

HONI SOIT



ISSUE ELEVEN SEMESTER TWO

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Acknowledgement

The editors of *Honi Soit* and the SRC acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. *Honi Soit* is written, printed, and distributed on Aboriginal land. If you are reading this, you are standing on Aboriginal land. Please recognise and respect this.

We acknowledge both our privilege and our obligation to redress the situation as best we can: to remember the mistakes of the past, act on the problems of today, and build a future for everyone who calls this place home, striving always for practical and meaningful reconciliation.

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Art by Alex "Grills" Grilanc.

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Editorial

So here we here, almost at the end of it all. 24 issues, 154 cheese pizzas and about 400 bottles of the BWS cleanskin later, we're all much the same: a bit fatter, a bit paler, papers produced, papers pulped.

It occurred to me recently that *Honi* really has a fundamentally stupid business model: Get 10 people to spend 12 months grappling with InDesign and the basics of defamation law. Make sure none have any particular managerial experience, then see how they go coordinating 100+ reporters and artists of diverse talent and temperament, endlessly searching for polite ways of saying "Oh God we can't publish this" at 2am in the morning. Let those 10 people get to a point where they've maybe, just *maybe*, got control of that hurtling train... and then throw them all out and get in a whole new bunch.

The only thing you can really guarantee with a model like that is that every editorial team will make mistakes. Creative, professional, personal, more than a few ethical—messing up seems to be built into the system. If you stuck with us despite that, then thank you. If you called us out on it at any point, thank you. Furious Facebook comments taught me far more this year than polite praise.

Mistakes aside, every week we really did try to fill these pages with voices of people who cared; with people who were engaged, alive and aware of their world—and brave enough to write about it. It requires a huge amount of trust to put your name to something in print so if you invested any of that in us this year, thank you.

I'm under no illusions—year to year, few things really change with *Honi*. But even if the paper doesn't change all that much, please trust that people do. This year, I've seen young reporters who used to need two weeks to write an article turn one around in two days. I've seen news reporters venture into comedy and culture writers try their hand at opinion. I've seen my fellow editors become clearer, stronger and braver in their imagination and resolve.

That stuff is cool to see and if you read, commented, liked or shared any of your ideas with us this year you made it possible. So from the 2015 editors, sorry for all the fuck ups and thanks so much for reading.

Joanna Connolly

Credits

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Thoughts, Feelings and Notices

Sound and Fury

Hi *Honi* (particularly Rebecca Wong, Sam Langford, Mary Ward and Naaman Zhou),

I've managed to avoid writing a letter to the Editors for five years, but after posting numerous Facebook rants and casually complaining in Courtyard I have decided, enough is enough—I'm a little excited, but be gentle, it's my first time... The reason for the letter—I'm really sick of the consistent inaccuracies that crop up in *Gronkwatch*, which is ironic given the title of the section... So I have to ask, who watches the *Gronkwatch*?

In the latest edition of *Honi* I specially take issue with the section of *Gronkwatch* "Labor take their leave"—which makes up less than 1/4 of the entire article (despite focusing on considerable changes to the SRC). Firstly, "to nobody's surprise" the writers have yet again failed to do basic fact checking. The councillors who walked out of the meeting were from SLS and Unity, not from NLS—(yes, there are differences between NLS and SLS, a big one being the first letter of each faction's name). The only councillor to

speak against the motion from the Labor factions was myself (which makes the line "several of them spoke against the motion" beyond incorrect, unless this is a subtle dig at representative democracy?)—Also, side note: yes NLS did remain in the meeting, but did not speak on the motion, but congratulatory tweets for them staying behind cropped up, which you know, is nice.

Anyway, when I spoke against the changes, yes fee deregulation was something I mentioned, however my tirade focused on the very real threats to education happening on this campus (removal of simple extensions, university restructure), which ultimately two well-paid Education Officers should be fighting against next year—with a President who receives at minimum, a full time wage.

The average student might not care, but a conversation that has gone on for months and took up over an hour of the SRC meeting to discuss probably deserves more than a paragraph write up.

Then the second paragraph on "last

Wednesday's two and a half hour long meeting" is even more disappointing—instead of discussing the debate that occurred between councillors, the writers have boiled the issue down to the view of the winning side, and left out every argument made against these changes. I find it ridiculous that the voices of "white people" were preferred in this article over two women of colour who spoke against these changes. Their voices were not only ignored in that meeting in preference for the dominant view (ACAR and the Ethno-Cultural Officer Bearers—neither of whom were present in the meeting), but they've also been erased from the discourse thanks to *Gronkwatch*. I don't really care that my contribution to this debate was not mentioned, because heck, I've been blocked out of ACAR since its inception so it makes no difference that my views get blocked out in *Honi* as well—but if you're going to report on student politics at all, get it right and be balanced ffs.

All in all, this article was a toilet.

I give *Gronkwatch* this week one poo out of five, because the entire thing focused

on a non-existent stack of the SASS AGM—which is about as interesting as well, SASS.

Yours in Unity,

Robby Magyar

Ps. I look forward to the online vitriol I receive for having an opinion—I really hope Rafi Alam posts a Facebook status to delegitimise everything I say again, that was super fun!

Adam Goodes

Dear *Honi* Editors,

On behalf of the Indigenous Collective we would like to thank you for all the work you put into securing the interview with Adam Goodes that was published in your last edition. We would especially like to acknowledge your initiative in suggesting to Goodes' team that the interview be conducted by an Indigenous student. By doing so you were able to highlight the voices of the Indigenous students on campus and produce a piece that effectively discussed issues that affect the Indigenous community. We would also like to thank all the editors who transcribed the interview. Special thank you to Alex who was fundamental in the organization of the interview and Dom who helped both in the organising of the interview, the final steps of getting it published and helped promote the interview by sending it to a number of external media outlets.

The Indigenous Collective thanks you for your commitment, not only in the Adam Goodes piece but throughout the year, in publishing the voices of Indigenous people and/or articles that give an insight into lived experiences of Indigenous people.

Congratulations on a fantastic piece.

Kind Regards,
Indigenous Collective

Faction:	Grossroots	Indies	SALT	NLS	Unity	SLS
Average Councillor Attendance Rate:	75%	63%	56%	48%	37%	31%

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A Period In Detention

Liberty Lawson spoke to Kate Milanowicz about the struggle to access sanitary products on Nauru.



Art by Stephanie Barabona

surrounding a Senate inquiry into conditions on Nauru, Milanowicz was inspired to start a campaign to offer these women another option.

LL: Could you describe the situation for women in Nauru for us?

KM: Numerous refugee advocates have publicly spoken out about women in Nauru being subjected to a humiliating process in order to access sanitary pads.

Some reports have detailed that women have been made to wait in line for up to four hours in order to request their ration of four pads from male guards, whilst other recent reports have said that women now receive pads on an 'as needs' basis from male guards each time they visit the bathroom.

From a practical point of view this just doesn't make sense, and from a human perspective, it doesn't take into account that these women come from different backgrounds and cultures and often feel extremely embarrassed about having to approach a male guard for a pad. It is incredibly culturally insensitive and dehumanising, and places women in the uncomfortable position of having to ask men for pads or go without. For those that go without, many make do with makeshift pads are constructed from tent fabric or whatever else they can find.

LL: Why would there be restrictions on something so basic and essential?

KM: Well, during the Nauru inquiry earlier

this year, Save the Children gave evidence that the reason they were given from guards were that pads were a security hazard as they were allegedly soaked in gasoline during 2013 riots at the centre. But as Senator Hanson-Young pointed out in response, there were no female detainees in the centre at that time.

Whilst I personally do not accept the alleged flammability argument as it is ridiculous to ban an essential item when almost anything can start a fire, that is why I decided to propose another solution—menstrual cups.

Menstrual cups are completely reusable and they're made of silicone, which has a low flammability risk. They also don't pose health risks like toxic shock syndrome, and they are environmentally friendly. One cup lasts up to ten years, and can stay in for up to 12 hours, so you don't have to worry about changing them during the day. They are also easy to clean.

LL: What inspired your campaign for menstrual cups? How would they be better than regular sanitary pads?

KM: I don't think many people want to speak out about reproductive issues, or their own menstrual related habits, but a large percentage of the population bleeds and we need to talk about it. Especially when already vulnerable women are being made to feel humiliated about it.

Many of my friends and I converted to menstrual cups and would often talk about

how great and convenient they were, and one day I just thought well, I guess this could be a solution for the women in Nauru. I'm not saying that menstrual cups are the perfect solution. Not all women feel comfortable using them, as they require a certain level of comfort and understanding of your own body, which some women may not be accustomed to. But by providing them as an option, at least it gives women another choice that they can explore and discuss with other women.

The better solution would be to dispense all sanitary products freely, but this issue has been discussed time and time again without resolution, so putting forward another solution may add a level of rationality to the debate. Ultimately though, people who have been found to be genuine refugees do not belong in detention and processing should be quick and efficient, but that's another story completely.

LL: How can the readers of *Honi Soit* help?

KM: Readers of *Honi Soit* can help by contacting the Minister for Immigration Peter Dutton to suggest that the dispensation of sanitary items be deregulated in Nauru and that menstrual cups should be provided as an option.

Readers can also sign and share this petition to get menstrual cups for women in Nauru, as it will be submitted to the minister for consideration and the more people that sign the better:

<https://www.change.org/p/minister-peter-dutton-menstrual-cups-for-nauru>

Last Against The Wall

Alexi Polden wonders if the left is always right.

There's a letter that I read sometimes, one of the few papers my grandfather managed to keep on his long journey as a refugee to Australia. If you can read Polish and understand the code used to evade censors the message is simple.

