieving serious Israeli engagement with the peace process. Warren, who originally stated his reason for abstaining as a lack of familiarity with ILP policies, declined to respond to questions but provided a statement declaring his passionate support for BDS. He also stated that if he were able to vote again he would propose a ‘pro-Palestine’ amendment to the motion but would still not vote against it. Warren reiterated his intention to remain in his office as USJP Treasurer.

USJP President Fahad Ali confirmed to *Honi Soit* that he believes Warren should step down from his USJP office, echoing calls made by individual members of the group. Ali was firm in disagreeing with Pink and Warren’s line of reasoning, pointing out that the “entire point” of BDS is “to put the onus onto the entire Israeli population

[to encourage them to] stand up and speak against what the government does in [their] name.”

Labor Club President Chloe Smith said that sending a contingent to the reception would have only been “to show interest in what was being said, but not to endorse the ILP”. Smith also said that she would be reluctant for the Labor Club to be seen as supporting the ILP, and confirmed she voted against the motion. She rejected suggestions there is any factional tension around BDS within the club, and said she believes most members support BDS.

Though the recent flare of attention has been fuelled by the minor controversies of student politics, the wider on-campus profile of the BDS campaign has grown in recent months.

On August 6 earlier this month, the SRC passed a ‘Palestine solidarity’ motion, in which they reaffirmed the SRC commitment to BDS. While the campus branch of the NTEU passed

a resolution in June earlier this year that stymied further debate about whether to officially endorse the BDS campaign – following the intervention of the general secretary of the federal NTEU – the resolution of the case against Sydney University academic Jake Lynch has brought increased publicity to academic engagement with BDS. The attempt by Israeli legal centre Shurat Ha’Din to sue Lynch for racial discrimination after Lynch refused to sponsor an Israeli fellowship candidate proved unsuccessful, easing potential anxieties about adherence to BDS being discriminatory.

Ali also linked growing support for BDS to increased media attention to the situation in Gaza, and expressed hope that this growth will continue across partisan divides. When asked about the Labor Club specifically, Ali said that he believes the Labor Club “should be one of the first societies to endorse BDS entirely,” invoking the Labor “tradition of progressive politics”.

A claim to shame *Rational debate is a waste of time, writes John Gooding.*

Do you find yourself trying to engage with the arguments of your political opponents and getting nowhere? Are your attempts to convince the hearts and minds with reason falling flat every single time? The problem might not lie with your arguing abilities, but because you need to amp up that shame-wow power.

When you come across someone arguing from a moral perspective you don't agree with, the only reasonable thing to do is shame them into either adopting your values or shutting up and sitting in the corner like the outnumbered dunces they are. It's one thing to be incorrect, but it's quite another to be a deviant. Your friends stop seeing you, you can't find a job, it's just awful. Shaming is a tricky game to master, but once you've got rhetoric by your side and the herd at your back there's nothing you can't achieve. Call your opponents whatever-phobic, somehow compare their point of view to Hitler, repeatedly quote Bible passages at them. Whatever

you need to get the job done.

But surely there are more civilised alternatives, you say? No, you're wrong, you're so wrong, social ostracisation is the best and only tool at your disposal. For example, look at the argument over whether section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act* (which outlaws certain types of racially discriminatory speech) is good or not. Both sides think freedom and equality are important, but they differ in which they think is more important. "Freedom of speech is paramount to liberal democracy," says one side. "I'm all for freedom of speech, but there has to be limits so people are treated equally by society," says the other. "No there doesn't," says the first, and the conversation from here on is pretty predictable. No matter how much you reason, assess or gesticulate wildly, you simply cannot prove that freedom is objectively more important than equality, or vice versa.

Well OK, I hear you say, if there's

no way to show my opponent's values are incorrect, why not attempt to mount an argument based on their perspective? Why not attempt to make a conditional argument demonstrating why their values demand an alternative course of action?

You must NEVER EVER do this. NEVER EVER. I cannot stress this enough. A curious thing about conditional words like 'if' is that apparently no one has any fucking clue what they mean. For example, let's say you were a pretty senior Liberal politician and you were to utter a phrase like, I don't know, "If you want to put a price on carbon, why not just do it with a simple tax?" If you think about it for longer than five seconds the meaning *seems* clear, right? Assuming the goal of achieving X, why not try policy Y? Tony Abbott is very obviously not endorsing either the goal of putting a price on carbon or the policy of a tax on carbon.

Alas, by making an attempt to

reach across the aisle you are handing your political opponents the rhetorical equivalent of a big stick to hit you with. You are trusting your rivals (and, more importantly, the fans of your rivals) not to be dickheads and imply you believe in either goal X or policy Y. This is too much trust, as the plethora of left-wing hacks using the above line to call Tony Abbott a hypocrite on the carbon tax demonstrate. When it comes to political debate, optimism and naïvete are about as fatal as hemorrhagic smallpox.

So the next time you find yourself a thousand words deep in a Facebook argument with a political zealot of any stripe, forget about reasoned debate. Forget about trying to see if your value systems are compatible (they're not), or if you can come to a similar policy agreement from both moral perspectives (you won't). It's just not worth it. There's too much at stake, too much to lose. Just wheel out the moral indignation cannons, load up some shame-union, and fire away!

It hurts to laugh *When you write comedy you walk a fine line, writes Peter Walsh.*

Among those who fetishise free speech, there's nothing more odorous than a vocal left-winger attempting to police what can and can't be said. Every three or so weeks, the *Honey Soy* Facebook groups erupts with a ~60 comment thread about things that are or aren't funny. It's a conversation worth having and re-having – the kind that clarifies the role of satire in a newspaper like *Honi Soit*.

When you look at a joke, you're not just looking at what was said, but who said it, when, and why. How it's said is important, too. And who laughs. Louis CK has a bit where he contrasts his thoughts on a particular subject ("Of course, children who have nut allergies need to be protected") against the other thoughts in the back of his head ("But maybe... if touching a nut kills you, you're supposed

to die"). He goes on to apply the same thinking to war veterans and slavery, but the heart of the joke is responsibility. That if you want to be politically incorrect, you can be, so long as you're aware of, and responsible for, what you're saying. In our own *Honey Soy*, we have a rule: punch up. Satirise the people in power and not the perennial victims.

Everyone recalls a social situation where someone makes a joke that makes someone else feel uncomfortable. The uncomfortable party, usually – sadly – is made to feel that showing their offence will only isolate them further. "Have a laugh," you can imagine the offender saying. "Stop being so serious," they continue. Most of the time – which is to say 99 per cent of the time – I'm willing to err on the side of not being a fuckwit

and say the joke isn't worth saying. That other 1 per cent, the land of borderline cases and grey areas, is the one I'd like to interrogate.

Take a look at *The Onion's* recent political headlines like "Police Officer Doesn't See A Difference Between Black, Light-Skinned Black Suspects" or "79% Of Minority Suspects Receive Miranda Rights While Unconscious". These are the kinds of jokes that ostensibly punch downwards – making light of the police's endemic vilification of people of colour – before diverting up at the last moment, drawing attention to unfathomable injustices and the institutions that perpetrate them. At the same time, there's a question of autonomy – who has the right to write something like this? Can an individual with one identity make a joke at the

expense of another's identity? Or is this merely an insidious manner of enforcing broader institutional oppression?

On one hand, comedy is a method of transmuted unbearable emotion into something tolerable. Sadness becomes laughter; insecurity becomes laughter; resentment, frustration, and anger become laughter. But when you make fun of the poor, the disadvantaged, or the marginalised, you must be aware that your punchline is a person, too. They're living, breathing, thinking individuals, with experiences more resonant than the echo of anyone else's laughter.

@_peterwalsh



O U T F O X E D

Eden Caceda speaks to New York-based photographer Flo Fox.

German photographer and photojournalist Alfred Eisenstaedt once said, "The important thing is not the camera but the eye." This adage, emphasising a photographer's creative vision and ability, rather than their tools, seems to entirely convey the life of American photographer Flo Fox.

A veteran street photographer and photojournalist since 1972, Fox has suffered from multiple sclerosis since 1999 and is now wheelchair-bound, visually impaired and is suffering from lung cancer. However, despite these physical challenges, Fox remains an active and feisty photographer in New York City.

Born in Miami, Florida, blind in one eye, Fox lived with her mother and two sisters until their father died when she was two. "We then moved back to our Woodside, Queens apartment where my brother was born. My mother got cancer when I was nine years old and resided there until I was 14 when she died," Fox says. "I asked my mother for a camera when I was 13 and she said I would get that gift for my ninth grade graduation, but she was never able to fulfill that promise."

Rather than seeing her visual impairment as an impediment to photography, Fox says it gives her a unique perspective. "Being born blind in one eye gave me a different perspective on my surroundings," she says. "Seeing on a flat plain was perfect for taking two dimensional photographs and I always looked for depth in the images." Inspired to take photographs to enhance her memory, Fox says that she enjoyed the possibility to look back and "see where I have been and to record history."

Starting as a freelancer, Fox says

she never had a particular subject she wanted to explore but tended towards the "ironic reality of NYC" when taking photos on the city streets. "My photos are very straight forward and to the point and I always look to capture the decisive moment," Fox says. "I leave a full frame border, proving I took the picture in its entirety."



Gaining some traction in the photography world, Fox was asked to be involved in a series of photos for *Playboy Magazine* after the editor saw a collection of her published sensual images. "They asked me if I would put my own sexual fantasy in a series of photos," Fox says. The photographs of Fox posing naked with her husband and their best friend appeared in a magazine published by *Playboy* which presented women's sexual fantasies. In her published fantasy, Fox offered both men money to simulate sexual conduct with her.

Fox also explored the intersection of pornography and art in her Polaroid Dichtology Collection, a series of controversial and well-known photographs of up-close

penises. "Pornography is in the eye of the beholder," she says when asked about photographing sexual images. "My Dichtology Collection shows men's appendages with decorations and adornments that match its owners personalities. I feel it exhibits extreme humour and it never fails to make me laugh."

Travelling internationally, many of her photographs were exhibited in Argentina, Spain, England, France and many other countries. "It's exciting to know that my work is appreciated in galleries and museums," Fox says. "I love the fact that my work will live on forever in permanent collections." Fox was also published in *Life Magazine*, something she says was a highlight of her career. "Ever since I was a child I was always impressed with the photos I saw in *Life Magazine*. There was a full page of my photos."

Fox also speaks fondly of her brief talk show – *The Foto-Fox Show* – in 1980, where she discussed photography with fellow photographers. "The very first time I saw cable TV and knew it would be shown internationally, I wanted to have my own show. It was great to get to know and interview other photographers."

But soon after, Fox's multiple sclerosis began to impact upon her ability to take photographs, and, after 27 years of shooting, she was unable to independently continue her passion. "It's extremely disappointing to be so disabled that I can't get many fast moving images, but I do try to ask others to help me shoot photos. I have to explain to how I want the image to be taken, from the top to the bottom to the left to the right. I explain the distance the photographer has to be from the

subject and how much to zoom the lens."

Fox has lost the use of her right hand, but uses her left hand to control her motorised wheelchair and travel around the city. Now, she teaches photography to visually impaired people in New York. "It's fun to teach blind and visually impaired people photography and describing the details in the images they took," she says. Fox adds she is committed to giving others the opportunity to learn about photography and this is why she continues to give lessons despite her health.

Fox's most notable and recent work, 'Out Of The Ashes: 9/11', comprised a series of photographs of the ruin of the World Trade Center. As she captured the scenes of destruction, Fox exposed herself to significant personal risk.

"I photographed the World Trade Center when it was being built in 1973 and I thought it was important to document its destruction, even though it gave me lung cancer," she says. "Out Of The Ashes' is my ode to the World Trade Center and part of the 9/11 Memorial."

Fox tells me that she has taken over 120,000 photographs over her career and doesn't intend on stopping anytime soon. Despite now dealing with pain on a daily basis with the twin horrors of lung cancer and multiple sclerosis, Fox remembers her past and achievements with much happiness and gratitude.

Speaking about New York City, the city that gave her so much and that allowed her career to blossom, Fox says: "NYC never sleeps and is a constant barrage of unique characters. And I could never leave it."

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THEME: DEATH

I can't believe it's not cocaine

Legal highs may be more dangerous than the hard stuff, writes Isabelle Comber.

With the mid-semester break drawing ever closer, one usually figures that the time to party is nigh. And, let's be real about this, with nigh often comes high.

As it was, I found myself at my favourite house music dungeon a few days before class started. All around me were the regular party-folk, imbibing and, subsequently, vibing. Next to the DJ booth, my friend passed me a little bottle, no bigger than your regular lip balm.

"Sniff that shit!" she eloquently yelled.

The bass was pumping, I had already bid my dignity adieu many moons before – the time was right. Breathing in deeply, I was thrown into a brief but sweaty high. The blue disco ball lights and clanging bass claps beautifully amalgamated, and before I could think of any more wanky descriptive phrases, the high was over.

Promptly nipple crippling the 18-year-old owner of the bottle – as you do – I settled in for the night. This shit was good, felt unthreatening, and seemed relatively cop-proof. But was it?

I was sniffing a variation of amyl nitrate, or simply 'amyl' – a substance that is sold legally in sex shops and selective pharmacies.

Sniffing it incites a 'depressant' effect, slowing the nervous system and causing the user to feel sedated. It can also significantly loosen the vaginal and anal sphincter muscles (for those not using it for sexual purposes, it can also solicit the largest poo of your life – hellllo boys).

Although usually under the bracket of 'inhalants', substances such as amyl also loosely (pardon the pun) fit into the bracket of 'new psychoactive substances' or NPS. NPS can include anything from synthetic weed and inhalants to substances that closely mimic cocaine and ecstasy. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction currently monitor more than 280 types of NPS in global distribution. With each substance working differently within legal lists of ingredients or constantly adapting to the banned list of ingredients within its distributed countries, we have fuck all idea what their effects are, but we can sure as hell enjoy their accessibility.

Often seen as a gateway to heavier drugs and posing zero criminal risk, NPS have masses of appeal to up-and-coming munters. The Australian Drug Foundation this year found that one in five children aged 12-17 will have used inhalants and 3.8 per cent of the population have been found to engage with the substance

at least one or more times in their life.

Any kind of inhaled NPS can cause 'Sudden Sniffing Death', in which the sniffer can suffer from immediate heart failure. On a less serious level, NPS can cause nausea, asphyxia, hypotension and an irregular heartbeat, as well as affecting brain function. I can only assume I could be doing a Bachelor of MECO/Law if it weren't for that shit. But at least I'm not in the grave. Last week, a report from the Centre for Social Justice in the UK forecasted that deaths related to legal highs would overtake deaths from heroin by 2016. With 400 legal-high related deaths estimated for that year, larger UK music festivals such as Glastonbury

have banned the drugs in an effort to curb mortality rates. Even then, distributors and dealers are criminally untouchable.

The irony in all of this is that health-wise, it's plausibly safer to go out on the weekend and take your run-of-the-mill pinger or snort ye olde cocaine. The original risks still apply, but at least if you find yourself in the emergency room authorities will know the protocol for your treatment.

Is it possible that a drug-paranoid government could run citizens into fatal experimenting with legal highs? With an industry that is quietly and legally thriving, it's quite possible we could be left feeling very, very low.

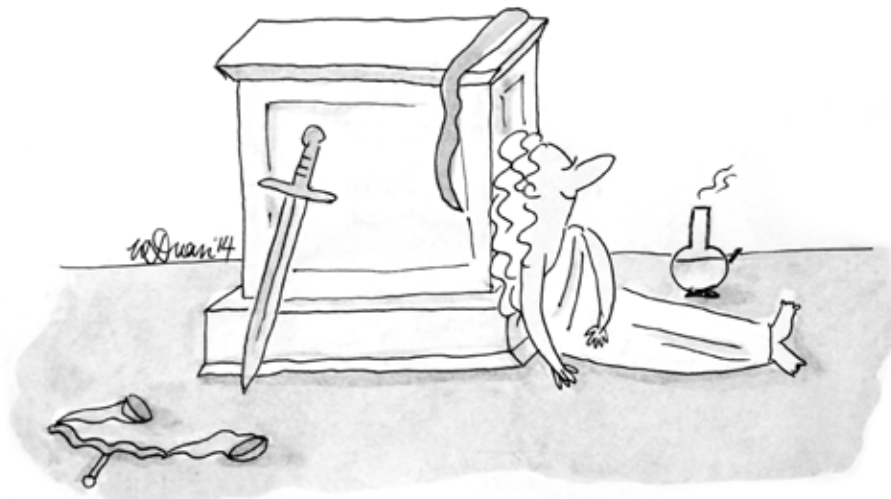


ILLUSTRATION BY WHITNEY DUAN

On neckbeards and arseholes

The video game community needs to confront sexism and homophobia, writes Leigh Nicholson.

After her latest YouTube video showed how video games use sexual violence against women for advertising, Anita Sarkeesian was driven out of her home by threats of sexual violence. In the same week, game developer Zoe Quinn suffered harassment after being accused of unethical behaviour because, supposedly, she had sex with a game journalist to increase her review scores.

Sarkeesian is the founder of Feminist Frequency and the YouTube series 'Tropes Vs. Women in Video Games', a critical analysis of the depictions of women in games. Sarkeesian this week revealed on Twitter that she and her family had to leave their home after a barrage of violent and chillingly specific threats. In her most recent video, she started a discussion on how sexual violence is often used to sell games. This isn't the first time Sarkeesian has faced harassment for her work. In 2012, some members of the gaming community took offence to her criticisms, creating an interactive game where you repeatedly punch an image of Sarkeesian in the face,

progressively and visibly injuring her. This was, apparently, a rebuttal to her criticisms.

Similarly, Zoe Quinn's experience was also not a one-off. Quinn is the developer behind the successful indie game, *Depression Quest*, which has been praised by critics and gamers for its insightful approach to exploring the nuances of living with depression. When it was first shared on Steam Greenlight, Quinn had to remove it because of gendered and sexually related abuse she received. After being released on the Steam Store, a group of online 'vigilantes' accused Quinn of corruption because of an alleged sexual relationship between her and a game reviewer. Disregarding the fact that the guy in question never reviewed her game (which is free anyway), it's also no one's business whom anyone decides to fuck. Phil Fish, the game developer behind *Fez*, had his Dropbox and Twitter accounts hacked after speaking out in support of Quinn.

In discussing the recent unwarranted, but unfortunately

unsurprising, attacks, *Badass Digest* editor Andrew Todd wrote "The Video Gaming Internet can be a horrible place. A documentary, which came out earlier this year, *Gaming in Color*, focuses on the crossover between the queer and gaming communities and how ingrained homophobia is in some game types. In it, one programmer hypothesises these homophobic and sexist remarks come from people who are generally pretty shit in real life.

However, a number of these are straight male gamers who wouldn't call themselves as discriminatory, but get defensive when faced with criticisms telling them to interrogate their escapist hobby. A good example of this is a Kickstarter-style project recently launched, called "The Sarkeesian Effect", a documentary by two guys who claim to "explore how gaming and tech culture have been hijacked by Social Justice Warriors". They say that a Social Justice Warrior is a "pejorative term to refer to a person who berates other internet users over matters of political correctness". They feel threatened by people coming into

"their" community and pulling them up on harassment.

This year has seen a plethora of sexism in gaming and tech. The TV show *GAME JAM* got derailed in a day when all the developers involved up and left after some of their female colleagues experienced sexist remarks from the producers. At E3, developers behind the blockbuster series *Assassin's Creed* settled for four male playable characters, explaining that female characters were too difficult to make. There have been several notable departures of women from tech start-ups because of sexism in the workplace. Sarkeesian acknowledged this in the same tweet she made, flagging she would be leaving her home. "Authorities have been notified. Staying with friends tonight. I'm not giving up. But this harassment of women in tech must stop", she said. It's disheartening to hear these reports almost week after week, but it's at least comforting to know it constitutes outrage.

ANOTHER BOLT IN THE HEAD

Evelyn Corr takes a hatchet to News Corp's monster.

Last week Andrew Bolt, journalist, blogger and conservative gremlin of *The Herald Sun* and the seventh circle of hell, proved once again that he is not to be trusted with an audience.

A collective sigh of exasperation could be heard all around the world as Bolt uttered the well-known maxim: "dividing people on the grounds of race is racist". His comments on *The Bolt Report* (Channel Ten's answer to *Fox News*) arose amid discussion of Recognise, a campaign that is aimed at promoting constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Organisers and supporters of the campaign see it as not only a movement to challenge discrimination and exclusion in the constitution, but also as a process of healing, and acknowledging the ownership of country that is so often denied in pursuit of the myth of *terra nullius*.

Bolt believes it's problematic to specify separate groups of people in a constitution, as do the other two middle-aged, heterosexual, able-bodied white men he rounded up for the chat. To his credit, it is well known that constitutional recognition in its proposed form is perhaps not within the best interest of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and the campaign has been the subject of extensive discussion within the community. However, instead of proposing other solutions such as a treaty that doesn't involve trading Melbourne for some handkerchiefs, Bolt's answer to the very complex issue was to speak loudly and incoherently.

Gary Johns, who edited a collection of opinion pieces titled 'Recognise What?', challenged the campaign for being a waste of government funds on "weepy-eyed" sentiment for institutionally oppressed peoples and suggested that instead of an amendment, the Constitution include a preface to acknowledge the history of Aboriginal occupation of Australia before European invasion. Bolt's response was one of outright denial: "No, but they weren't here first . . . We were here the moment we were born . . . that's racism".

A later clarification on his blog persisted in his objective of utterly confounding anyone with a reasonable grasp on the concept of time: "No one of any 'race' - Aboriginal or other - who is younger than 54 was here before

me. They have no greater right to this country. It is racist to say a group of Australians living today were here 'first' on the basis of who some of their ancestors were".

On a later episode of *The Bolt Report*, former Labor frontbencher Craig Emerson identified the hypocrisy of Bolt's simultaneous denunciation of racial divisions, and condemnation of the race that happened to be irritating him that week, to which he again responded by speaking loudly.

Discrimination Act. His denial of the Stolen Generations in 2006 was as offensive as it was absurd. In 2009, he made it a point to attack the so-called "political Aborigine". You know, those of us who are mixed race or white passing, who dare to identify with the culture we were denied through genocide.

The issue we have when we give people like Bolt oxygen, let alone a news programme, is not merely the spread of his poison this

It speaks to the gross ignorance underpinning the discourse on race in the Australian media.

To acknowledge race and to treat others differently depending on their ethnicity is racist, Bolt insists, calmly rejecting the benefits of affirmative action and culturally specific approaches to health and education, all the while ignoring that for hundreds of years the West has been built on institutions that privilege people who look like Bolt, at the cost of those who don't. He objects to the racial division of Australian people, because society tells him that he is the default, and to acknowledge that he is the recipient of these advantages would destabilise his achievements. When Bolt insists that we should not divide Australia by race, he is enacting a privilege that is not an option for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For us, talking about race is part of an ongoing process of acknowledging disadvantage, voicing trauma, repairing the damage of colonial violence, rebuilding communities, and finding ways of practicing our culture in the new world that was forced upon our ancestors. For Bolt, talking about race means admitting that it has never been a problem for him.

Dealing with racism is time-consuming and forces myself and other individuals to coherently dispute fallacies, prove self-worth and respond to accusations we should never have had to face. I am not here to be a "political Aborigine." I am here because my people were here first, despite what Bolt would like to splutter about. No one has the right to complain about the money being spent on advertising campaigns, scholarships, infrastructure or government support for Aboriginal people, not when the economy of this nation has been built on the denial, exploitation and illegal occupation of Aboriginal land.

What he is saying to me is that he does not see me as Aboriginal, as Koori, let alone a Bundjalung girl living in Dharug country. He does not acknowledge that I go to University in the Eora nation, because this is *Australia*, undivided not a melting pot, but a bleach bath.

There is no place for racism in Australia, Bolt claims. It seems we do agree on something.



You might remember Bolt's particular brand of distasteful gibberish from his other scandals, such as the time he was sued by nine different people over his delightfully-titled op-ed, "It's So Hip To Be Black", not to be mistaken for a separate piece he wrote, "White Is The New Black". Bolt seems unreasonably preoccupied with the Aboriginal community, and it's quite telling that many of his attacks have been found to violate the *Racial*

week's flavour being, *it's racist to talk about race unless you're a white person*. His insistence on seeing race as an abstract notion, unrelated to disparities of wealth, infrastructure, housing, mental health issues, incarceration rates and life expectancy, is only relevant when he wants to condemn anyone who dares call themselves Aboriginal. However, this doesn't meet the stereotypical standards he clings to, rather it is an act of epistemic violence.

“Something you can’t run away from”

Felix Donovan and Subeta Vimalarajah explore the complex nature of Jewish identity in contemporary Australia.

DAVID

You took a different path into Moriah College. Moving away from your family’s strong ties to the Jewish community in Sydney, you attended Woollahra in years 5 and 6, one of just two Jewish kids in the year.

You were obviously bright and independent even then. When your parents let you choose which school you would go to, you picked Sydney Boys High School: a secular selective school near Moore Park. The social scene in which you found yourself was decidedly non-Jewish: public schools and soccer teams outside of the Jewish community.

After you enrolled at Sydney High, you visited Israel with your family for the first time. “Something clicked”, you said. Your brother’s bar mitzvah was held in Jerusalem - on a date not far from the 40th anniversary of the Six Day War, you added. You went to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum, and stayed for half the day. You cried the whole way through it.

And when you got back to Sydney, you decided that Sydney High was not the school for you. You starting learning Hebrew, and enrolled at Moriah College instead.

* * *

A couple of months ago, amidst Max Brenner sit-ins and weekly pro-Palestine rallies, the usually quiet Australian Union of Jewish Students emerged with a response. Launching a campaign across Australia, AUJS paired images of rockets fired at universities with the question, “What would you do?” At the University of Sydney, we were asked to hypothesise “Imagine: UNSW terrorists fired thousands of rockets at USYD”. A press release billed this as “busting the myths and providing perspective on the current conflict”.