Your family are gone. You can never return home.

And he didn't. One day my grandfather left home to study, and, some time later, his family were gone, some shot, others disappeared to Siberia where they'd inevitably perish.

His experience wasn't particularly unique. Though nobody really knows how many people died under Stalin, the figures are staggering. The lowest estimates are around 20 million, the largest up to 60. Even on the lowest that's 1830 deaths for every day Stalin was in power. A million deaths may be easy to write off as statistics—but, most of them, meant someone like my grandfather never had a family or a home to return to.

Of course, it takes very little effort to mourn the tragedies of generations gone by. The debates of the "New" and "Old" Left are banal and useless to the experience of so many. But in the relief of escaping the

philosophical stagnation of internal crisis many in the left have forgotten just how badly our favoured system can work out.

Perhaps my complaint is unclear; I'll spell it out. For all our (rightly justified) concerns about systemic failings, about microaggressions and oppression, about colonisation and economic servitude we forget that so many of those features existed in the failed socialist project. That's not even the root of what I struggle with: as generations of my fellow leftists have pointed out, a few failed experiments doesn't destroy a theory.

What really riles me is the contempt and disregard shown by so many for the pain suffered under socialist regimes. I simply don't understand how people active in social movements, who understand the pains that can be suffered by digging up old wounds and carrying on soiled narratives can turn around and post photos of Stalin on their Facebook feed. Or how every argument they have ends with the refrain "ah, but the libs will be the first against the wall".

I have quite seriously seen complaints (some my own, some by others) about that playful fetishisation met with the (quite serious)

retort, "Ah, but you're forgetting the class consciousness of the revolution, what it set out to do".

You'll be pleased to know my gripe isn't Eurocentric. Early this year ARMED, the "intersectional, anti-racist media collective" published "Ask Comrade F - ARMED's very own advice column with our in-house Marxist-Leninist-Maoist expert..." The advice, which opened with a quote from Mao suggested (in great humour I'm sure) that an advice-seeker "Set about at once to purge these reactionary tendencies from your partner", among other things. The post was met with rightful disdain and, admittedly followed by an apology—but exemplifies the strange lack of self-reflection so endemic among people otherwise so keen to do the right thing.

This mindlessness isn't restricted to the campus left. Near the end of every intervarsity debating tournament my much loved USU Debating society chants "Trotsky's Lament" (better known outside debating as "Red Fly the Banners O")—strangely, the debating society uses the tasteful Stalinist version of the chant.

None of these things, a fetishisation of Stalin

or socialist/Maoist language, ill thought out song choices, really particularly phase me. An off-colour joke here or there doesn't make you bad or necessarily a hypocrite.

Honestly, I just expect a little better. Political movements should be self aware, and acknowledge the faults in their past. I don't take the lazy fetishisation as some kind of endorsement of Stalin's reign, but I think it's a little endemic of a left wing failure to grapple with the realities of our preferred society. That said, this paper isn't really a political treatise, all I really set out to say was that words sometimes words hurt, and we shouldn't forget the past.

If you want a more assertive conclusion, I'll borrow from Lezek Kolakowski's 1974 letter to E.P Thompson "My Correct View on Everything".

"This is a banal but important point which I hope is clear to you. I simply refuse to join people who show how their hearts are bleeding to death when they hear about any, big or minor (and rightly condemnable) injustice in the US and suddenly become wise historiosophists or cool rationalists when told about worse horrors of the new alternative society."



The Internet is Racist

Rebecca Wong found out that a picture is worth 250 words.

Blind people have really niche pastimes. Last week, my friends and I discovered an online service called 'Describe'. For \$6, it offers three 250-word descriptions of an image—seemingly a fair price to pay for vicarious sight. Eager to find out what everyone else looked like, we each submitted a photo of ourselves for examination. Here's what the internet thought of me.

Description 1:

This room is quite dark: a single table lamp throws light up behind the woman standing before the camera's lens. There is a couch and some chairs along the wall arranged in a conversation group. Large paintings and a mirror are hung on the walls in the gloom. To the right of the image, one mirror catches a distant window covered with a long sheer curtain and other furniture.

The petite Asian woman in the center has the brightest of smiles covering her entire face. The outer edges of her black hair are absorbed in the darkness but the glow on her cheeks cannot be missed. Even her eyes are alive with the joy that she feels. Her left arm is relaxed at her side. Her nails are painted a soft blue and she has a large exquisite ring on her index finger. Her right hand rests gently on her right hip with her fingers coming forward, and a bluish

bracelet is partially visible on her wrist. Her legs and feet are not visible on this picture.

Under her soft wrap she is wearing a simple sleeveless yellow shift. It has a large scooped neck and reaches almost to her knees. The soft layered wrap itself is two-tone with ties at the waist. The orange panel is on the left and the peach is on the right. Where the ties come at the waist the wrap touches and the whole garment is likely tied toward her back. The material of the wrap is quite soft with the top layer reaching her waist and the under-layer reaching gracefully to the floor. Indeed she is a woman who catches your attention.

Description 2:

A young woman is posing for the picture in a formal living room. She is oriental with short black hair. She has a big smile. She is wearing a short yellow dress that is performing the function of a shell. It is covered by loose fitting lounging pajamas that are pink on one side and a muted orange on the other. The pajamas reach to the floor. Her right hand is on her right hip while her other arm hangs loosely at her side. She has baby blue nail polish on the nails of both hands. Her arms are quite thin and her figure is neither too thin nor too heavy. The room is dimly lit by a single



table lamp that is behind the woman and not fully in view as a result. There is an oriental flavor to the decorations with a large oriental statue on a shelf as a focal point of the interior design. There is a simple white fireplace, a sofa, and chairs. A large mirror is mounted on the wall behind the sofa. The entire scene communicates to me a woman who is living well and who fully enjoys it. She doesn't appear to have any current major problems or challenges in her life. She has every expectation that tomorrow will be as good as yesterday and today for her.

Description 3:

The picture shows a radiant young woman standing in a living room smiling at the camera. She is in her late teens or perhaps twenty years old. She seems to be of Asian descent. She is wearing a very lovely long

flowing silky dress of bright colors, orange, yellow and salmon. She has short brown hair. Her dress has a low neckline, revealing the skin of her upper chest. Her arms are bare as the dress is also sleeveless. She has beautiful skin. She's wearing very little jewelry, nothing around her neck or on her arms, but she is wearing a large ring on her left hand which rests by her side. Her right arm is bent at the elbow and her right hand is on her hip, as she is posing for the camera. She has light blue fingernail polish on. The flash from the camera has made the young woman stand out from the relatively drab background of the living room. She is so beautiful and happy she is positively glowing in this moment. There are some clues in the living room that she is Asian. We see a large Asian statue in the background and a small Asian style end table with a tea pot or incense pot on top.

Other than those items, however, the room is furnished American style with 2 chairs, sofa, lamp, large mirror and a fireplace in the background. This girl is very happy and is dressed for an occasion. We speculate where her family is from, perhaps Nepal. But she was born in America and lives here now. She is about to go out on an important date with someone she is fond of, and who has captured this moment forever in the picture.

Bringing Down The House

Ellie Rogers and Oliver Moore offer some home decorating tips that match your budget.

The student housing crisis has long been acknowledged, with too little available, what is available being unaffordable, and most being farmed out to third party services rather than managed by the university itself. Roughly 90% of students live in private accommodation (that is, not living at home or in a university-maintained property), and coming up with the \$375 a week to rent a UniLodge studio whilst juggling full time uni, part time jobs, and extracurriculars (mostly CV-stuffing and partying on weeknights), is by no means a simple task. It's no surprise that students are looking for a new, cost-effective option to furnishing apartments. So, we went through the uni and tested what was and wasn't bolted to the ground, and beautifully furnished a UniLodge studio.

The bookcase on the ground floor of Woolley

This bookcase is the definition of class in antiquity. Its rich wood and swinging glass display doors are only part of the story—it comes accompanied with all sorts of classic titles. From a quick glance it seems to be mostly things you've pretended to have read in order to impress a lacklustre date, so this should give you perfect deniability if you manage to make it back to your place. If you don't want to go to the effort of carrying all the books from Woolley to yours, you can always just pick some really obscure titles from Fisher and renew them forever.



This dubious cupboard from the Quad, and whatever mysteries it holds

Has anyone ever opened it? Is this where they keep the bodies of students who fail PHIL1011? Is it a portal to another dimension? Filled with rejected simple extension requests? Take it today to find out!

A giant hashtag "#####sculpture#####"

Every apartment needs a piece of modern art so your one night stands thinks you're sophisticated, and this one has the added benefit of letting them know you got in to USyd. It can also be used as a coat rack or hat stand in times of need.



The bean bags in Carlslaw 24 Hour
You're better than this.



Finally, for the artier types out there, the biannual campaign season should give you ample material to:

Make a papier-mâché lover out of leftover HTVs

The only way to complete your home-away-from-home experience is with a lover who won't ever leave you. This papier-mâché friend with benefits has all the advantages of a sex life without ever having to engage meaningfully with another human being. And, anyway, you've already been fucked by stupol once...



Tim Minchin vs. God*

*(As represented by Tom Goodwin...)

When I was 16, I emailed singer-songwriter Tim Minchin to talk about God. I had just been to his concert, and as a devout Christian I was offended by his comedic takedowns of my religion. My first message started a dialogue that was to last for over a year. Below, I have included excerpts from our emails.

Hey Tim!

I really enjoyed your show. I think you have an amazing ability to be brutally honest and humorous at the same time.