This isn’t the only recent AUJS initiative. In their “Letter to Universities”, all Vice-Chancellors

and student representatives are called to “keep a watchful eye against any manner of anti-Semitic activity”, including “anti-Israel motions” that “make Jewish students feel alienated, uncomfortable and threatened”.

We saw these campaigns and wanted to know where the came from. We were used to SRC resolutions that condemn Israel and fiery media debate, but activism from pro-Israeli students at a university known for left wing politics was unexpected. Our first reaction was to think that the origins of AUJS lay in Jewish schools that – we presumed – presented blinkered ideas of the Israel-Palestine conflict. When we started talking to Jewish students we thought they would unanimously speak of propagandist tours of Israel and Zionist Jewish studies classes. That wasn’t the case. Instead of blind righteousness and devotion to the homeland,

“Year 4 students at a Jewish primary school in Melbourne were asked to write letters to IDF soldiers.”

these campaigns reflect a sense of persecution, a close knit Sydney Jewish community that encourages feelings of suspicion rather than superiority.

* * *

ELLIOT

You took a critical approach to your Jewish identity from a young age. When you were nine your parents suggested you join a Jewish student movement. They suggested their own - but even then with a quick Google search, you rebuffed them. Instead, you joined Habonim Dror, a socialist Zionist group: the furthest left of the Jewish student movements.

Your adolescence has the markers of the quintessential Sydney Jewish student. You went to Emanuel and you spent a year in Israel with Habonim Dror, which you “loved”. But you’ve always been remarkably critical - in Jewish studies you felt “Zionism was pushed down my throat”, you remark that St Ives is a “Jewish dome” in which alternate perspectives are rarely recognised.

Despite being on the political fringes of the Jewish community, “one of the more critical” members, years out of school you are still heavily involved. You’ve dabbled in Young Labor, the Greens, you went up to Socialist Alternative when you began university, but ultimately Habonim Dror still consumes your time. You spend every Sunday and at planning meetings, hoping to help Jewish students understand their cultural identity, as the movement helped you to.

* * *

The Jewish community in Sydney is a tight-knit one. Not only is it connected by Jewish schools, synagogues and community groups, but geographical closeness. Of the Sydney Jewish population, 63 per cent live in the Eastern suburbs, 22 per cent on the North Shore: the ‘bubble’ and the ‘dome’. Sydney’s three prominent Jewish schools, Moriah College, Masada and Emanuel, are all located in either this ‘bubble’ or ‘dome’. As you’d expect, the links between the institutions are strong, cultivated primarily through Jewish cultural festivals.

Informal connections exist, but

these are also encouraged by school administrations. Schools are the primary recruiting grounds for Jewish student movements, with university students allowed on school grounds during lunch to chat to high school students about joining their movements, or give presentations to that effect. Schools have also, on occasion, allowed the movements to replace teachers in Jewish Studies classes.

Jewish student movements have been very successful recruiters. At schools like Moriah and Emmanuel some estimates put the number of students involved in a movement to be at about 20 per cent. It’s the equivalent of a three days a week part time job for the organisers. They have to recruit, teach and plan activities like camps. For most of the people involved the movements offer very similar things to other strong social groups: fun, something to do, people to hang out with, a place to feel comfortable. But most social groups don’t culminate in a year-long stay in Israel.

Although there is a significant degree of similarity in recruiting and organising methods, Jewish student movements vary in ideology greatly. They range from cultural movements populated by critics of Israeli defence policy to orthodox movements that assist in organizing pro-Israeli rallies.

* * *

CHRIS*

Being Jewish is raised as a challenge for you now. A rapper in the fringe music scene in Sydney, Jewish colleagues are rare. You are the one who is asked about Israel, to ‘justify this’, to ‘defend this’. You’ve left traditional Jewish communities - eschewing the Jewish student movements you signed up for in early high school to pursue your interest in skateboarding, graphic design and music - but you haven’t left your Jewish identity. “It’s something you can’t run away from”.

The only time interest is piqued in your identity - the only time your Jewishness is acknowledged - is when the conflict flares up. It’s telling that when we ask you about your politics, all three of us would have laughed if you’d said which party you voted for in the last election. Your politics is defined by the actions of the Israeli Defence Force. Sometimes it must feel like your Jewishness is too.

You don’t like to rap about Jewishness or Israel because you don’t want to alienate people. Yet you say that you feel like a “messenger for your community”. It’s a role that is thrust upon you rather than chosen.

* * *

ANTHONY

‘A dissident’. That was your self-assessment, crafted by years of being the secular critic of Israel at Emmanuel College. When Jewish studies was made mandatory for all year 11s just as you finished year 10, you staged what must have been a lonely sit-in in the principal’s office. You hated the aspects of “institutionalised religion”, resenting weekly prayers and even the certain cultural traditions of Judaism the school sought to uphold. Micro-protest was redefined when you ate bacon in class, knowing some of your peers were keeping kosher. Perhaps because of such things, your dissent was the subject of some eye-rolling from those who knew you in school.

Yet you never renounced your Jewishness. Asked whether being Jewish was important to you, you were reflective and honest. “I’d like to say it isn’t, but I’d be being dishonest.” All your friends growing up were Jewish, and even now, at a university and in a degree known for its WASPiness, you can’t shake it. Your friends are almost all non-white, if not from Jewish backgrounds then from Syrian, Greek or Italian families. It’s a shared experience and knowledge of what it “feels like to be a minority” that binds you together.

* * *

Reflections on Jewish Studies classes are varied, dependent on both student and school. The curriculum is largely set at the discretion of the school or teacher in question, and most schools opt for an education in Jewish history and culture. Although largely apolitical, it’s when Rabbis like Moriah’s Benji Levy are involved that the classes take on propagandist tone. At a large protest in early August, Levy was quoted by *The Daily Telegraph* defending recent Israeli actions in Gaza, saying “We are trying to create peace, they are trying to

create terror.’

The ideological and cultural education offered by the schools is not limited by the curriculum. Last year, Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier who spent five years imprisoned by Hamas, addressed the 1800 Jewish students from across Sydney in an event organised by Moriah College. In late July this year, year 4 students at a Jewish primary school in Melbourne were asked to write letters to IDF soldiers. In one letter decorated with illustrations of the Israeli flag, Abby of class 4D wrote, ‘Dear Israely Soldier, I admire the way you are fighting for Israel.’

Of course, most Jewish schools don’t ask nine-year olds to write letters to foreign armies. But foregrounding Jewish identity, and teaching Jewish history is one of the important functions of these schools. For many parents that hold fears the Jewish community may be eroding, or that Jewish culture and traditions are being forgotten, Jewish schools are the bulwark against secularisation.

* * *

STEPH

You had no qualms in telling us that being Jewish was “like 100%” of your identity. Jewishness for you is not about religious observance. It’s defined by family tradition, a sense of solidarity and a close-knit community. You fit Israel into that picture, for although you’ve never been, you said you felt “a very strong call” to go. Your friends and family have all been, it was an experience expected of you by most and something you regretted to admit every time you returned from travelling elsewhere.

Despite an insistence to stay away from politics, a question about AUJS prompted you on a topic you could “talk about for hours” - contemporary anti-Semitism. You kept clarifying that these were probably isolated incidents, that it was just people being stupid on Facebook and that you hadn’t necessarily experienced anything personally. But then you spoke of “senseless vitriol towards Jewish people”, the “very unsettling” comments of friends, the “anti-

Semitic hate fuelled” abuse you had perceived.

You’re studying a history of the Holocaust this semester and it was this that led you to conclude the events of the present - break-ins in France, the bus attack in the Eastern suburbs, although isolated incidents were “reminiscent of pre-World War II”.

Anti-Semitism in Sydney is real. On August 7, five men boarded a bus that was taking Jewish children to school and shouted “Heil Hitler!” and “Kill the Jews”. On August 26, flyers were distributed to Eastern suburbs homes that warned of a Jewish conspiracy and demanded that “white Australia” should “wake up”. This is following the furore that was sparked in July when the *Sydney Morning Herald* printed a cartoon of a hook-nosed Jew holding a remote detonator.

It is events like this that contribute to the idea that anti-Semitism doesn’t just exist on

* * *

DAVE, CONTINUED

If there is a defining character, it is you. You’re academically talented, play football well enough to still be doing it and are socially comfortable with two strangers quizzing you about your identity. Everyone speaks highly of you. Even you - resolutely modest - have to admit that you’re well liked. School captains usually are.

Even so, anti-Semitism has still stung you, is still something you haven’t been able to brush off. You said that the insults have rarely been obvious. Nobody ever said ‘you fucking Jew’. But once, in high school, you went to play a secular public school and the other team’s players were joking and laughing as they walked onto the field. This bothered you, as you told us, “Do I have any doubt that they’re on the bus beforehand laughing about Jews, making jokes? I have no doubt.”

We asked whether you had ever experienced anti-Semitism at this university. You hadn’t, but you added that one of your friends had been threatened by someone putting up anti-Israel posters on Eastern Avenue. Then, a day later, you sent one of us a picture of some graffiti you’d come across on campus with the message “I know I told you I haven’t experienced anti-Semitism in a while on campus - well that streak is over”.

***Name has been changed.**

Most of the people we talked to heard about the August 7 bus attack because news of

it inundated their Facebook newsfeeds, and was then discussed at length with family and friends. “I used to catch that bus, it could have been me”, one person reflected. When a *60 Minutes* special on Jews in Australia aired in late July, that too was disseminated and talked, with much of the Jewish community expressing outrage at the perceived anti-Semitism of the program. At times, this outrage seems to suggest that other racial minorities in Australia aren’t subjected to the volume of discrimination that Jewish people face.

We expect communities to offer people security. When people with similar backgrounds and identities come together, we expect them to take comfort and strength in their shared experiences. But in manufacturing emotional links with the state of Israel, by focusing on the anti-Semitic persecution that still exists, the Jewish community may instead be offering a sense of insecurity.

The Night Before Mardi Gras (Queer Revue)

Namaan Zhou on your best bet for good clean family fun.

Looking for tasteless jokes during revue season is a lot like spotting Bintang singlets in summer – certain months just come with their own unique and compulsory strains of awfulness. But Queer Revue 2014 is the blessed and delightful exception to the rule. Directors Mikaela Bartels and Hayden Aitken seem to have grasped the golden tenet of satire – it’s only funny when you belittle those in power rather than those without it. *The Nightmare Before Mardi Gras* is clever, insightful and righteously subversive. In my latest attempt to publish a sentence that finally arrests the beating of Fred Nile’s heart, this year’s Queer Revue was probably your best bet for good clean family fun.

We have a chorus line of jubilant, crowing Liberals in supplication to Margaret Thatcher. A disconcertingly real parody ad that casts Eden Tollis as a maniacally happy Michael Spence (“You are all roaches beneath my feet guys! Roaches!”). And crowd-favourite Shevvi Barrett-Brown as a transit officer who thinks they’re Humphrey Bogart. Queer Revue understands that rather than turning the punchline into a premise and piling on absurdity from there, it pays to set everything up before knocking it down. There’s no fun going bowling if you start with all the pins blown to smithereens.

It’s also refreshing how the cast takes stale sketch-comedy gender tropes and blitzes them wonderfully

apart. Sarah Jamieson imagines Marie Curie as the madcap offside to her fretful husband Pierre, inexplicably boganified and taping radium to a super-soaker. Georgia Kriz and Lauri Hopkins are drollier than droll as two Aussie cis-men just having a wholesome Aussie Man-Chat™. Apropos of nothing, this year’s Revue also contains possibly the world’s most Charlie Kaufman-esque orgy joke - a delicately structured, multi-layered, fourth-wall destroying thing of obscene and meta beauty. It was a full-frontal reminder that bawdiness runs in this revue’s DNA, despite some inebriated audience members reacting poorly to earlier crude jokes. Bartels and Aitken should also be wary of accidentally pouring scorn over unintended targets,

like when an otherwise perfectly executed sketch about two gay dads ridiculing their son’s heterosexual marriage rendered one of the night’s standout female performers as just a speechless reaction-face there to cop the flak.

With no faculty to back it, Queer Revue is sadly one of the university’s least funded revues. There are but two jets of dry ice in the whole production, squeezed out for maximum efficiency like someone trying to make a Coke with their last canister of Sodastream. And yet, it doesn’t matter. A small budget can’t conceal intelligence and consistency. This isn’t the little-revue-that-could, it’s the revue that doesn’t really give a fuck because it knows it can.

Sam Farrell also thought Moolah Rouge was a highlight of the revue season.

Despite suffering from one of the more questionable pun titles in this year’s revue season, *Moolah Rouge* was a thoroughly enjoyable show coloured by the professionally excellent music and dance numbers that have come define Commerce Revue over the past few years.

The opening song, taken from the musical classic, *A Chorus Line*, was a clever take on the torturous process of job applications and set the tone for what was to be a high-energy show. The first few skits answered the call with simple and solid premises, warming the audience up to the first highlight –

an extended parody of the children’s song ‘There’s a Hole in my Bucket’. This skit initially seemed to be an interminable listing of ways to fix holes in buckets, but the combination of a strong punchline and the charming acting prowess of Aidan Kane and Zara Stanton cemented this skit among the show’s best. Kane also featured in the hilarious sketch entitled ‘A world without PA systems’ in which library lingerers were physically and violently escorted by a human PA system, escalating to Kane’s eventual murder of a student who had the gall to borrow a book after the library had closed.

In a rarity for revues in which the writing is really made by the acting, Commerce Revue used the technique of ‘just kill everybody’ relatively sparingly and with great effect; in one sketch, a customer tries to return a faulty item to a store whereupon the store manager insists that one of the retail workers must be shot in fulfillment of a ‘zero customer disappointment policy’.

Absurd humourists and show directors, Julian Hollis and Jacinta Gregory delivered some uniquely funny AVs, including a brilliantly cut series of wordplays on ‘So You Think You Can Dance’, featuring

glancing, prancing pantsing and many more. Another, almost too ridiculous to describe in actual human words, followed the struggle of a psychiatric patient as it came to terms with being a chair. Yep. The show did falter, with a series of one-joke skits laboured into long scenes and a bizarre choice to play the *Moulin Rouge* soundtrack (far too softly) as accompaniment to an otherwise incredibly choreographed Act Two opening number. Even still, the sheer amount of acting, singing and dancing talent showcased by so many (let’s face it, MUSE-based) cast members made *Moolah Rouge* a highlight of this revue season.

Snow White & The Seven Dollar Copayment (Med Revue)

Astha Rajvanshi thinks Med Revue has improved from previous years.

Every year, an unpredictable team of first-year Medicine students is charged with the responsibility of producing Med Revue, in what one might call tradition or just a forced bonding exercise. As such, past Med Revues have not built up any high expectations for their successors, relying too often on the uninspiring and easily accessible format of racist and sexist jokes. Thankfully, this year’s Med Revue does a little more than just that.

Snow White and the Seven Dollar Copayment starts with a whimper and ends with a bang. The jokes of

Med Revue are not groundbreaking. There are a lot of puns and hit-and-miss medical references, and the premature delivery of punch lines makes the skits drag a little too long. By the third shirtless reference to *300*, the audience almost expects to groan to the play on words to Sparta (“This is Barter! / This is Frittata!”).

Where the first act fails to provoke more than a sleepy response through its insipid humour, the second act unexpectedly redeems the show. The energy picks up with the delivery of strong song-and-dance acts that carve their way through the night

with crafty, subversive humour. The choreography is exceptional, with the occasional tap dancing and synchronized moves that manage to make the cast look like professional ballerinas in a standout rendition of Swan Lake. A version of Avicii’s ‘Hey Brother’ displays radiant costumes that tempt the audience to relive a game of Mario Bros, and the sperm race in Enrique Iglesias’ ‘Tonight I’m fertilising you’ is amusingly intervened by one female rapper dressed as the Pill. The band also provides musical relief throughout the skits with melodious tunes.

The recurring character of Copayment Man, clad in a blinding bright gold spandex suit, is cleverly employed to point out the obvious shortcomings of Abbott’s healthcare reforms. The only exception to this is the offensive reference to Chinese people as “stupid Communists,” something that could’ve been easily salvaged by even a mild sense of racial awareness. But then again, political correctness seems to be a weakness, if not a blind spot, for most Med Revues.

Victoria Zerbst now feels a little bit sorry for Tony. PHOTO BY LISA XIA

Under a sprinkle of condoms came forth the cast of queer revue on the AV screen. Did this betoken a rubber-insulated experience for the audience? Was safe theatre to be practised? Or would an orgy of love rain gloriously on the gay parade? Of course it would! Of course it would!

When straight characters Susan and Dick arrive at The Birdcage in Newtown on a Wednesday night, they are surprised to find a lot of women with “short hair”. Played (curiously convincingly) by Eden Tollis and Georgia Kriz, these straighties failed to realise that Wednesday night is dyke night and also the night before Mardi Gras and also possibly a night of nightmare, as dictated by the title.

On this multi-important night of nights, these Jesus-praising liberals from Dee Why (spare us, spare us from such, oh Lord)

are dragged into a quest to save Mardi Gras from drugged-up drag queen Moanie Bitchell and, also, commercialisation.

The highlight of the spectacle was the *Leave Tony Alone* parody video performed and recorded so perfectly by Jacob Grice. I swear there were real tears delivered with the line “Tony is just not well right now”. YouTube. Now.

The revue was at its best when the aggressively sexual content was coupled with a wider social, political or religious trope creating powerful, transgressive or entertaining sketches. Standout examples include the Drag Queen nun performance of *Ave Maria*, or the wonderful transit officer who breaks out into a noir monologue amid a smoke-machine cloud.

It wasn’t surprising that the nudity in this revue felt less like

a gimmick and more like an obvious progression from the recurring gag, “How to Kill an Orgy”. After three failed orgy attempts (one with a clown participant, one with a sock puppet, and one with parents) the cast finally creates a wonderfully nude “group sex tableau” as a tactically cheesy song plays, “that’s how you have an orgy”.

Other sketches were sometimes lost to lack of polish and the dance numbers could have been tighter and more rehearsed. Occasionally strong premises fell flat from lack of development or low performance confidence.

Some sketches were directly

written for a USyd audience, some exhibited heckle-bait puns but most of them punched up at the right people and created lots of energy on stage. Queer Revue could do with a buff and a polish but some moments found the gold at the end of the rainbow.



Moolah Rouge (Commerce Revue)

Rebecca Wong on a highlight of revue season.

Bristling with creative energy, *Moolah Rouge* is one of the most polished revues I have ever seen. Ranging from physical slapstick humour to the absurdity of interspecies love between a human and an elephant, the sketch comedy was fresh, varied and brilliantly executed. The actors exhibited an impressive mastery of dramatic tension and comic timing, occasionally prolonging but never exhausting the comedic lifespan of a joke. The contrasts between

straight-laced characters and their eccentric counterparts (a boorish author, a pavlova-eating zombie, an unhinged librarian) were delightfully farcical, and while punchlines occasionally fell flat, the overall quality of sketches was exceptionally high. The show had its fair share of dark humour, including a somewhat terrifying children’s clapping game-come-death eater skech, and the “So You Think You Can Dance” video sketch was a definite highlight.

The choral and dance numbers were incredibly tight, and had clearly been rehearsed to near perfection. The overall flavour of the show was highly reminiscent of musical theatre, from the distinctive style of the dances to the orchestral band, sans brass. The a cappella money medley constituted an impressive feat of musical arrangement, and I now understand that there are few things I’ve wanted more from life than to hear a song about the taxman sung to the tune of

‘Roxanne’. While your reviewer appreciated the musical theatre-esque feel of the show, it may have alienated some audience members. Having said that, it granted cohesion to the show, and nicely complemented the loose theme of high-end corporate glamour.

The quasi-professional production values, cracking comedy and fantastic dance and musical numbers have surely made *Moolah Rouge* a highlight of the revue season.

Patrick Morrow is reviewing Med Revue for the third year running.

If I had tried harder, I could have hated *Snow White and the Seven Dollar Copayment*. References to Fritzl aren’t clever, and aren’t funny. If resorting to stereotypes about Asian food and restaurants wasn’t bad enough (and it was), hideous vocal caricatures added literally nothing of worth to a production that ran too long anyway. Copayment Man didn’t need to accuse, and accuse only, an Asian cast member of being a communist from a culture with a sense of entitlement. No it’s not

funny, or new, or interesting to make stereotypical men behave like stereotypical women. On all these counts, fuck you.

There are also the standard complaints about punchlines in the middle of sketches, a cast that didn’t seem wholly comfortable with comic dialogue, sketches generally running too long, sketches that just weren’t funny, and sketches that were just a lot of shitty puns delivered with milk and water smiles.

But I actually enjoyed this year’s Med Revue. I think it was trying to be better.

This Disney pastiche had a beautiful kindness that was distinct from its predecessors’ shitty, uninspired and oppressively sexist (and racist and homophobic) cynicism. And though *Copayment* was aggressively unpleasant at times, this gentleness meant I didn’t want to dislike the show.

The musical parodies are solid. Lyrics were sometimes dull, but every time the incredibly capable cast began to sing and dance, the spectacle flattened any possible complaints about generic words. Further, Do You Believe In Magic and We’re in the Way proved that you can have in-house humour,

and it doesn’t have to suck. Sketch highlights included Sea-word Shell, Copayment Man, Nobody Expects and just the line “I’d rather slay dragon than pussies – Wahey.” Unintended highlights include Dracula trying to deliver a less-good punchline over fading lights and audience laughter, Copayment Man trying, in slow motion to pick up his cape under partial darkness, Copayment Man trying to hide in a bin under partial darkness, and Copayment Man.

The Seven Dollar Copayment, unlike its predecessors, feels like it has heart. The directors should be proud; this show has clearly been thought about, and this enables a very talented cast of performers to play to their strengths. The result was good.

Med Revue still has a long way to go, but *Copayment* demonstrated that it might actually get there.



Company cars, company votes

Compulsory voting enrolment for corporations is undemocratic, writes Adam Murphy.

As a rule, conservatives see Clover Moore as the Antichrist of local government. She despises cars, and endeavours to restrict their access to the CBD. Even worse, she loves bicycles. She spends council money on ideas looper than a Canberra roundabout, such as renewable energy schemes, giant fibreglass milk-crates and multicoloured pedestrian crossings. Under her watch, the council has adopted a planning policy of NIMBY-worship. Having failed to win against Clover at the ballot box, and seemingly reluctant to gerrymander Sydney's council boundaries (historically the preferred strategy on both sides of state politics), the forces of the right are now promulgating 'Get Clover' bills; creative new attempts to overturn her democratically-determined mayoralty.

The most recent of these is the *City of Sydney Amendment (Elections) Bill 2014*, introduced to the LegCon by Robert Borsak of the Shooters & Fishers Party, which attempts to dramatically increase the scale of corporate voting within the City of Sydney. Borsak's proposal has two limbs. Firstly, any corporation listed as the owner, leasee or occupier of rateable land in the City of Sydney will be compulsorily enrolled to vote in council elections. Secondly, any such corporation will be afforded two votes, exercised by its directors, owners or company secretaries. The outcome: businesses get way more voting power, hopefully against

Clover Moore & Co. Borsak was surprisingly candid about the Bill's provenance when introducing it, explicitly thanking figures such as Alan Jones, the Daily Telegraph and Liberal councillor Ed Mandla for their contributions to its creation.

Most ordinary people's visceral response is something like businesses voting is batshit crazy and overextends the notion of corporate personhood. Regardless, there are legitimate reasons why it exists here, as well as in New Zealand, Canadian provinces, the City of London and various other places. The output of the CBD's economy alone is larger than the State of Hawaii, and is driven by commerce. And unlike at a State or Federal level, the City of Sydney earns 75 per cent of its revenue from rates paid by businesses. Council decisions on matters of environment and planning directly affect the ability of many businesses to trade at all. In short, commercial interests within the City are proportionally significant. Moreover, juristic persons, as manifestations of those interests, should receive the vote. Indeed, supporters of Borsak's bill have remanufactured these arguments into one of 'no taxation without representation'.

Despite its basic rationale, the essentials of the proposed amendment are unjustified. Firstly, the 'businesses get two votes' argument depends on

the suggestion that, because a ratepaying household usually has at least two voters, businesses (which pay more rates) should have more votes. Yet Australian democracy recognises personhood over property ownership. To conform to the rest of the electoral system, eligibility to vote in council elections should depend on whether you are a juristic or natural person, not be proportional to the rates levied against you. Secondly, compulsory enrolment to vote is not a thing elsewhere in our electoral system, and the proposed bill goes too far in extending to periodic tenants or mere occupiers of land. These businesses are too precarious to remain permanently on the roll because of the potential for electoral fraud if they relocate.

Clover Moore does recognise that businesses should retain the local government franchise. Her response to these amendments was not to condemn business voting, but to propose

her own measures to streamline it. Unfortunately, the issue has become a mere tool for the ejection of Clover Moore from office. Those of us who do like Clover's attempts to create a more humanised Sydney should say loudly: win fairly, or bugger off.

Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney

Want some work! Polling Booth Attendants Required

The SRC is looking for people to work on the polling booths for its elections this year.

If you can work on
Wed 24th Sept and/or Thurs 25th Sept,
and attend a training at 4pm Tues 23rd Sept,
we want to hear from you!

\$32.30 per hour

There may also be an opportunity to undertake additional work at the vote count
Application forms are available from the SRC Front Office
(Level 1 Wentworth Building).
For more info, call 9660 5222
Applications close 4pm, 3rd September 2014



Authorised by P Graham, SRC Electoral Officer 2014.
Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney: 02 9660 5222 | www.src.usyd.edu.au

Bright lights, big Sydney

Jessica Cid on the small, but significant, differences between studying in Australia and the US.