I apologise in advance for the long email but I respect you and value your opinion and was hoping that you could write to me addressing some specific topics!! Pretty please... I would love to hear your view on why you so firmly believe that evolution is truth and why you say that the only argument against evolution that you have heard is that it is "only a theory". I love the way you respect the immense beauty in creation and can only hope that you one day come to see the beautiful mind of the creator who created the beauty of the earth...

I encourage you to investigate the claim of Jesus rather than reject it based on the Christians who seem to believe in God through blind faith rather than by researching the claim and evaluating it. The best book that I have read that explains the logic behind God and Jesus is in the book "Mere Christianity" by C.S. Lewis...

Sincerely,
Tom

Hey Tom!/ Thanks so much for your excellent message. You're quite clearly an extremely intelligent 16 yr old! You don't at any point sound arrogant, and I'm really glad you wrote...

You seem to be claiming the following: "Evolution is a theory that has millions of pieces of evidence to support it. It makes predictions (ie that there will be transitional fossils in certain stratum) that constantly, consistently, and frequently come true. However I have found a couple of examples of an animal which doesn't easily fit into this theory. Therefore, a dark-ages text claiming the existence of a magical man-god must be the better explanation." Mad! Type Occam's Razor into Wikipedia.

Even if evolution was not the scientific fact that it is, the idea that the Christian explanation of existence is its worthy replacement is absolutely crazy. Creationism / Intelligent Design does not propose any testible theory for the existence of species. It simply looks for tiny cracks, peers into them, and yells. "Look! Look! I can see God!".

Please, Tom, look carefully into the information you are being fed... The vast, vast majority of scientists accept evolution as fact... and pretty much the only ones who don't are Christians and are therefore not thinking scientifically. There are, of course, hotly debated topics within evolutionary science... this is what makes science different from faith: it is constantly challenging and improving itself.

I could go on for much much longer about why Christianity is intellectually problematic, but

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frankly, i don't care. I don't care if people are Christian, Hindu, Jew, Atheist, Confucian or Pastafarian. But when it comes to my shows, I can only write about the things I think about - and belief happens to be at the top of the list.

...Just one note: the notion of sin is nonsense. You'll have to excuse me for any arrogance here, but dividing behaviour up like that is extremely unhelpful, and if i had any direct advice it would be this: do yourself a favour and forget about the notion of sin. It will ruin your life.

I don't dismiss Christians nor generalise about their behaviour. My criticisms of Christianity in my show, "Ready For This", are very clear and very specific:

"1. *The Church's treatment of homosexuals is hypocritical.* ("I Love Jesus, I Hate Faggots") ...
"2. *The idea that the Bible is our best source of moral guidance is laughable.* ("The Good Book")..."

Came across this book review. The book looks like a good one for you if you're interested.

<http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/badastronomy/2009/04/15/why-evolution-is-true/>

tim

"If God exists, he's a proper cunt. (And he made his followers in his image... which might explain why you compared homosexuality to rape.)"

Hey Tim,

Thanks so much for the reply. Sorry that I am the one who takes a long time to reply even when you are probably a thousand times busier than I am

...I feel that it is possible that people may have homosexual inclinations naturally (occurring without any environmental causes in their upbringing) in the same way that people may have the inclination to lie or cheat etc.

I do not think that having an attraction towards the same sex in and of itself is wrong but rather acting upon this inclination becomes sin. This is the same as any other sin. I hope this does not mean that you reject me as a person...

One thing that really confuses me is the way that people who are atheists talk about morals. I would love to talk for longer about this point! I do not understand how people can believe that we were created in some chemical reaction... If we are only these

meaningless organisms with no purpose in life than to have the most enjoyment before we die then what stops us from being completely selfish and killing whoever we want and having sex with whoever we want etc. Why would we need to worry about 'moral' issues such as the ones you mentioned?...

Sincerely,

Tom G

I didn't reply to this, Tom, because I found it sad and infuriating. You're a smart young man and I hope you learn over time how problematic your opinions are, logically and morally.

What other people do with their sex lives has nothing to do with you. Nothing to do with the church. Nothing to do with me. Nothing to do with a book that you seems to concurrently think is both divine and open to interpretation! Nothing to do with any of the fools who preach their prejudice in your church.

How dare you decide what God thinks is a "sin"? How the hell would you know what God thinks? How dare you look at a homosexual person - a smarter, more educated, more giving, more open, more loving person than you or your preachers

.....

"If God exists, he's a proper cunt. (And he made his followers in his image... which might explain why you compared homosexuality to rape.)"

or your parents and say be or she is committing a "sin"? What the hell is a "sin" anyway? How simplistic and judgmental!

The need to divide things into the false dichotomy of good and evil should remain the intellectual pursuit of pre-enlightenment adults and modern 4 year olds.

Many of the most horrific human acts in history have been justified by ill-educated arseholes waving their personal definition of sin.

Humans created God. Humans created the Bible. Humans created our laws. Humans are the source of war and hatred. Humans are the source of love and giving. Humans are the source of morality. If you need a book to tell you what is right, then I am sad for you. Are you suggesting if God wasn't there, you would kill and fuck all over the place? What's wrong with you dude?

Sorry mate. I don't reject you "as a person". I don't even know you. And I'm sure you're a nice guy, but you've been taught bad stuff and it gives me the shits. As you should know from my material.

Keep this email and read it every now and then. Consider it the Book of Timothy's lost verses. t

In the next section, Minchin's replies are slotted in between my responses:

Hey tim,

Sorry if i have made you sad or infuriated though may i ask (not to sound arrogant), if what other people do has nothing to do with you or me, then why does my 'difference of opinion' cause you sadness or fury?

You make a lot of well thought-out points, but this isn't one of them. A person's sexuality doesn't hurt you or even affect you, so you don't need to have a moral opinion on it. That's what I mean by "nothing to do with you". The fact that you presume to do so makes me angry in the same way that if someone tried to pass laws saying Christians have limited rights, I would be angry on behalf of Christians.

And if you claim that there is no deity that defines what is right and wrong then how can you claim that specific human acts are "horrific".

I don't know. I just can. Weird huh? How do you know what's right and wrong? Do you always have to refer to what your dark-ages philosophers thought? Or do you just know? Take some pride in your own ability to act morally.

If nature was the result of a chemical reaction and our species has evolved due to natural selection and survival of the fittest then what gives you the right to tell Hitler that what he did was wrong. He may have believed that he was killing off weaker forms of our specie. What has a crazy Nazi killing people have anything to do with natural selection? That's a completely empty argument.

A thought on morality for you, and anyone else who think their doctrine is the source of the stuff:

Morality alters over time. You are the type of Christian you are (ie reasonably liberal) because humans have dragged their religions forward with them. Slavery, witch-burning, genocide and a million other terrible human acts have been justified as supported by the bible. (Note I didn't say religion caused these acts). The reason those things are now seen as immoral is because humankind has advanced. God has nothing to do with it. A prediction: in 50 years, Christians will not accept prejudice against homosexuals and will look back at your generation as misguided and embarrassing. You think all those old Christians were wrong with their prejudices against black people and women and Muslims, but you think your interpretation of God's word is spot-on? You sure Tom? You sure you haven't seriously fucked up? I'd hate to be in your shoes - you must be scared shitless of judgement day.

The simple answer to complex moral questions is to invoke God. And if you want simplicity,

"How did 'God' (a word I don't understand) send 'Jesus' (a dead cult leader from dark-ages Palestine) to 'give us the opportunity to have our sins forgiven'? I honestly don't know what that means. And I'm smarter than you. What gives?"

go for your life - I've never once approached a Christian and questioned their right to believe what they want.

I do not claim to have an opinion. I am presenting you with what I believe comes from the authority of God who made you in his image.

I don't know what you mean by "God". I don't know what you mean by God's "authority". I can't believe you think there's a God who looks like me.

You are correct in saying that the sex lives of others has nothing to do with me or any other human ... However if there is a God, then it matters to Him and even He doesn't force you to have a certain 'sex life'. He has told us the way we should live our lives and will judge accordingly. Though on that note it is amazing that he does not judge us based on the sins we commit but sends Jesus in our place in order to give us the opportunity to have our sins forgiven.

I don't think you even know what you mean when you write sentences like this. How did "God" (a word I don't understand) send "Jesus" (a dead cult leader from dark-ages Palestine) to "give us the opportunity to have our sins forgiven"? I honestly don't know what that means. And I'm smarter than you. What gives?

If we move away from homosexuality being a sin then what is stopping us from making murder or rape or theft right.

If you said that to me at my dinner table I would ask you to leave. An exercise for you: rather than spending your email time regurgitating standard old church rhetoric, why don't you answer this for me: why is the above sentence fucked? Honestly, give it a bash. Try to think why I think the above sentence is problematic and reply with your answer. If you do that, I'll answer again. If you don't, I'm over and out.

Is there not something inside you that makes you feel angry when injustice is served? I put it to you that this is the work of God in creating us as beings in his image.

Well I put it to you that a Dragon called Grsbmid is doing it. You can't just substitute an assertion of your original premise to try to bolster your argument.

And I know you enjoy having a dig at the church but I would say that I am not against this.

I appreciate that. I imagine it must be very hard believing what you believe and not being outraged by people insulting it.

How can you tell people not to be judgemental when you yourself are judging the church and claiming to know that what they do is wrong.

I don't know. It's complicated. I don't know if I'm right. But I use my brain, I look at history, and I try to be a good person. Part of being a good person for me is being angry at prejudice. Just like part of being a Christian for you is supporting prejudice.

Christians should also not be judgemental. It is not our place to judge. It is our place to let God judge and tell other people that he will judge all of us.

Yeab well, he's doing a pretty good job of judging millions of innocent African kids. If God exists, he's a proper cunt. (And he made his followers in his image... which might explain why you compared homosexuality to rape.)