Before I left New York, I remember all the thoughts about Sydney that disturbed my sleep at night. It was a mixture of excitement and curiosity about where exactly my journey would take me. In essence, my travels did help me flourish and step out of my comfort zone, but living in Sydney for about five weeks now helped me realise something about the global world.

We are all connected.

When I moved into college the first day, I made sure to Skype my mom to show her my room, the dining hall, and even the outside terrace. I felt at home immediately after that conversation, and soon enough the city lights seemed to glisten just like they do in the Big Apple.

You'd think the hardest part would be adapting to a new city,

but it wasn't - the hardest part was familiarising myself to a new university as an international student. Simple things like calling my lecturers by their first name instead of formally addressing them felt incredibly uncomfortable.

I think the biggest challenge I faced was recognising the difference in security on campus compared to colleges and universities in the United States. Walking around my former university, big, blue emergency poles were scattered everywhere across campus. There was also a campus alert system, which students could use for fast and effective communication with campus security.

I didn't become aware of these differences until the other day when my friend and I decided to go to the library. I told him I would be leaving

at 3 am because I wanted to go to bed instead of pulling an all-nighter.

He looked a bit stunned and said, "be careful."

I didn't know what he meant until I found myself alone in a dark street on campus. At first, like any New Yorker, I wasn't too scared of a dark alleyway until I began hearing fast paced footsteps walking up behind me.

I ran, and didn't even look back.

That person probably meant to do no harm. Maybe they were just running late and happened to be walking faster than I was. I was so conditioned to assume that if someone was walking faster than I was behind me in a dark street, they automatically posed some sort of threat. As someone who has been

mugged before, it's pretty hard to ever feel safe even in one of the safest universities.

Although I can't help but remain constantly aware of safety concerns when I'm out late at night, I've learned that I shouldn't be too uptight about it. I've also learned not to assume things. Sydney Uni is very different to my former university, and I now know that I shouldn't be afraid to ask other students about how things are.

It is imperative that I become more aware of my surroundings and familiarise myself with local university culture. Even between two nations as similar as the US and Australia, cultural dissimilarities can be vast.

A GUIDE TO HUMANS VS ZOMBIES

Trust no-one, and carry a big gun, writes Adam Chalmers.

I was once like you. Back in 2012. I was young, eager, excited to shoot some nerf guns and run around USyd on a Sunday. I thought Humans vs. Zombies was going to be fun.

I lasted less than five minutes.

I managed to make every possible mistake you *can* make in Humans vs. Zombies within five minutes. But don't worry, friends. Together, we can learn from my mistakes. Maybe this year we'll last *six* minutes.

Mistake 1: Trusting People

Trust is the cornerstone of human society. It will also let zombies murder you. A few humans are chosen to be the Original Zombies, or OZs. These players look and act just like regular human players, but if they touch you, you'll become a zombie. Zombies can't talk, which means they can't reveal the OZs' identities. If played correctly,



Image sourced from Concrete Playground, taken by Lindsay Smith.

OZs can take out hundreds of players without being discovered.

Former OZ Samuel Jenkins recommends OZs should infiltrate and befriend groups. "Friends are complacent people, and that means free kills to start the day," he said. My group invited our friend James Wilson into our base at the start of 2012. Five minutes later, he led us into an enclosed space and tagged us all. I haven't been able to trust since that day.

My advice? Stay near other human players so that if the OZ tags someone, you'll notice. Not too near - don't let them tag your whole group at once. Be suspicious of anyone touching humans. If you identify the OZ, message the game co-ordinators so they can announce it via social media and Zedtown radio. Check these sources regularly so you can identify the OZ when he or she is revealed.

Mistake 2: Not Holing Up

My stupidly quick zombification meant I spent most of my game attacking humans. I quickly developed a name for humans walking around in the

open: fresh meat. Delicious, stupid fresh meat.

If you want to survive, find a base with one clear entrance, and aim all your guns at it. This way, zombies can't surround or sneak up on you. If you've got enough firepower to cover this entrance, no zombies can get in. You'll be safe. Throughout 2012's game, zombies found it almost impossible to break through a suitable base. One group of players held up in the Sunken Courts BBQ for most of the game. The only reason we got them was because they committed mistake #2: they left their base.

When you hole up, don't forget about the OZ. The OZ could be in your group or try to enter your base. Be suspicious of outsiders. Don't give them a chance to tag your whole group.

In 2013, some special zombies ("Witches") were indestructible (though they could only walk, not run). These forced players out of their bases. If you must walk around in the open, find a new defensible position as soon as you can. Zombies *will* form large groups and outnumber you eventually. You will run out of ammo, you will lose one or two group members and then be outnumbered. Humans in the open die like John Green falls asleep: slowly, then all at once.

Mistake 3: Bringing Stupid Equipment

Don't buy a big fancy gun. You're playing for defence, not offence. Killing zombies buys you time, not points. Don't waste your ammo with battery-powered automatic firing. When a zombie jumps out at you from behind a wall or hedge or car, you need to be able to fire as soon as possible. So make sure your guns are always primed. If your gun takes a second to start spinning and firing, you're dead. Bring an accurate gun that can fire the moment you see a zombie. And get lots of ammo.

Buy a dozen cheap socks from a dollar store - socks can be thrown as projectile weapons, and they're great in a jam. Pack light - just ammo and food. You'll need to run fast at some point. Good thing you've been doing cardio training. You have been cardio training, right? Fucking amateurs.

Mistake 4: Taking the game too seriously

Don't forget this is the coolest, most unique event of the year. There's nothing like this in Sydney. Give it all you've got, but don't worry. Even though I spent my whole game as a zombie, I still had a great time. Enjoy this game.

And seriously. Don't trust anyone.

Cal and pal

Sean O'Grady reviews SURG.FM's resident Tories.

Like most people I frequently wake up in the morning thinking about what sparkling wine would best complement my train trip into uni. Thankfully, SURG FM has, for one day a week at least, assuaged my existential anxiety.

At 10am on Tuesday morning *The Bill and Cal Show* answers that question for me. Naturally, the show's opening music coincides precisely with the time my local Dan Murphy's opens. For the past three weeks I've found myself standing ready and waiting in the sparkling wine section for the hosts to tell me what "is whetting [Bill and Cal's] tongues" that morning, so that I may emerge from the Kafkaesque prison of my subconscious and emulate their superior taste.

Champers popped, swigging from a brown paper bag and disco bangerz blasting out of my headphones, I am ready to begin my train trip into university (and here I should thank my considerate lecturer who understood my inability to embrace Tuesdays without this ritual and rescheduled the lectures accordingly).

But wait, you say, so many calories that early in the morning, what ever will you do? Never fear, dear reader, all is well. Bill and Cal are also experts on exercise. If motivation is your problem then take heed of their advice and Instagram your morning run, it will rack up 'double taps' and work both your glutes and your Klout score. Be warned though, some members of the public may not understand aperture and vectors,



so be sure to issue them with a list of instructions and make full use of the editing capabilities of #vscocam.

As the only media outlet in Sydney more in love with Marx than the ABC, it is nice to see SURG embracing a format that is more

fair and balanced. Real students don't want to hear queer hip hop, they want the perky vocal stylings of Ariana Grande. Real students don't want a ten-part series on the best places in the inner west to dumpster dive, they want answers to the real questions in haute cuisine, like is pizza *ever* a suitable entree? (The answer for those playing along at home is "no", Reagan would roll in his grave). Real students don't want to hear unshowered socialists abusing Christopher Pyne on the airwaves, real students know he is perfect.

If ever you have winced upon seeing asymmetrically cuffed chinos or vomited in your mouth a little bit at the thought of a quiff with a hair out of place, then this is the show for you.

OUTSPEAK THE OUTSPOKEN

Charlie O' Grady on slam poetry and the fetishisation of oppression.

The phenomenon of reading and listening to poetry is nothing new. Spoken poetics, in many cultures, predate written text. Classical Greek and Latin epics were recited aloud and written down later; myths and creation stories pass through time and across spaces through oral tradition.

If anything, this preoccupation with written poetry (seen particularly throughout the Enlightenment and its disdain for balladry), which has become the form's legacy, is responsible for the stereotype of poetry as being nothing more than stuffy, old white men. And of course, for much of modern literary history poetry has been bloated with old white men waxing lyrical about war and God and declaiming that women who won't sleep with them are demons. However, poetry has seen a rebirth in the past 50-60 years with the genesis of the poetry slam.

Slam poetry takes many forms, but its current most recognisable iteration is that of the Slam itself – an open mic-cum-competition event wherein poets perform, usually to a time limit, and are scored on their performance. Slam poetry is frequently highly emotionally or politically charged: because of this, as well as its disregard for literary convention, it has become highly favoured by young writers as a way to engage with or process social issues. Personally I find spoken word helpful as a way to make sense of my own life in a form that gives space to complex and intersectional experiences.

It's clear that poetry has become a contemporary site for the voices of those minorities who are silenced within political and literary spheres – spoken word poetry in particular, as its aural form renders it a more democratic, widely accessible art form. When one considers the number of poems that have "gone viral" in recent history, it's apparent that slam

poetry also has the ability to help change society's normative views.

In the contemporary slam scene, however, it would appear this power has been diluted by a trend of appropriating experience as means to an artistic end. In a form where lived experience formulates the raw honesty of a poetic statement, people are taking on experiences they have not lived.

An example from a recent slam I attended: a white male gets up to perform a poem. His dreadlocks just graze his shoulders, flopping out from his pale scalp like a sad, anaemic willow. "So my dad is pretty racist," he says. "I guess this is a bit of a personal piece about coming to terms with that." What followed was a fumbling account of racial politics the likes of which has not been seen since Eminem declared: "I am the worst thing since Elvis Presley / to do rap music so selfishly".

This is not the first time spoken word has witnessed this phenomenon. Beat poetry, one of the multiple styles of spoken word, was borne out of the Harlem Renaissance and inspired by the rhythms of blues music, and had a substantial contribution to the Civil Rights movement. While this influence was continued in radical spoken word collectives like The Last Poets and in powerful pieces like Gil Scott-Heron's "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised", the style was also co-opted by the Beat Generation, and subsequently used to feed a now highly familiar white male existentialism.

Those of a privileged identity doing slam is not an issue on its own, and that fact should be made clear. The value of slam is its openness as a forum for sharing personal experience. It's a space in which one is allowed to be controversial in discussing issues that may not ordinarily be considered "literary". That said, in many cases a slam audience is far less concerned with the social issues a "controversial"

poem may indicate, and more by controversy itself. (Case in point: after I performed a poem at a recent slam about the frustrations of being regularly misgendered, one judge remarked "how brave she [was] to get up and perform that poem".)

There are a number of reasons why this happens. One in particular is the scoring system that applies in slams: traditionally, each piece will be scored out of ten by three judges – who, let's be real, are typically white males – and the three highest scoring poets will be put into a final from which a winner is chosen. When scoring is so frequently arbitrary and down to the personal taste of whoever shows up and doesn't want to pay a door charge on the night, people begin to take "good" to mean "shocking".

Another contributing factor is the ever-present phenomenon of the guilt that comes with privilege. In his poem "How To Get Beat Up By The Cops" Neil Hilborn claims, ironically self aware: "The thing about being oppressed is that I'm not: I am straight, white, and male in America." We all realise, now, the parts of us that make us lucky in this world, and we feel sorry that we have them – so, being poets of a post-Romantic world, we write about that. In doing so, however, we speak over those who are not so lucky, and impede their ability to reclaim a voice on their own oppression.

What makes it problematic is that slam poetry stops being a forum for honest expression of hardship, or the processing of experiences, and starts becoming a contest for "who can say the most dramatically oppressed thing"—or, alternately, "who can make their own experience *sound* the most dramatically oppressed". This, needless to say, is stupid. Fetishising minority status does very little to change the social conditions which oppress those of a minority identity. There is

no drama to oppression, there's nothing flashy about being silenced, there's no shock factor, there's only silence. The power of spoken word poetry is in the transcending of this silence, in the fact of speaking and being heard. The power of spoken word poetry as a force for social change is diluted by all this other noise, and poets who write cathartically are written off as "just another poet ranting about discrimination".

What's more, it sets standards for what is or is not acceptable or valuable to talk about in slam, which comes back to one of the most important things the performance poetry scene has achieved – that is, to construct a dynamic wherein there *are* no topics that are more acceptable, where there are no strict rules to determine who is or is not allowed in the club.

Linguistically, performance poetry will place itself outside of traditional grammatical structures and conventions of how language is supposed to sound – conventions which are inherently hegemonic and implicitly reinforce normative ideas about gender, race, ability or sexuality. Slam is based on rhythm, sound, and movement, not the words themselves and whether or not they cohere to form a complete sentence. In this way, not only is it a more accessible form of literary expression, without the dynamic of gate keeping found in the written word but, in the very structure of each line, spoken word poetry defies hegemony.

There is not, and never has been, a correct way to slam. That's not what this is about. There is, however, a correct way to treat the identities who find their voice in spoken word poetry – more importantly, there are ways to engage in this scene and have one's voice heard, without speaking over others. The answer is simple: just listen.

COMPLAINT LETTERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

It's never been easier to file complaints and it's never been easier to ignore them, writes Jonathon Parker.

ILLUSTRATION BY MONICA RENN

In 2012, Twitter-user @grahamcummings7 sent a tweet to British telecommunications company O2 instructing them to "SUCK DICK IN HELL". The O2 Twitter account responded by saying "Maybe later, got tweets to send right now".

Hidden behind layers of cynical public relations and attempts to create 'positive brand association', the PR teams of some businesses offer playful ripostes to spurious and frivolous complaints. Yet these responses are anomalous. Many 21st century companies have not adapted to the post-ironic tone of the internet, not knowing when to dismiss certain complaints as spurious and when to take others as genuine. The nature of a complaint letter, as it was once known, has changed, and many businesses have struggled to keep up.

Most responses to complaints from companies seem clinical and automated, rewarding even the most ludicrous complaints with the same blank, inhuman conciliations. In February this year, Twitter-user @ITK_AGENT_VIGO sent a tweet laden with sarcasm to the British Domino's Pizza Twitter account demanding a refund for burning his penis on a pepperoni pizza. Domino's responded by instructing the objector to "please email our head office", claiming "we will look for a way to notify customers of this in the future".

So much feedback received by companies nowadays is trivial, sarcastic and brusque, and thus is considered disposable. This comes from the simple realisation that every comment made on social media will soon vanish. As a result, do the companies of today not know how to deal with lengthy and substantive criticism?

A couple of weeks ago, I was refused entry to a screening of Kevin Smith's 1994 film *Clerks* at the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace in Cremorne. This was merely because I arrived a few minutes after the box office closed (yet still before the screening, scheduled to commence at 9 p.m., began). Later that night, in a state of mild annoyance, I posted this message on the Orpheum's Facebook page:

"I am not complaining about the employee who turned us away, because he was clearly following the arbitrary rule mandated by his superiors. Instead, I question the arbitrariness of this rule. There was clearly someone still sitting behind the box office, and it only takes the push of one button to re-open the till... Obviously there would be employees working until well after the completion of the last session, so I am confused as to why you would capriciously close the box office two hours before the end of your shift... In an age when the cinematic art, as an economic venture, is being threatened by piracy, I find it peculiar that you would turn down hundreds of dollars of business."

I fully expect this post to be ignored and dispatched into the sidereal void. Yet as a patron of your fine establishment for many years, I sincerely hope it is not."

The Orpheum did, indeed, respond to my complaint. Their only consolation was an apology that my night "didn't go to plan" and confirmed the screening of *Clerks* commenced at "exactly 9:10" – nearly ten minutes after we arrived.

Social media has expedited the ubiquity of outrage, allowing anyone to whine about any discommodates at any time in the day – as long as that complaint is expressed in fewer than 140 characters. Social media, through its public accessibility and visibility, makes companies more accountable for their actions. It is an economic imperative for businesses to respond to open Twitter and Facebook messages as quickly as possible for fear of public shame and reprisal; a level of accountability not facilitated by a written letter or telephone conversation.

However, Twitter and Facebook encourage terse responses rather than sincere apologies and compensatory offers. Social media lacks the personality of the human voice communicated through a telephone conversation, or the

rumination of a written letter. In the transition from old forms of communication to the new digimodern media, contemporary businesses have struggled to suitably remedy the complaints tweeted their way.

In August this year, Reddit user 'lyndy' posted a photograph of a letter she received from United Airlines. After submitting a complaint letter to the airline, the letter she received in response was clearly a template which failed to fill in the specific details of lyndy's case. The letter featured such gems of insincerity as "(SPECIFIC EVENT) will be used for coaching and training our employees" and "(CUSTOMER NAME), I ask that you allow us another opportunity to serve you". In contrast, many years ago, I wrote a handwritten letter complaining to Smith's Chips about opening a packet of Salt & Vinegars which lacked the Tazo promised by the package. In response, I received a personalised letter and the full collection of Tazos.

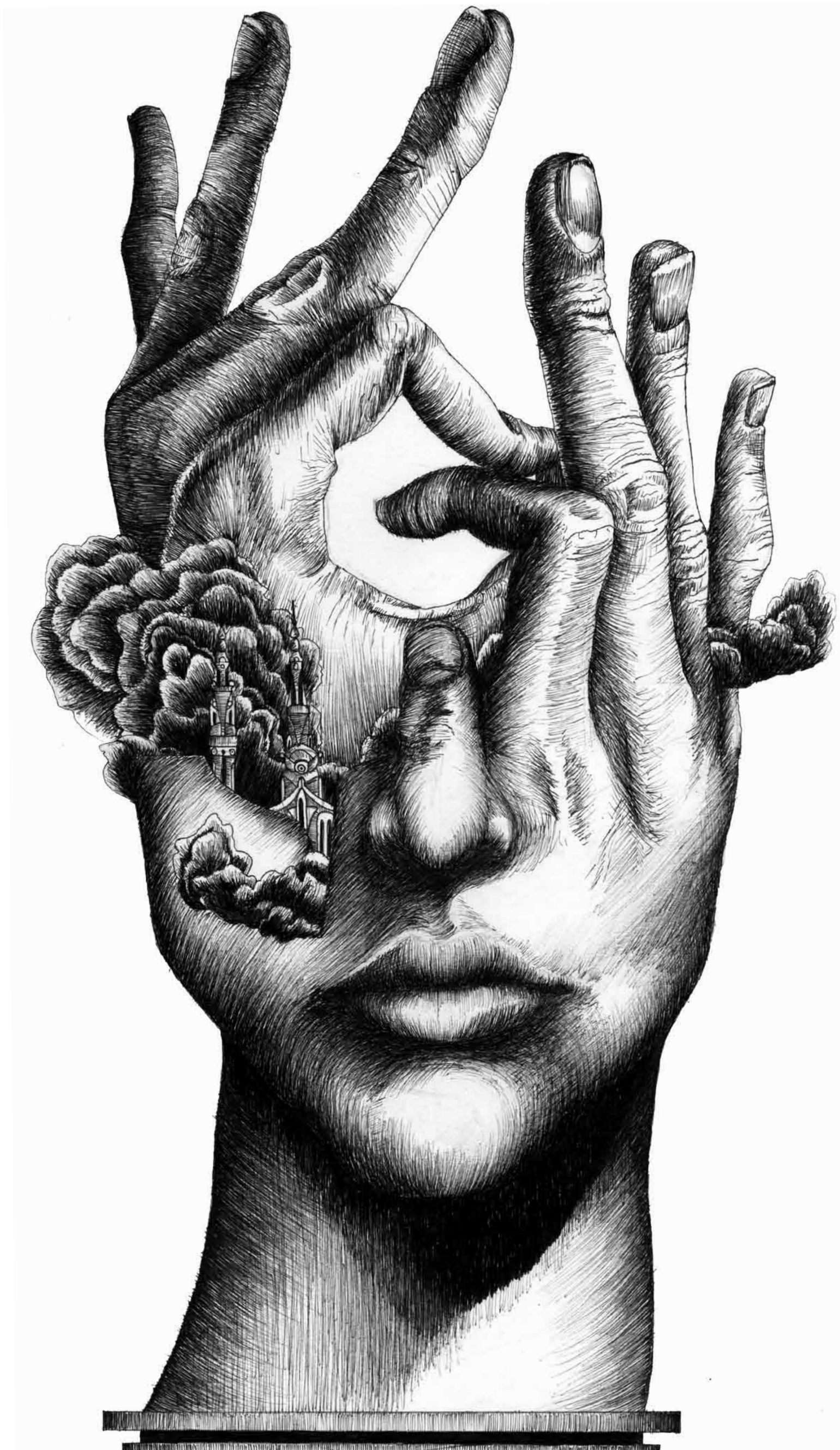
A recent study by Bluewolf, a global business consulting firm, found that 58 per cent of people who tweeted about a bad experience with a company received no response from the offending company. Instead of remedying complaints, many companies have focussed on using social media to actively promote their brand. In this paradigm, companies reward people who approve, rather than castigate, their products. In 2012, Dutch

airline KLM selected eight 'random' Twitter followers and gave them a free return flight to Amsterdam. The only thing the 'winners' had to do was write a positive tweet about the airline. Just as everyday people are encouraged to recommend a product to their friends, celebrities are paid tens of thousands of dollars to endorse certain brands.

The public sphere has morphed into a maelstrom of digimodernist praises and complaints, emerging and disappearing from Twitter – and thus the popular consciousness – in an instant. Just as the *Hey Hey It's Saturday* blackface folk devils faded into oblivion, so will the disgraceful story about the Brazilian man who was refused a job as a barista for being black. People will be outraged at something new, and forget about what outraged them a week ago. The complaint letter of the present day has thus been reduced to a form of amusing but ultimately empty public dialogue between customers and companies, with no feasible remedy or outcome. Perhaps, the Orpheum disregarded my complaint because they know I will soon forget the mild inconvenience they caused. The lure of \$5 tickets on Mondays is too tempting to repudiate.

To the credit of the Orpheum, my complaint post was not deleted, suggesting freedom of speech still has a place in society. Even though my complaint was not really important in the slightest, I would have liked a few free tickets.





Special consideration for student carers

If you are sick or have experienced some misadventure that has stopped you from being able to complete an assessment or exam you can claim Special Consideration.

However, did you know that this includes being a carer for someone who is sick? Of course there are conditions. For example, you have to be their primary carer, and be able to prove that. The University's policy says:

Students who bear a primary carer responsibility toward another person at the time of an assessment may also apply for special consideration on the basis of illness, injury or misadventure on the part of the person for whom they care if their ability to prepare for or perform the assessment is adversely affected.

So if you are in that situation, get the appropriate documentation and apply before the 5 day deadline.

If it is a situation that you can foresee, then you should talk to your teacher about getting special arrangements instead of special consideration. This might include doing your exam earlier or having a different type of assessment or something else we haven't thought of.

To see an SRC Help Caseworker call 9600 5222 to make an appointment or email: help@src.usyd.edu.au

For more information for student carers support and advocacy see: srcusyd.net.au/representation/src-departments/disabilitiesandcarers/



Students who bear a primary carer responsibility toward another person at the time of an assessment may also apply for special consideration.

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SRC CASEWORKER HELP Q&A



Ask Abe

Dear Abe,

I've got a million things going on in my life at the moment and uni just can't be my number one priority. I can't imagine that I will be attending many classes from now until the end of the year. I know I've missed the HECs census date, but is there a way that I can avoid failing.

Past Census

Dear Past Census,

You are still in time to apply for a Discontinue Not to count as Fail grade (DNF). Look on your faculty website for details on how to do this. This means you will have no academic penalty, but will still be liable for fees. However, if you can show that you reasonably believed that you could complete the subject at the beginning of the year, then things disintegrated beyond your control, you may be able to apply for a refund. Ask an SRC caseworker for details based on your personal circumstances.

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.

President's Report *Jen Light*



I would like this opportunity to share a message from some of the speakers at last weeks Town Hall meeting in the Great Hall to discuss Fee Deregulation

"We were all speakers at the University of Sydney Town Hall meeting; we are undergraduates, postgraduates, general staff, academic staff and alumni Together we form a diverse cross-section of the university. We note that speakers were selected by a chair appointed by university management itself for the stated purpose of representing a full range of backgrounds and perspectives.

We are all in agreement that the majority sentiment among the speakers and the audience was opposed to de-regulation.

Thus, we do not feel it is appropriate for the Vice-Chancellor to continue advocating for de-

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.

regulation, and we express our disappointment that public statements regarding the event by the University have thus far failed to acknowledge the meeting's clear opposition to deregulation.

We call upon the Vice-Chancellor to publicly disavow his previous advocacy for de-regulation. It is unseemly and anti-democratic for the spokesperson of the University to use his position to advocate against the clear view of the majority of the University community."

Last Monday the Great Hall was packed out for a discussion on the Universities position on Fee Deregulation. There

were 30 speakers ranging from Undergraduate and Post Graduate students, an International student, a rural student, Alumni and Staff. There were a few differences in opinions but the most notable was that despite the overwhelming support of members of the University of Sydney community the Vice Chancellor Michael Spence continues his push for deregulation.

However it is not Spence who decides the Universities position, it is the senate fellows; and with the elections of undergraduate and postgraduate looming the senate position may change.

Keep posted for updates

General Secretary's Report



In some ways, we are at a disadvantage when it comes to how the SRC is run and the fact that people are elected for a twelve-month term. Every December, a new batch of perky faces takes over the office, with their plans for the coming year and

their ideas for improvements. For those of you who don't know, the term span for office bearers, the President and Honi Soit editors is from the start December until the end of the following November. Inductions take place before uni starts, and the summer holiday period is a busy time for many office bearers.

This is a great way to ensure that as many people become involved as possible, and it also prevents activists from getting burnt out since their terms are capped at 12 months. After this, whether or not people want to continue their involvement is up to them, and some people do choose to stay involved. The downside is that sometimes the handover between office bearers – from one year to

Mariana Podesta-Diverio

the next – falls short of delivering the relevant information to the new officers. This can be because of miscommunication or other factors.