Anyway I am sorry if I sound angry or offended at all. I hope that this conversation can remain intellectual. I hope that you may not disregard my points, even though it is highly likely that you will disregard them as foolishness.

I find it hard to believe you are only 16. You are very smart (assuming you really are writing this stuff yourself). I don't think you're a fool - I wouldn't bother writing if I did. I wish I had time to address all this properly, but I have a 6 week old baby.

But even if I had time to have this conversation properly, I know it would have no impact on you, because you believe that you and your family know something that is unknowable. You have been convinced that one of thousands and thousands of gods created by man over the millennia is the "real" one. And guess what? It happens to be the one you were bought up to worship! Wow! What a huge coincidence!

You believe that morality is governed by a completely unprovable and very unlikely entity. This makes you largely lost to reasonable debate. And it means you are not suited to contribute to the forward movement of human morality. While you sit there with your divine "knowledge" of what is right and wrong, the rest of us will roll up our sleeves and get on with the job of trying to face the challenge of ever-

"Are you suggesting if God wasn't there, you would kill and fuck all over the place? What's wrong with you dude?"

changing human morality in an ever-changing world.

You are so bright that it will be very hard for you to leave your religion. You work so hard at justifying your beliefs that you are probably going to hold them for life.

t

hey tim stoked that you did send it! hope your baby is getting along well :)

just quickly i want you to know that i don't have a moral opinion on a persons sexuality. people were given free choice. people can be homosexual and heterosexual and shouldn't be treated differently. thats what jesus did. he hung out with the prostitutes and tax collectors (hated in that time period) rather than the religious leaders. however all i say is that there is a god, he would be a bit angry



if he made man and then created women to be with men (and made them compatible for procreation) only for the men to be with other men...

Slavery, witch-burning and genocide are all WRONG. These have no support in the bible... Slavery is not biblical either. In fact, you may know the story of William Wilberforce? ...

i have an honest question that i hope you could answer for me on science. i'm not trying to be an arrogant tosser: if science and this world is based on cause and effect (which i don't disagree with) then what caused the big bang? ie. how did the chemicals and whatever it was, come into existence?

cheeeers!

Tom

we don't know what caused the big bang, but the idea that it was god simply begs the question, what caused god?

and you'll say he exists outside of time, and i'll say, 'how do you know?' and make a whole lot of points which you - whilst dressing your reply in cheery and charming language - will completely ignore, and instead continue to deliberately avoid turning your otherwise well-developed brain to anything that genuinely conflicts with your philosophy.

in a poem i wrote, i say: "science adjusts it's views based on what's observed; faith is the denial of observation so that belief can be preserved".

you have faith.

in my last email i made the point that people have used the bible to justify horrible acts just as

.....

changing human morality in an ever-changing world.

You are so bright that it will be very hard for you to leave your religion. You work so hard at justifying your beliefs that you are probably going to hold them for life.

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you are now justifying your prejudice... and you replied, 'yes, but those other people were wrong'. Which shows how completely you managed to avoid thinking about what i said.

and then, like some kind of 5-year-old you said, 'god made men and women so wouldn't he be angry with gays?' to which i actually laughed out loud.

that - as the cool kids say these days - is a fail.

and, as vonnegut says, so it goes.

Hi Tim,

When we last emailed 6 years ago, I was an opinionated 16 year old Christian... I'm now 22 and no longer a Christian. I'm sure you've had many similar conversations over the years, so our exchange probably doesn't immediately spring to memory. I just thought I would write because toward the end of our exchange all those years ago (after you'd just had a baby), you said "even if I had time to have this conversation properly, I know it would have no impact on you".

I just thought you might be interested to know that it did have an impact...

You said I "had faith", but really I think I was just searching for meaning/truth. And you were right, the most convenient 'truth' was the one that my extended family had convinced themselves was real...

I really hope you get a chance to read this (even though I still think I sound like a twat when I write) because I guess it shows that debating stuff with seemingly stubborn Christians isn't always all for nothing.

I hope you are well. I saw you in Californication, that was awesome.

Tom





Empowering Women Behind Bars

Rebecca Wong talks with Kat Armstrong, founder of the Women in Prison Advocacy Network

HS: Can you tell me a bit about yourself and how you became involved in women's advocacy?

KA: I spent 10 years myself in prison, and whilst I was in prison I saw many injustices occurring to and around the women. I wanted to start an organisation that actually advocated and supported to empower women, to become the best that they could be. I came from a very dysfunctional family. I had very young parents, my mother was 17 when she gave birth to me and my father was 19, and they already had my sister who was 18 months older than me, so babies having babies. My father was a Vietnam veteran, and so for the first few years of my life he was away at war. He was conscripted, so he had no choice. When my father got back from Vietnam, we moved to Newcastle. For the first say 10-11 years of my life, it was filled with domestic violence, alcohol addiction, and abuse. And then my parents separated when I was 11 or 12, and I moved in with my mother and left my father. By the time I was 15-16, I began to self-medicate on illegal substances—marijuana, speed, and then heroin, and by the time I was 17-18, I was addicted to heroin, because I hadn't had the support, counselling or nurturing as to my dysfunctional upbringing. I ended up in the CJS as a 19-year-old single mother with a 1-year-old daughter.



before that occurring, were asked to sign a consent form, but without the details of what would actually occur in practice. And also with underlying threats which of course were not written in the consent form, that if you didn't participate in this, this could affect your classification of getting into a lower security prison.

HS: If there are female prison guards, do you think that's less likely to happen?

KA: Absolutely not. So back in the late 80s early 90s, it was predominantly women officers, with maybe a quarter or a fifth men officers. Today, it's sometimes 60-40 men to women, so regardless whether those are men or female officers, depending on the culture, and the values and judgment of those officers, it's irrespective of gender.

HS: Is that a cultural thing, or is it individuals who abuse their power over others?

KA: The reality is the majority of officers in correctional services, and particularly long term ones, after seeing so many of the same people come in and out, come in and out, they form a major judgment and bias—they just believe this person is just a hopeless druggie. "Oh Kat you've been in jail 3 times now, you're a habitual criminal you're a serial recidivist, you're an addict, and you'll either die or keep coming back in for the rest of your life—I couldn't tell

you how many times I was told that. But then there were other officers who then took me aside when I started my law degree, and were just like "Well done, good on you".

HS: are there ways in which women's experiences of prison differ from men's?

KA: The biggest one is this. 60-70% of women who go to prison are mothers, primary caregivers for their children. And 50% of those women are not even convicted of an offence, but they're refused bail. They lose their children, who quite often go into foster care, they lose their

house, they lose all their belongings, and so the whole family unit breaks down. The majority of men that go to prison, have a wife or a girlfriend or a partner, who maintains the family home and the children, and visits them in prison every week.

HS: Do you think the prison system adequately supports women who wish to pursue education?

KA: When I was in prison, there was greater budgets for education and programs in prison, both for men and women. Over the last 12 years, those budgets have continually been reduced. As of April this year, there was not one woman in Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre doing full-time education. If you want to do full-time education, your weekly wage is between \$24-32 a week. If you choose to go and work in a corrective services industry, you can make up to \$65. So given 95% of the women rely wholly and solely on their prison wage, there's no way they are going to go and do full-time education.

HS: Are there skills that people don't have or lose during their time in prison, that then makes it harder for them to adjust to life after coming out?

KA: You have no access to any money, no budgetting classes. You're told when

to get up, when to eat, you get locked in your cell at 3:30 in the afternoon, every prisoner except in minimum security. So you're not empowered, you're not given any responsibility whatsoever. So say you've been in there for 6 months, and you've lost your house, you've lost every piece of clothing, you've lost your children, and you get out with basically the clothes on your back that you were arrested in and little or no money, not knowing where you're going to sleep that night, and to survive on a \$296 crisis payment cheque that you get when you're released plus two weeks, how can women possibly do that? No wonder it's almost 50% of all women that are released return to prison within a 2 year period.

HS: What kind of work does WIPAN do?

KA: WIPAN was created in 2007-08 to advance the wellbeing and prospects of women affected by the criminal justice system. Our one on one mentoring service is where we recruit and train a variety and diverse array of women from the community. We then match them to women either just arrested or sitting in prison or just released from prison to be mentored by these women, to walk beside them and guide them in whatever area of need or support they direct. And that can be helping getting her children restored, helping getting a house, helping getting into education that will one day enable her to become employed, helping her get volunteer work so that she's got something on her CV to say that she's had some practical experience in an area, helping her go to court and against a DV partner in AVO problems, helping with debt issues that women are often released with.

HS: Do political considerations play a big part in policy decisions?

KA: Absolutely. But the bottom line is that women are coming back to our community. The second bottom line is this—the cost effectiveness of incarcerating a woman and not rehabilitating her or addressing her drug and alcohol addiction or her trauma and just getting her out and she goes straight back to the drug and alcohol because she hasn't got the employment, education and/or the counselling for the trauma as to why she started offending in the first place, then we will continue to have an unsafe community, and she will continue to commit crime, and therefore continue to cost taxpayers and the government far more money than what it would be if we stand beside her and empower her instead.



BREAKING NEWS: Coffees Out, Iced Coffees In, Baby.

Aaron Chen knows what's up.

If you actually are at one with this world you will have a total realisation that the weather is getting warmer. Yes, summer is upon us! It is actually so hot that when I was riding in an Uber which had all leather seats and my back got really sweaty and the driver saw me and I don't think I got 5 stars for the experience. This is not the only implication of the heat. Yes, coffees are out and iced coffees are in. See there's nothing like a hot flatty to get peak pit moisture on a summer's day. The greatest cafés are all chucking your lattes on ice now. No, I'm not talking sugary cold coffee a la Barista Bros. I'm talking your morning coffee on bricks of frozen water, capiche? Now don't get me wrong I'll smash a Big M or Dare any week of the year but it really is a sometimes drink.