James and I think it is very important the institutional knowledge we have acquired throughout our term is passed on to our successors. This includes information on the budget – and why we did it in a certain way – as well as other things relating to finance, regulations, collectives, staff and matters regarding the executive. Accordingly, we have started to compile our handover documents. This will include formal information as well as advice on dos and don'ts for the 2015 General Secretary(ies). It is important that office bearers share

information with one another and work together. The SRC as a whole is reliant on smooth internal operations to ensure its ongoing operational stability. By compiling extensive handover information we can ensure that there is a rollover of information.

On another note, if you've left it until now to buy a textbook you weren't sure you needed but have just discovered that you did need it after all, visit the SRC's second hand bookshop in the Wentworth building, you might find what you're looking for at a cheap price.

As always, if you have any questions about the SRC, or stuff in general, please email us at general.secretary@src.usyd.edu.au

Education Officers' Report



Last Monday evening Sydney university hosted the Town Hall style meeting to discuss the wider university community's thoughts on fee deregulation and the other proposed attacks to higher education currently on the liberals agenda.

The consensus was overwhelming; out of 26 speakers comprised of various staff member, student

representatives and alumni only one speaker spoke in open favour of fee deregulation (the speaker is also the president of the NSW young Liberals so no surprises there). The other speakers shared moving stories of the struggle many students face in trying to access tertiary education, as well as addressing how fee deregulation will entrench a two-tiered US style education system.

This coupled with a student protest out the front of the meeting and heckling of the vice chancellor spread the message loud and clear: public opinion overwhelmingly opposes the neoliberal restructuring of our universities.

Despite all this, in the following days Vice Chancellor Michael Spence has proven what a sham his tightly orchestrated 'consultation process' is. He has been singing the praises

Ridah Hassan and Eleanor Morley

of deregulation in the media, and joined the other Group of Eight University Vice Chancellor's in Canberra to lobby politicians currently opposed to the policy, which entered parliament last week.

Those heading the elite institutions have partnered up with Pyne in an attempt to attract only the most privileged students in society. Students at Sydney University will continue to protest not only the Abbott government, but our own VC as well, who has been responsible for a wave of attacks on staff and students in recent years.

The Education Action Group held a forum the following day to discuss the strengths of the campaign so far, and where we're heading next. Senate member Verity Firth addressed the forum, reiterating the detrimental effect

deregulation will have on equal access to higher education, as well as highlighting the current inequalities entrenched in the Australian education system.

National education officer Sarah Garnham also spoke about the national campaign, and in particular the leading role that Sydney has played, through active campus Education Action Groups and the NSW Education Action Network.

As the legislation is debated in parliament in coming weeks, students will continue to protest to defend our education. If you would like to get involved with the campaign, come along to the EAG meetings every Tuesday at 2pm on the new law lawns, or send us an email at education.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

Welfare Officers' Report

Chiara Angeloni, Oliver Plunkett, Philippa Specker, and Brendan Wylie

The scenes of Joe Hockey's face on television as he announced the 2014 Budget back in May now seem like a distant nightmare... but the scary reality is that they're still haunting us to this day. As these reforms get debated in Parliament, now - more than ever - must we fight to ensure they don't become a reality.

It has been heartening to see the fierce backlash to the Budget is still continuing in full force, evidenced by the National Day of Action on August 20 and the March in August last Sunday. It is now essential that we, as university students, put pressure

on politicians in opposition to the deregulation of higher education and cuts to welfare services for students and the wider community.

Since our last report, your Welfare Department has been active in this fight, both on and off campus.

We've been involved with Students for Wom*n-Only Services (SWOS), a group working to fight the devastating reductions in funding by the State Government to wom*n-only refuges across New South Wales. SWOS worked with the SOS Women's Services campaign to collect

signatures for a petition calling for State Parliament to debate these reforms, and organised a candlelight vigil at Pitt St Mall on July 24 to raise awareness of the issue. Though the petition reached its target of over 10,000 signatures, many refuges still in fact face impending closure. Thus, the fight to save wom*n's refuges must - and will - continue.

We've also supported the continuing action at the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy. For more information, feel free to contact us (at welfare.officers@src.usyd.edu.au) or the Indigenous Officers.

On campus, we were pleased with the overwhelming resistance to deregulation voiced at the Town Hall meeting on August 25. This sends a clear message to both University management and Federal Parliament that staff, students and alumni at the University of Sydney oppose the inequitable and unfair education reforms. We anticipate that these concerns will be echoed in Parliament, in favour of - in the words of the informal motion passed almost unanimously at the meeting - a "government-funded, quality education system for all."

Wom*n's Officers' Report *Georgia Cranko, Julia Readett and Phoebe Moloney.*

Another fantastic week at WoCo with Wom*n's Self-Defence, Radical Sex and Consent, Film Screenings and our new Greivance Policies. Over the past few weeks we have had a chance to present workshops on apologising and calling out. So we thought we would put a little how-to guide in this very space!

How to apologise for doing something oppressive:

We have all been in the situation where someone has told you that you have done something wrong - maybe it was something that wasn't just 'wrong' in the situation you were in, but something wrong in the sense that you were partaking in the systematic wrongs that people have to deal with everyday. Maybe you got called out for doing something oppressive.

Perhaps you didn't mean it like that, or you hadn't really thought about it in that way before... Maybe you are actually a strong advocate against racism/trans*phobia/ homophobia/ sexism or the oppressive behaviour you are getting called out for - in which case you might feel quite ashamed, and unsure about the right way to respond.

So what should you do? Well obviously the best thing to do is apologise - but in a way that shows you realise that you have participated in oppression, and that you are going to think about how not to do that in the future. Also remember that it's an opportunity to learn something new. Someone calling you out may serve as a reminder of something have forgotten or aren't as sensitive to because you haven't had certain experiences. Here's

a few guidelines to apologising constructively:

1. Say "sorry".
2. Do not speak of your intention. No one who is committed to social change really seeks to hurt others, but your behaviour can be mapped on to systematic oppression as a result of living in this unequal world. Avoid classifying your apology with 'ifs' or 'buts' as they put the blame on the person who has called you out i.e. "I'm sorry IF you're offended, BUT I didn't mean it like that."
3. Articulate and acknowledge what you did wrong: "I am sorry for perpetuating racist stereotypes which are untrue and harmful."
4. Say 'Thank You' and understand that calling out takes a lot of courage and can be one of

the hardest things to do. Don't ask the person who called you out for more information.

5. Tell that person you are committed to changing your behaviour. "Thank you for pointing that out, I will do more reading about this and be more mindful of what I say in the future."

If you would like to find out more about calling out and apologising there are some great youtube videos by Francesca Leigh (cescaleigh) and the internet has many many resources for self-education to learn more about negotiating privilege and oppression. Wom*n's Collective will also be running workshops throughout the semester so contact us if you would like to get involved.

Indigenous Officers' Report

Kyol Blakeney, Crystal Dempsey, Brad Hanson and Madison McIvor.



Although a mouthful to pronounce, SULS' DLA Piper Social Justice Conference (#SJcon14) addressed many current concerns, including the background of imprisonment and racial vilification.

In her keynote address, Alison Churchill identified the effects of colonisation, dispossession of land,

over-policing and child removal as being "inextricably linked" to the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in our prisons.

Clearly it's inaction (combined with destructive, ineffective action) permits these unsettling figures to persist.

The panel discussion focused on our government's approach to racial vilification, with Tim Soutphommasane, David Rolph, Kirstie Parker and Kingsley Liu on the panel. All were in favour of the current protections allowing complaints against racial vilification remaining intact.

Race Discrimination Commissioner and fabulous Tweeter @timsout noted that while the law cannot singlehandedly end racism, it does have a role to play. He expressed

deep worry over the "socially dangerous message" that the proposed reforms communicate to our community.

Importantly, the panel identified worrying discourse of "prosecution" and "conviction" surrounding the now infamous Racial Discrimination Act, exposing clear misconceptions about what is in fact a complaint-based system.

Concern for this lack of understanding about the scope of the legislation (did you know there are exemptions under the often overlooked s 18D !?) and its operation are clearly warranted, Dr Rolph pointing out that this inaccuracy fuels our "distorted and superficial debate on freedom of speech." Despite the panel being in agreement, opponents of RDA provisions can hardly deny

that this confusion is objectively problematic.

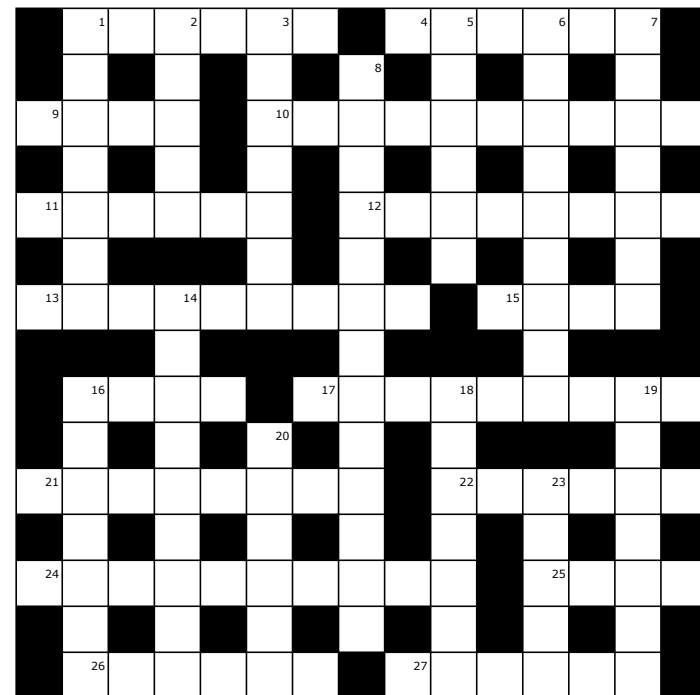
While most instances of vilification are unlikely to proceed to complaint, Parker, Co-Chair of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, said "it does provide a level of comfort to people" in affording Indigenous and other voices a medium through which to be heard. Unfortunately, discrimination and vilification against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remain at a disproportionately high level, and in the words of Parker, while it'd be nice not to need these protections, we're "nowhere near being the fair...society we'd like to kid ourselves we are."

You can contact the Indigenous Office Bearers at indigenous.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

ACROSS

- 1 Thrusts pousse heels oddly (6)
- 4 Observe the counterfeit narcotic? (6)
- 9 Oedipal offspring half-dead (4)
- 10 Losers infect crisis about technical method (10)
- 11 Curtis sued in adjunct matter (6)
- 12 310 traded ecstasy for a menace (8)
- 13 Removing Macquarie from country! (9)
- 15 Soda hoist (4)
- 16 Take away from Marina (4)
- 17 Irritants number prowesses without afterthought (9)
- 21 Grows and matures pod elves (8)
- 22 Inscription pedal with Yankovic torn! (6)
- 24 The Outpost Pact (10)
- 25 Continental portmanteau, without regret for continent (4)
- 26 Aims drills (6)
- 27 Bearing south after tea hounds (6)

Cryptic



DOWN

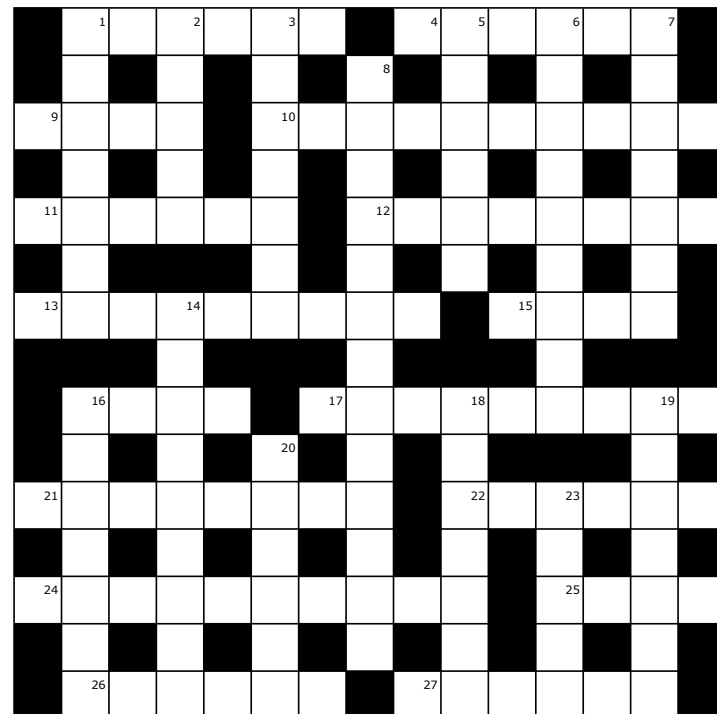
- 1 Cares for supplies (8)
- 2 Discards shacks (5)
- 3 Least difficult to bomb sea site (7)
- 5 Holders worsen out (6)
- 6 Copy curb without amateur (9)
- 7 Striking backwards dive half-decent (7)
- 8 August set apart (13)
- 14 Pit occupant dug up short acre (9)
- 16 Why's predecessor and cockroach most profound? (7)
- 18 Score pocket cue (7)
- 19 Returned Sensei Menelaus to rivals (7)
- 20 Forego vernacular during rule (6)
- 23 Whipped albumen apices? (5)