But is it as good as a classic coffee? Yes. I actually strongly believe that coffee on ice is better than hot coffee. Like the level of ice actually makes it so smooth on the palate (your tongue). It feels fun and adventurous and I impressed so many people at the big café for many weeks and especially the big man at the café who is angry looking and I'm scared of. They were talking about it for so long that after they stopped talking about it I just felt empty and little. That time I ordered a soy flat white, chuck it on ice barista. However, nowadays I can only drink long blacks but still on ice because my friend Sam is making me lose 7 kg for a big comedy show we are doing. In it I have to crowd surf and in the trial runs I was much too dense and heavy for the feeble audience.

The first time I had this was at The House in Chippendale. I saw it on the menu and simply could not resist throwing down some of the beverage between my lil' lips. If you go there you will notice that all the baristas are so cool and give each other hi fives... REGULARLY. So please go wearing your best hat or something similar otherwise you will feel intimidated. And please don't tell them I sent you because it could ruin my reputation if you are not cool or a nerd or just one of the worst jocks. When I started drinking the long blacks for my diet (because I'm making the greatest art), I did it at this café opposite Redfern station with the "No Wi-fi" sign. Their coffees are chill but their signs are nil. You can also get a cold drip but honestly I don't really know what that is. One time a lady tried to explain it to

me but the whole time I was too distracted thinking about how it cost \$6 and had less liquid than I expected.

There you have it, once again the game is changed. Have a good summer and don't get sunburnt or kicked in the shin when you are kicking around a Wahu at the beach.



Art by Johanna Roberts

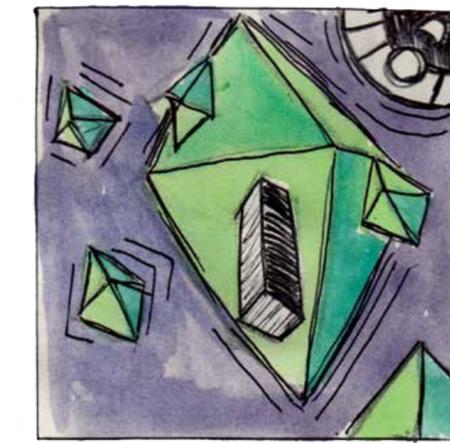
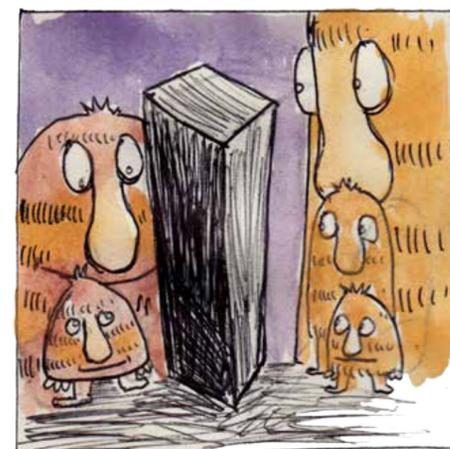
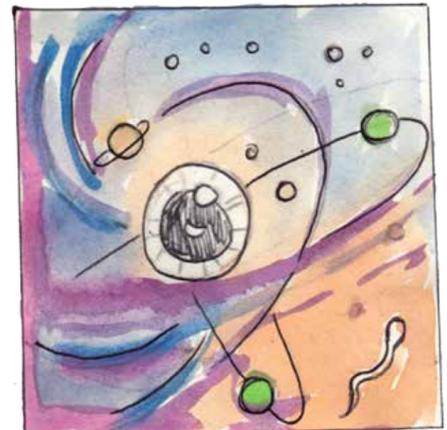
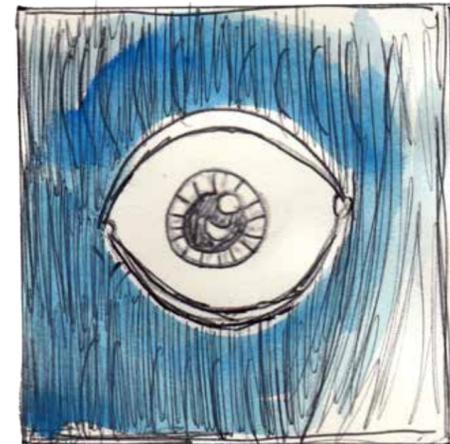


Illustration by Bryant Apolonio



Cardboard Crack

Dom Ellis on Magic: The Gathering and chasing dragons.



Somewhere around the ninth and final round of day one of the Sydney Grand Prix (GP), the largest event on the Australian Magic: The Gathering calendar, my competitor, a large bearded man, told me how about he'd lost four and won four of his eight games thus far.

"I haven't been going well, and I've pretty upset about it."

He was simultaneously shuffling his deck, preparing for our game.

"Up until I heard my seven year old son won his first game (after losing seven in a row) ... Now I'm over the moon—just happy to be here."

He told me that this year was the first time in 20 years that he'd played Magic competitively, having dug up cards that he bought back in high school. Now he's teaching his son to play, taking him up to Sydney for the GP—from their hometown in New Zealand—to "throw him in the deep end".

As an obligatory summary, Magic is a CCG (collectable card game) which, to make a reductive pop culture comparison, is something like *Yu Gi Oh* on steroids. The basic idea is that you generate 'mana' which is used to summon either creatures or other spells to try and drain your opponent of life. There are myriad ways to actually do this, ranging from brute force (cover the board in creatures and just keep 'swinging' [attacking]); to playing defensively and waiting for one big spell to do the deed.

Magic is usually played in one of two basic

formats: constructed and limited. The former requires players to collect cards and pre-build decks, while the latter involves building a deck on the spot using semi-randomised assortment of cards given to you on the day. My personal preference is limited, largely because of its financial sustainability (what you pay to buy in to games you usually make back from the cards you win), but both formats share the same sort of complex gameplay and high-level logic. On a strategic level, Magic's closer to chess than anything else, as every move requires short-term and long-term considerations, and one wrong move can cost you the game.

Magic is played by over six million people worldwide. Close to 15,000 cards have been made in its long history, with the most expensive valued around US\$30,000. The Pro Tour main events—of which there are multiple per year—pay out around \$250,000 in prizes. Though largely ignored by mainstream media, Magic, at least in a sporting sense, is the real deal. My trip to Sydney Olympic Park Hall 4 for the Sydney GP was fairly unsuccessful. I barely cracked the top 200 of the 1000

player pool. Luckily, the two players I went with (a sibling and a friend) both cashed out, making the top 50 in their first ever GPs and scoring around \$800 and \$500 respectively. We learnt a little later on that they were only a few places off qualifying for the pro tour and scoring free flights to Madrid.

At twenty-two years old—a year older than me—Magic's appeal is multidimensional, offering a casual pastime for old-time nostalgics and a shot at glory for young, competitive up-and-comers compelled by the dream of a fulltime profession that involves pretending you're a 'planeswalker' and summoning mythological creatures.

Wizards of the Coast, the geniuses who created Magic (because wizards make Magic, geddit?), once divvied up Magic players into three, unfortunately monogendered, 'psychographic' profiles who they called Timmy, Johnny, and Spike. Timmy is your kid-player, the seven-year-old upstart introduced to the game by his nostalgic dad. Timmy's in it for giant dragons and momentous wins using the biggest and brashest possible cards. Johnny

is all about style. He wants his deck to be centred around synergy and panache, and while he might not always win, as one commenter describes: for Johnny, "Magic is self-expression". For Spike, by comparison, it's all about competition and glory, and Magic's just like any other sport. The Spikes of the world have made Magic into the competitive global game it is today.

These three profiles quite aptly characterise the game as I have learnt it from my three-month crash course. While the game certainly lacks diversity in the most meaningful sense, its players all love the game for so many different reasons, be it an appreciation of the subtleties of land art or a drive to be the best, and that's kinda great.

The Sydney GP, the culmination of my three months of training, is the crème de la crème of competitive Magic events in NSW, and it saw all of Timmy, Johnny and Spike come together for a celebration of the beautiful game, in all its competitive and creative glory. In between the 1000-person main event, and the many other side events at the GP, fans lined up for signatures from their favourite Magic artists and uber-fans cosplayed. It was one of the most ludicrously over-the-top things I've taken part in—a who's who of the people you probably bullied in high school—and yet it was kind of picturesque, an intersection of imagination and competition that you don't really see in any other form.

At this point, I forgive you for wanting to beat me up and take my lunch money, but I won't apologise. Magic is about as good as gaming gets.

Paint the Town Zed

Yitzi Tuvel fought his way through Zedtown.

The horde is behind us. We sprint past some parked cars and two of the creatures leap out. I weave to the right. Everything is slow now. I fire twice, and one goes down. My gun is dry. I switch weapons clumsily, fumbling to get the barrel pointing at the remaining enemy. The thing flinches. Shayma shoots it in the back.

This is *Zedtown*, the world's biggest zombie survival game. Gameplay sprawls over much of the Sydney University campus, with important gameplay hubs in Holme, Carlaw, Physics, and Manning. Over 700 players competed this year, and the overarching goal was a simple one: don't get bit. Along the way, missions and side-quests and a host of NPCs added a welcome sense of purpose. A new game mechanic was introduced this time around, with players being sorted into one of three factions at the start of the game. Each faction had its own base, its own banner, and its own non-player characters. It was

fascinating to watch the nervous cycles of peace and war roll on between the Golden Sands and their nefarious foes.

The immersive nature of the game drew in the players, and gave the battles and intrigues which unfolded a sense of moral and dramatic weight. Several times I experienced the bodily sensation of being present at a truly significant event: the betrayal and capture of Lieutenant Atlas, the surrender of the perfidious Red Earth Raiders to the mighty Golden Sands, the fall of the Prophet, the massacre of Physics Road. These are memories I will hold dear, and I daresay they will be spoke of in taverns for years to come.

Interspersed between these terrific thunder claps was a heavy silence. In it, I felt the sluggish weariness of battle, and the unique exhaustion that fills one's limbs after hours of constant alertness. The fatigue stretched out the hours, and

added to the somber weight of the valiant charges and narrow escapes.

Zedtown was a roaring good time. I forged new friendships, failed a diplomatic



Art by Zita Walker

mission, and became enveloped in surging crowds. And I got to shoot the greatest zombie of all, James Wilson.

Live in faith, die in glory.



Your Own Sense of Place

Andy Mason on connecting to country on one's own terms.

Many white people are surprised when they find out that the biggest Aboriginal community in the country is in Sydney. Media coverage of Aboriginal issues tends to focus on remote areas, and if that's your only source of information you could be forgiven for thinking that most Aboriginal people live in the bush. In fact 70% of Aboriginal people live in urban centres.

White society is often fixated on demanding that Aboriginal people demonstrate their cultural authenticity according to colonial standards of traditional-ness. Although the maintenance and revival of traditional cultural practices are very important for many Aboriginal communities, and should be fully supported, Aboriginal people should be given space to assert their cultural identities on their own terms.

With this in mind, I spoke to five Aboriginal students about the challenges and opportunities which living in the city brings, and the ways in which they navigate their sense of cultural identity while living in the city.

Alison is a Gomeroi woman from the Namoi River floodplains in north-western NSW. She moved to Sydney at the age of 17, seeking "education, work, politics, fresh starts... [she] relocated for the first one, and stayed for the last three!" For her, Sydney presents the opportunity to study law and work in law reform, which wouldn't be possible back on her country.

She feels a real tension between wanting to stay connected to her community and country, a feeling which manifests as a "bodily yearning for home," and wanting to work in an area which will benefit her people. She cautioned that while the city might be seen as a "hive of activity and opportunity", her country "has so much more, and it's crucial that those who leave for education end up back there."

She's seeking a career in law and academia, but laments that "funding for legal aid, elitism and inflexibility in the academy" would make it impossible to have that career back home. As a result Alison has built a life for herself in Sydney, and feels "stuck in this loop" between "two beautiful homes... many hundreds of kilometres apart".

Kyol shared these feelings of "living in two worlds...speaking two different languages." Kyol is also from the Gomeroi nation, and grew up in the small town of Werris Creek. Kyol's connection to his Gomeroi people and country is extremely important to him, as is "sticking together with other Blackfellas" by identifying broadly as Aboriginal.

Kyol moved to Sydney eight years ago to make use of a scholarship to a private school, and feels this opportunity has allowed him "to get the messages that are important to me and my culture out there". Kyol's

"experiences on both sides of the fence" have meant he can engage politically.

Although Sydney has been great in some ways for Kyol, who is now the President of the Sydney Uni SRC and has been at the forefront of Aboriginal activism in the city, he also shares concern about the potential for dislocation from his culture and community, saying he has "had to relearn a lot of things". His advice to other young Aboriginal people moving to the city was to take those opportunities, but to "make sure that you don't lose contact with your culture".

Georgia, one of the Indigenous Officers at the Sydney Uni SRC, identifies as a Gadigal woman from the Eora nation. She explained how when she describes herself as an Aboriginal person, people sometimes expect her to be from somewhere else—"they get this image of central desert or something like that!" She grew up in Western Sydney, and feels that "coming here [the inner city] and coming to uni has been a spiritual thing for me." She pointed out that there are still Aboriginal cultural sites like middens, carvings and rock paintings around, as well as natural features, but that "you have to find these places amongst high-rise buildings".

For Georgia, the experiencing of trying to reconnect with her cultural heritage has been very difficult. She pointed out that her country "was the first place to be invaded" and that in the early days "more than ¾ of the Gadigal people were wiped out." Despite the fact that "a lot of the [cultural knowledge] is just lost", she spoke about some programs which are attempting to revive the Eora language and cultural practices, and was optimistic about the future.

She gets frustrated at how "I don't meet [white people's] expectations of an Aboriginal person" because she is fair-skinned and hasn't been able to learn much of her culture. In this environment, she feels that "I just have to know within myself and within my family who I am".

Evelyn identifies broadly as a Koori woman, as her family background contains both Bundjalung and Dharawal heritage. She has lived all her life on Dharug land on the Hawkesbury river, and her family's connection with local elders has been crucial to her sense of cultural identity. The Hawkesbury was the site of devastating frontier violence and massacres of Aboriginal people. Evelyn talked about how the Dharug community is now "reclaiming sacred sites" to affirm their cultural relationship with the land, and also highlighted "a real push to acknowledge that terribly painful history." She stressed that her identity can be a "flexible, hybrid kind of process" given these complexities, but that culturally and spiritually "it's important to pay respects to the land I've grown up on as well as the country I'm from".

For her, education has facilitated not only a "spiritual and cultural engagement with the local community", but an "ethical and social engagement with Aboriginal Australia as a whole". She has been connecting with her own Bundjalung heritage through a language program offered at a local TAFE, and her PhD in Aboriginal literature has also allowed her to connect with communities from around the country.

Nathan is also a Sydney Uni SRC Indigenous Officer, who identifies as coming from Biripi country near Taree but who feels that "home has always been a bit of a moveable

object for Nathan, the sense of community with other young Aboriginal people in Sydney has also been key to his connection to Aboriginal culture—he says "I maintain my connection through my relationships with people around me." This is something which the other interviewees shared as well—Alison described feeling part of a "diaspora of sorts" where "although our experiences are diverse, having that commonality is a strong binding element".

Despite this diversity, many white people remain fixated on a narrow, stereotypical conception of Aboriginal people. Such

"She feels a real tension between wanting to stay connected to her community and country, a feeling which manifests as a "bodily yearning for home," and wanting to work in an area which will benefit her people."

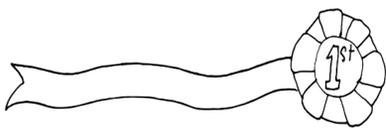
thing for me" because of moving around growing up, and mostly living on Wiradjuri country in Dubbo. When talking about his cultural heritage, he said "I've always had a nebulous connection to country, but ever since I can remember i've always known and understood that I'm Aboriginal." Nathan expressed frustration at the way that outsiders can sometimes have a pre-formed idea of what it means to be Aboriginal and, that because he isn't connected to country in the ways they expect, "does that mean I'm not as Aboriginal [to them]?" His connection to his Aboriginality has come about not mainly through his connection to his country, but through his experiences of community, family and art.

notions have their origin in the policing of Aboriginal identity which always formed a crucial part of the colonial project in Australia. Mick Dodson, former ATSI Social Justice Commissioner, argued in "Re (de)finding Aboriginality" that definitions of identity have been used as a mechanism of control, being employed in legislation to police all aspects of Aboriginal people's lives. Whether these definitions revolved around skin colour or cultural difference, their main purpose was to affirm the inferiority of Aboriginal people and justify their subjugation at the hands of settler society. Dodson urged that we move beyond such definitions, and that Aboriginal people be given space to define their own senses of cultural identity.



The 2015 Opinion Competition

It is traditional for Honi to host an annual opinion competition, open to any and all. This year, with prizes ranging from \$150 for highly commended to \$1000 for the winner, and the tantalising theme of 'shame' to write on, we received more than half of one hundred entries and your offerings did not disappoint! The competition was judged by Amelia Lester, Executive Editor at the New Yorker. The top four entries are presented here for your perusal:



Somewhere Else

Yitz Tuvel



I grew up somewhere else.

My family home was in Bondi, but we didn't really live there. We dwelt in our own village, hidden from the world. To everyone else, Bondi Road was a strip of cafés and restaurants, but to us it was the path from home to synagogue, and from synagogue to dinner—our own Diagon Alley. Every Friday night we'd walk the same routes in our Sabbath finery, seemingly invisible to the world about us.

Our peculiar piety was weaved into everything we did. We went to our own schools and had our own youth groups. I grew up praying in Hebrew, studying in Aramaic, and greeting my fellow townsfolk in Yiddish. We were taught to understand the Scripture, and to memorise the Liturgy. We were taught the minutiae of religious practice: how long one must wait between eating meat and dairy, how far a man may walk with his head uncovered, how much wine one needs to drink after reciting a sanctification (answers: six hours, four cubits, and enough to fill one cheek). We

were taught to treat other Jews, all other Jews, as family. And we were taught to love Israel.

The very word seems to hang over the page now, like a fart in polite company. It was never like that when I was a teenager. Israel was a point of pride—a revival of our ancestral homeland, a fine example of Jewish entrepreneurial spirit, and an extra country to back in the Olympics. We'd find plenty to argue about when it came to her politics—the Occupation, the settlers, the Wall—but Israel was always our country, and we loved her.

The first time I got into an argument about Israel at university, it seemed like the most natural thing in the world, something comfortable and familiar. But the difference between the way things were done at university and the way things were done at home quickly became apparent. The feelings of camaraderie and support that I was used to were gone, which was to be expected. But what came as a shock was the venom that replaced it.