Quick

Across

- 1 Somewhat characteristic of Morse Code (6)
- 4 Tags (6)
- 9 Lion hair (4)
- 10 Punctuation mark (10)
- 11 Contraction (5'1)
- 12 Cloister (8)
- 13 Forging ahead (9)
- 15 Army, Fire and Pharaoh (4)
- 16 Flay (4)
- 17 Bands (9)
- 21 Affair (8)
- 22 People of exemplary virtue (6)
- 24 Risible (10)
- 25 Heed (4)
- 26 Wheezed (6)
- 27 Grammatical category relating to verbs (6)



Down

- 1 Four-sided figure (7)
- 2 Pips (5)
- 3 Pliant (7)
- 5 Thespians (6)
- 6 Poignant (9)
- 7 Buildings in which 18-dns take place (7)
- 8 Attribute presumably required at 7-dn (13)
- 14 Attributes presumably developed at 7-dn (9)
- 16 Dispatching (7)
- 18 Social strata (7)
- 19 Of greatest height (7)
- 20 Diminish (6)
- 23 Orb (5)



Kew You Eye Zed

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Which boxer has five sons all named George? | 5. Who composed the soundtrack to Tron: Legacy? | 9. What is the capital of Brazil? | 13. Blade Runner is to Phillip K. Dick as Apocalypse Now is to... |
| 2. What is the most dangerous animal that has ever lived? | 6. Which U.S. state is Fargo in? | 10. Which fish does caviar come from? | 14. What is the address of the White House? |
| 3. How many books make up the Odyssey? | 7. What is the name of the aircraft with the largest wingspan in history? | 11. What were the names of the wives Henry VIII had beheaded? | 15. Where does the only species of frog that goes 'ribbit' live? |
| 4. What is Freddie Mercury's birth name? | 8. Which member of the A-Team was lowest in military rank? | 12. Who is the boss of classic mode in Super Smash Bros. Melee? | 16. What is the final line in the movie There Will Be Blood? |

Answers: 1. George Foreman 2. Mosquito 3. 24 4. Fartokh Bulsara 5. Daff Punk 6. North Dakota 7. Spruce Goose 8. B.A. Baracus 9. Brasilia 10. Sturgeon 11. Anne Boleyn 12. Catherine Howard 13. Master Hand 14. Joseph Conrad 15. 1600 Pennsylvania Ave 16. "I'm finished!"

Are you a BNOC?

The following questions should help you discern what your campus status currently is. The number of Big Name on Campus (BNOC) points available for each question is indicated in brackets.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1. Have you ever held a campus position with a stipend or had an office on campus? (4) | 7. Do you know where the Anderson Stuart courtyard is? (2) | 13. Did you speak at the USYD Town Hall Meeting? (1) | 19. Have you ever signed up as a student ambassador/mentor to eye off future campaigners on open days? (2) |
| 2. Have you ever started a Facebook message with: "I'm really sorry to bother you", or "I wouldn't usually ask this but..." (2) | 8. Has anyone ever repeated your full name back to you after someone else has introduced you by your first name? (4) | 14. Have you ever speculated about an untapped voter base? (3) | 20. On your birthday, did at least 200 people post on your Facebook wall despite the fact that only you Mum was there with you to help blow out the candles? (4) |
| 3. Have you ever been the President of a Club or Society? (3) | 9. Can you complete the following chant: "Chris Pyne get out, we know what you're all about..."? (2) | 15. Have you ever tried to work out more than 3 synonyms for 'left-wing'? (2) | 21. Have you ever been instagrammed at Laneway? (2) |
| 4. Have you bought a pajama shirt of your own in the past 3 years? (-1) | 10. Have you paid for your own lunch on campus in the last month? (-1) | 16. Have you ever read your name in Manning Files or Unigate? (2) | 22. Do you ever show people just how important you really are by commenting on a Rafi Alam Facebook post? (2) |
| 5. Have you ever discussed the upcoming SRC elections during the intermission of a revue? (3) | 11. Do you know how much Michael Spence gets paid, or have an opinion on where he should shove it? (1) | 17. Have you ever publically slagged an Honi team on Facebook only to have your arse handed to you? (2) | 23. Have you managed to convince yourself that people actually listen to your SURG show? (2) |
| 6. Have you ever managed a student election campaign? (3) | 12. Do you know where the Cumberland campus is? (1) | 18. Have you ever performatively scorned Union coffee in the company of Taste regulars? (2) | |

< 5: Best of Luck with your Engineering degree. Defs not a BNOC.

5-10: You probably don't know the difference between the USU and the SRC. You persistently ask, during every single student election, whether 'this is the one with the drink voucher' and you picked this newspaper up because you thought it was the MX.

11-20: You secretly love the

colourful rainbow of t-shirts during elections and wish that you could find even one normal student politician to befriend. You are also, however, campus-aware enough to realise that 'normal student-politician' is an oxymoron.

21-25: Like a new gold-fish from the pet-shop, you are slowly acclimatising to the water temperature in the big tank. You hold a few minor positions on C&S executives and your Dad tells your Aunty that you're 'getting quite

involved in campus-life'.

26-30: You say you're just wearing the t-shirt for a mate, but you're really planning your Union Board run for 2017.

31-34: The following names probably mean something to you: Callum Drake, Paulene Graham, Todd Pinkerton, Penina Su and Omar Hassan.

35-40: You are allowed to sponge-

bath a BNOC on election days. Do your job right and these next few weeks might just be the biggest of your campus life.

40+: B-fucking-NOC. You strut down Eastern Avenue with the three campaigning 'lanes' in mind. You've benefited from more SSFAF than a debater. When things don't go absolutely to plan, you ask: 'Do they even fucking know who I am?' Best of luck with your vacuous existence.

We came, we spoke, Spence didn't listen

Last week's town hall meeting was nothing but a consultation fig leaf, argues Caitlin Doyle-Markwick.

The "Town Hall-style" meeting about fee deregulation organised by Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence and the Senior Executive Group last Monday night was nothing but a public relations stunt.

Spence's plan, however, flew back in his face. Outside students held a speakout, and National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) members leafleted against the changes. Inside speaker after speaker came out against fee deregulation. Only a tiny minority, including a Liberal SUPRA councillor and a wealthy member of the alumni, spoke in favour of the changes.

Spence was never interested in true consultation. He was only willing to hold this meeting in the first place because of pressure from the NTEU and Senate members. He tried to limit representation and dissent by making people register to the event. Speakers

were pre-chosen and given only 3 minutes to speak (while Spence got 10!).

We came, we spoke, and Spence ticked the consultation box, while continuing to lobby for fee deregulation. Any illusions that Spence was serious about consultation were further smashed when the following day he went to Canberra to continue lobbying Christopher Pyne for deregulation.

Spence has never been interested in consultation. Where was the "consultation" when Spence joined the other Go8 VCs and started lobbying the government to uncap fees four years ago? What about when he tried to cut courses and fire 340 staff in 2012? Or when he decided to fire 156 library staff and do away with thousands of books and study spaces? Spence cares only about further corporatising our university and raking in ever

bigger profits from student fees. What Abbott does in parliament, Spence does on campus.

But the government is on the back foot and feeling the pressure from below. The only reason Pyne is negotiating to drop the HECS increases is as a bargaining chip to try and get deregulation through - but he's having a hard time of it, resorting to threats of making cuts to research funding instead.

An escalating fightback, which combines student struggle with union power, has the power to beat the budget now. It was the Your Rights at Work campaign that stopped Howard. It was a staff and student campaign in 2012 that stopped job cuts at Sydney Uni. We can do it again.

The government's determination to implement these changes is such that they are willing to

virtually destroy the university system until they get their way - it is imperative that we meet this determination in our own fight against the corporatisation of our universities.

But while we continue to fight the government's changes, we must also remember that Michael Spence is not our ally in defending a good quality, equitable education - he is but the face of this hated government on campus, and must be fought just as hard.

Come along to the next Bust the Budget student meeting- Thursdays 2pm Merewether Seminar Room 7- to discuss where to next in the campaign.

On behalf of Bust the Budget Students.

Honey Soy

Mildly Dramatic Yet Essentially Safe Collisions With Inanimate Objects New Form Of Psycho-Therapy

Sam Langford enjoys walking into doors.

After valiantly surviving a run-in with the front of a slowly-moving bus, an unnamed USU Board Director says he feels the vehicle's impact really "knocked [his] problems into perspective". In the wake of the startling realisation that the laws of physics extend to intangible states of mind, an eager copycat movement has arisen.

One of the movement's founders, Mary Lane, explains that the movement aims to improve people's lives and outlooks through mildly dramatic – yet essentially safe – collisions with easily accessible environmental objects.

"We really aim to have an impact on people – in this case, quite literally."

Despite its slightly brutal inspiration, the movement has a strong focus on safety and consent. As slowly moving and non-lethal buses are difficult to come by, followers have found alternatives in walking into

low-hanging branches, stubbing toes on doorframes, and having Macbooks tumble onto them when desks fail in lectures.

In the recent inclement weather, a popular option has been to simply stand on Eastern Avenue and wait for a wild umbrella to eventually make contact. Emotional support is then provided via social media, where followers are encouraged to share their stories of minor physical impact and subsequent emotional transformation.

When asked why the strategy was better than traditional counselling and therapy, Mary explained that the cost barriers to accessing such services are often prohibitive for students from low-SES backgrounds. "Walking into a door, on the other hand, is freely available and accessible to anyone. It really equalises the playing field."



Ciders Review Board Directors

by a cider.

First there was the landmark Queer Review. Then there was the Transparency Review. Now, a cider brings you The 2014 USU Board Directors Review. On the 14th August 2014, I, a cider, tried two of the board directors at Manning Bar. These were an apple-based beverage's live findings, no edits have been made:

Alisha Aitken-Radburn –

You get the impression she has been designed to give everyone a little bit of something that they kinda want. She's not the sort of niche product that's really there for a specific demographic, so much as non-committally, generally palatable. I am made of apples. Run of the mill, and always has a toe on the party-line. Alisha also sports an aggressive dislike of opera and love of SUBSKI. Also, did you hear she's dating Young Liberal Dean Shachar or something lololol omg so Alishachar, so scandal (just kidding – I'm an apple and I'm above that bullshit).

If you're already five board directors deep, you're not going to mind having this one. But you won't necessarily enjoy it.

Kade Denton –

Kade is probably fine, I guess.

Kade initially wanted to make a racial slur after trying my friend, a bottle of Kirin, though not one you'd expect. He settled instead on a line about amy! or something, whatever that is (I'm an apple and don't have a butt hole).

The USU encourages the responsible election of board directors.

IN OTHER NEWS

Bells Ice Board of Directors Secretly Pleased Motor Neurone Disease Is A Thing

History Channel To Solve Construction of Pyramids for the Seventh Time This Week

Very Popular Show Wins Most Popular Show at the Popular Show Awards

World Mostly Just Relieved It Wasn't The Other Attenborough

Top Six Hottest Statues On Campus

Victoria Zerbst is a listicle.



1. Horse, 1992



2. Gilgamesh, 2000



3. Brooding Gargoyle, date unknown.



4. Plywood Pavilion, 2014



5. Roman Republican Statue, 1st Century BC



6. Mercury, dunno

Beyonce's VMA Performance Kills Thousands

Astha Rajvanshi survived.

All of the 12 000 audience members at this year's MTV VMAs have died from exhaustion, dehydration and starvation after Beyoncé accidentally ended up performing every song she has ever made, ever.

Originally the singer was scheduled to do a 15-minute performance of her latest self-titled album. However, following a series of backstage communication errors, she surprised the audience with what was literally a show-stopping performance of more than 250 songs which lasted over three days.

The Texan singer wore a sparkly leotard throughout the performance, which slowly disintegrated on stage with each passing day and each new fallen audience member. Along with some classics like "Single Ladies" and "Halo," the singer also performed songs from her Destiny's Child days that nobody had ever heard before, including "Signs," with the infamous lyrics: "He was freaky like a Taurus the way he handled me yeah/Flirtatious like an Aries/ Which sign is best for me?"

A few hysterical audience members tried to tweet at the singer to beg her to stop at the two day mark, but were unable to as their iPhone batteries died half way through the show from Instagramming their own protracted deaths too much.

Upon finishing, a breathless Beyoncé said, "I have nothing to say," but continued, "I love Jay-Z, I love Blue Ivy, I love music, I love God, I love you my fans, I love you MTV, I love y'all so much!"

Blue Ivy was the only remaining audience member left alive. "Go Mummy," the three-year old babbled into the microphone, standing alone amongst a sea of stinking corpses.



The back-up dancers pictured died just moments after this photo was taken.

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"Though the minds may change, the hangover will always remain."



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Did you know that the University, most super funds and the Big 4 banks have significant investment in the fossil fuels

industry? Come and learn about the local and global movement to divest from climate change.