People hated me. Not just what I said, but what I was. Where I expected a counter-argument, I instead was told: "Fuck off, Zionist scum." My love of Israel was seen as an inexcusable failing in my character. When I spoke in solidarity with the Palestinian people at an Al-Nakba Day Rally, I was angrily condemned, and told I had no business being there (not by anyone at the rally, I should note, but by absent students).

My Jewish friends who are less combative were received with similar suspicion, and gradually we all stopped being quite so public. One friend of mine started hiding her Star of David necklace whilst at uni. Another stopped correcting people who assume he's South American. We started being invisible again, just like when we were children—but it didn't feel so magical this time.

For a long while, I felt like an unfortunate casualty. There are undoubtedly important things to be said against Israel, I thought, and most of the people here who say them

are well-meaning. They're fighting for a more just world. Perhaps we're all just being thin-skinned about it.

But recently my morose resignation has transformed into a hot indignation. It occurred to me that no-one else has to put up with this. Others are not called to account for the crimes of their people or their faith. If a gang of political activists confronted a Chinese student for the sins of China, or a Muslim student for the sins of Islam, they would be roundly and rightly brought to task for it. They who are so commendably careful to avoid giving offense to any other minority see no cause to employ the same respect or caution when dealing with Jews.

We are made to feel ashamed for who we are. We are taught to hide and downplay our Judaism. We are reminded, every single day, that we grew up somewhere else.

What it Feels Like to Get an Abortion

Tash Gillezeau

Shortly after turning 19, I found out I was pregnant. The news was particularly shocking because I'd been taking the pill and using condoms, which I considered an airtight contraceptive regime. I don't know why or how I got pregnant (well, I know *how*), but I've since learned that the pill has a much lower efficacy rate for people like me with Crohn's disease, an intestinal disorder that can fuck with your absorption, amongst other things.

Early signs didn't click. I was ravenous all the time. My boobs swelled and friends asked if I'd begun wearing push-up bras (my chest isn't exactly my main

asset. I'm constantly asking guys to stop staring at my face.) I couldn't stomach a vodka shot—the mere smell made me instantly sick. I dismissed this aversion as a consequence of the six months I'd just had of over-zealous alcohol consumption in Europe during my gap year.

Then I tried to remember when I'd had my last period. I couldn't. Every month, I have no idea when my period is coming. No idea. This might contradict images of hysterical girls on Sit-Coms being all homg imma a day late, but it's just something I never tune into until the blood is literally staining yet another pair

of my underwear.

Then I started feeling nauseous. I dismissed the idea of being pregnant as stupid. To put my mind at ease, I took a pregnancy test bought from a pharmacy I never go to in a public bathroom on my way to work.

Although debates on "where life begins" are important, philosophical questions are not what you think of when you realize you're pregnant and don't want to be. Your first response is disbelief. Then "oh, fuck". Followed by disbelief.

My main job back then was looking after three small boys under the age of 5. They were adorable and I loved them to bits. That afternoon, I walked to work in a trance. Playing with the kids felt weird now I had one growing inside me.

What none of the pregnancy books I hadn't read prepared me for was how hard the hormones would hit. I thought about children all the time. I dreamt about them. I was teary, feeling every emotion with full impact. It was like an elaborate method-acting empathy task into the daily experiences of pregnant women, except I was actually pregnant.

Nuns and Roses

Cameron Gooley

I was sixteen years old and attending church for the first time in four years. Kneeling on the wooden plank jutting from the pew in front of me, I looked around the hall. Apparently I was the town's only person in the 12-60 demographic to show up that morning—so much for being inconspicuous.

After the service finished I waited awkwardly by the confessional booth for the priest. I passed the time staring at the ceiling. You'd think the town's only Catholic church would be nicer than the Presbyterian one, but I guess the Vatican's bank account actually does have a finite number of digits.

An exception to this was an elaborate sculpture of Jesus nailed to the cross above the altar. My eyes lingered on the bloody stains over his knees before returning to his stomach. Someone had definitely gone to town on that body. I began to picture a sexually repressed nun sculpting his abdominals, in some twisted Catholic version of a Mills and Boon novel.

I slapped my wrist and scolded myself—that sort of 'perverse' shit was why I was attending confession for the first time since primary school anyway.

"Are you alright, son?"

The priest had flanked me while I was preoccupied with thoughts of horny convent sisters.

"I'm just here for confession Father," I said, putting on my most dazzling snaggletooth smile. Realising that I should probably be

acting somewhat more solemn, I suddenly began frowning.

"Well, come then child, step into the booth."

I climbed into the booth only to be confronted almost immediately with another Jesus, this one fun sized. I traced his torso, giggling to myself. Those abs were definitely ribbed for her pleasure—caricatured pictures of pornographic nuns began to roll around in my head. Hearing the window separating the two halves of the booth swing open, I quickly dropped my hand. I didn't particularly like the thought of being caught molesting an idol of the Son of God by the Heavenly Father's Earth-bound proxy.

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. My last confession was ... ah, four years ago?"

"Was that a question? Or a statement?" The priest asked.

"Oh, a statement sir—Father!" I said nervously. "So I guess that's number one. I haven't been to church or confession for a while. Ahhhh, also, I caught my brother wearing a pair of my underpants so I farted on his pillow."

The priest stifled a snort with an extremely unconvincing cough, while I cringed in my seat. What can I say? I panicked.

"Yeah. Um, I think he got pink eye."

Stop speaking! I counted to three in my head before getting back to the point.

"Oh and I've been having some impure thoughts," I said. I couldn't believe I'd just said "impure" but I felt I had to compromise and find some middle ground between "butt-fucky" and "extreme Sodom and Gamorrah level shit".

"Is that it?"

I sat silently for a moment, and guiltily looked at the mounted figure of Jesus on the wall. I glanced once again at his mutilated knees.

"Jesus died for our sins right Father?" I asked.

"Well, yes, that's what we've been teaching you since year three."

Shit, okay mate, chill.

I looked at my own knees, hidden under cargo pants. The skin was raw and still stained green from grass. Sitting next to Jesus I felt like a human voodoo doll; I stained my knees green and they came up on him red and bloody.

He may have died for my sins, but he probably didn't intend to cover for me blowing another boy in my year at the local park.

"Yes that's it Father." I said, before reading the Act of Contrition.

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good."

Why is it always "He"? How can an omniscient being have a sex? I don't get

it; I'm the worst Catholic ever. Why is the priest just sitting there stamping his foot? Oh shit!

"For His mercy endures forever!" I blurted, slightly too loudly.

I did my penance sulkily, before walking out the door and back home.

What was worse: being so ashamed of sleeping with a man that I almost confessed it to a priest whom I hadn't seen since Year 6; or being too ashamed to even confess in the end anyway?

I decided it was time to take another break from church. The only things that institution had ever given me were passive aggressive authority figures, crippling self-esteem issues, and an irrational hatred of Anglicans. I already had a mother and father to do that anyway, so what did I need Catholicism for?



Having an abortion is a very private choice I hope none of my friends have to make.

But, if they do, my hope is that they can make it without fear of stigma, shame, or a moralizing other. Abortion will always be a dirty word if women give it that power through silence.

There's a difference between privacy and secrecy. Keeping my abortion secret not only creates my own sense of shame, it adds

Coming Out Bald

Tina Huang

"You get to decide what to worship."
— David Foster Wallace

My girlfriend was a born again believer in the power of Gillette Venus razors, eager to forget that year where she took gender studies and became a contentious objector to my wax strips. Every Sunday night Lauretta sat in our bathtub, shaving her legs and covering cuts with pieces of toilet paper. She sacrificed body and blood. The Gillette commercials promised that shavers would ultimately be rewarded with heavenly ogling and cat calls. The act of shaving itself however made her irritable.

Still, even on the cold Sunday night last July, when I told Lauretta that I was going bald, she could be found shaving her legs. I sat on our bathroom floor staring at my socks, whilst she swore at the razor. I hadn't really planned to tell her that night, especially not whilst she wielded a sharp, blunt object, but there was something very intimate about watching her shave. It felt wrong to keep things from someone who had let you see them in a bathtub, splattered in goops of Sorbolene, squinting at their knees. In the end it wasn't a very big deal. Lauretta gave me a hug and then

went back to shaving. I stayed on the bathroom floor for the rest of the night, just sitting there, watching as her leg hairs circled down the drain.

It has been about a year since my hair started thinning out, first in wisps and then thick, healthy clumps. Nobody was quite sure why this was happening. My doctor put it down to stress, a diagnosis which in itself was so stressful it acted like a self fulfilling prophecy. He told me to come back if the hair loss got worse and sent me on my way with a pamphlet featuring bald, middle aged men on the cover. Inside someone had copy pasted proud, bald figures like the Dalai Lama and the Rock. The pixelated heads espoused terribly peppy platitudes about confidence and success.

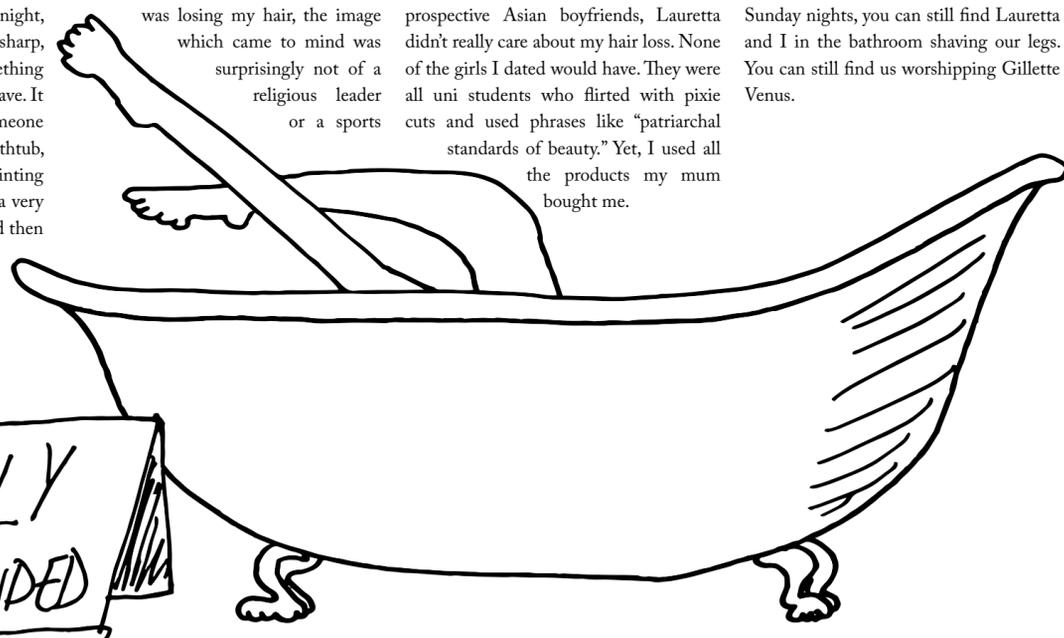
When the doctor first confirmed that I was losing my hair, the image which came to mind was surprisingly not of a religious leader or a sports

star. Sitting in the sterile office surgery I thought about Roald Dahl's *The Witches*. In the film's pivotal scene, Angelica Huston pulls off her wig and transforms into a bald, she-devil. This film left me, as an eight-year-old, terrified of bald women. I sat in the office wondering how soon it would be until I too started to terrify people.

A little while after Lauretta found out, I decided to tell my family. My mum came over immediately. I found her on my doorstep, proselytising about some miracle infomercial ointment. My mum didn't know about Lauretta. She was determined that my hair loss not impede her banal plans to find me a good, Asian boyfriend. My mum put her faith in the Coles cosmetics and health aisle, buying vitamins and conditioners and creams. I knew that unlike my mother or any prospective Asian boyfriends, Lauretta didn't really care about my hair loss. None of the girls I dated would have. They were all uni students who flirted with pixie cuts and used phrases like "patriarchal standards of beauty." Yet, I used all the products my mum bought me.

First out of politeness, and then earnestly, as if I were some sinning Catholic, counting my vitamins like rosary beads, praying with each circular pill that my hair would grow back. I used the products as if I actually believed in the power of Head and Shoulders. As if \$7.99 was a small price to pay for salvation. It turns out that Queer women, even ones going bald, worship at the altar of patriarchal beauty standards.

Recently, my hair started to grow back. The hair came through in patches, raw and messy, but at least in time for the new semester. I stopped letting my mother buy vitamins and shampoos. I had converted too much, if not to her faith, then at least to her practices and I was not sure that they were really working for me. Nowadays, the only time I walk into the Coles cosmetics and health aisle is to buy razors. On most Sunday nights, you can still find Lauretta and I in the bathroom shaving our legs. You can still find us worshipping Gillette Venus.



Public transport horror No.5 or... #GetaNewAddress

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Suzuki Address 110

SUZUKI Way of Life!

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Ask Abe

SRC Caseworker HELP Q&A

Work + Youth Allowance = Student Income Bank

Dear Abe,

I am on a Youth Allowance payment and I also work a casual job with varying hours. Sometimes I receive the full payment just under \$500, but other times I get much less than that. I heard that there is some sort of banking system that affects the amount of money I get, but I am very confused by all of this. Could you please explain why my payments vary?

Nursing Student

Dear Nursing Student,

The banking system you are talking about is Centrelink's way of keeping track of the extra money you are earning. It is called the Student Income Bank. Each fortnight

you are allowed to earn \$427 without any reduction in your Youth Allowance. If you earn less than \$427, the left over carries over to the following fortnight. For example, if you only earned \$147 in the first fortnight, you will be allowed to earn \$280 (\$427 + \$147) in the second fortnight. This process keeps going until you've accumulated a maximum of \$10,600. Your Youth Allowance payment is reduced when you have earned more than your Student Income Bank. That is, by 50 cents in the dollar for amounts between \$427 and \$512, then by 60 cents in the dollar for income over \$512. If you are unsure about whether you have been paid the correct amount, gather all your paperwork and talk to an SRC Caseworker about it.

Abe



When does your student visa run out?

It is your responsibility to ensure that you comply with all your student visa conditions, especially the length of stay allowed under your visa entitlement.

You can find out about all the applicable visa conditions and your visa expiry date using the online service (Visa Entitlement Verification Online – "VEVO") on the Department of Immigration and Border Protection website. Use this URL: <https://online.immi.gov.au/evo/firstParty>

When accessing this online service, you will need your passport number and other identification details which can be found on the visa grant email sent by the Department.

If you are not sure how to use VEVO or have trouble with this online service, you can get FREE help from the SRC registered migration agent by contacting 9660 5222.

Make sure you put the visa expiry date in your calendar and remember to NOT overstay your visa! Overstaying leads to serious legal consequences which in some situations may require you to leave Australia immediately and you will not be able to come back again for 3 years.

Level 1, Wentworth Bldg, University of Sydney
p: 02 9660 5222 | w: src.usyd.edu.au
e: solicitor@src.usyd.edu.au
ACN 146 653 143 | MARN 1276171

So you want to move out. What should you do?

Make sure you are informed about how to end a rental agreement.



Are you going to stay for the length of your agreement?

Refer to your original contract or lease. It should state an end date. If it is a contract you should be able to give notice to your landlord equivalent to the frequency that you pay rent that you are moving out on the end date. Sometimes contracts will have a clause about the fee for ending the agreement early. If it is a lease this amount of notice is either 14 days (fixed term agreement) or 21 days (continuing agreement). Notice should be in writing. This does not include text messages and may not include email. It is best to send this by letter. Allow 4 days extra for mail to arrive.

What if you want to leave early?

This will usually cost you lots of money. If you have a lease agreement you will usually have to pay four or six weeks worth of rent, depending on what percentage of the agreement you have already completed. Sometimes you can find someone to take your place in the agreement to avoid paying all of this money. The replacement person has to be a "reasonable" replacement. For example, they need to have a similar capacity to meet rental payments and a good rental history.

If you're under a contract you may need to pay the equivalent of the rent up to the end of the contract. Sometimes you can find someone to take your place in the contract or start a new contract, but that is completely up to the landlord.

When am I considered to have left?

You have only completely left your accommodation when the landlord (not another tenant) has received all copies of all of your keys and other door locking devices (like swipe cards). You also have to provide "vacant possession" which means all of your belongings have been moved out.

What if I want to move out and my housemates want to stay?

You will need to find a replacement for yourself. If you are on the lease or contract have that changed before you go. If you are on the lease, regardless of whether you live there, you are legally and financially liable for the condition of the premises. Make sure you keep a copy of the new lease or contract to show that you are no longer on there.

How do I get my bond or deposit back?

After you have moved out take photos to show the condition of the accommodation. This is to avoid disputes with the landlord's assessment of the condition of your accommodation after you moved out. The cost of any repairs or cleaning will come out of the bond or deposit. The rest of your bond (leased property) should be returned in the form of a cheque or electronic transfer from the Department of Fair Trading. Deposits placed on contracted properties are less regulated. Make sure you have your receipt to prove that you did pay it in the first place. If there is any dispute about getting back this money talk to an SRC Caseworker.

If you require assistance with an academic appeal, contact the SRC Caseworkers phone: 9660 5222 or email: help@src.usyd.edu.au



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Acting President's Report

Laura Webster

At a recent Undergraduate Studies meeting, the Committee approved a request from the Sydney College of the Arts to remove the option of part time study for an offered honours course. When the faculty's representative was asked why this was necessary given the necessity for part time study as an option on equity grounds, they the suspension of study rates were too high for their liking.

So there it is. Yet another stark reminder that we attend a university that is more concerned with how they rank in the latest international tertiary education poll (yes Usyd, we get it and there is no need for yet

another Facebook status about it) than the welfare of its students. The importance of a part time study option for undergraduate students is well documented, yet the University of Sydney continues to drag behind on this part with faculties such as Law and Medicine only offering part time/reduce load study to students with exceptional circumstances at the Dean's discretion. The practise of applying to the Dean in and of itself can be incredibly daunting or intimidating for students who require part time study to complete their degree. It gives Deans the power to interpret 'need' as they see fit and gives them absolute and unquestionable control

over a student's life. Part time study, particularly in coursework-heavy degrees such as Arts/Law or Medical Science/Medicine, the option for open part time study is crucial, as it means students are allowed to prioritise and comfortably work around work, health and other responsibilities over an arbitrary time frame of acceptable course completion.

The University of Sydney prides itself on being an institution that supports its students and gives them 'flexible study options' but a closer look at Senate and Faculty resolutions reveals this is not the case. In fact, Undergraduate classes

have not run past 6pm in recent memory which makes most undergraduate study completely inaccessible for prospective students who are carers, live with a disability or are working. I know it's hardly a shock to most of us that the University is caring less and less about the welfare and wellbeing of its students, but it seems the higher the University rises in the international ranks of tertiary education, the less they are trying to hide it.

General Secretaries' Report

Chiara Angeloni and Max Hall

Since our first meeting at ~6pm on March 4 2013, we have gradually sunk through the Hermann's lawn to the SRC dungeon. Remarkably, this turned out to be productive. How productive, you ask?

Well, as your General Secretaries we delivered one of the best orientation handbooks in years and worked with SUPRA to produce a brand new publication distributed in the ACCESS showbags. We brought home the largest proportional increase in funding of all student organisation this year. We are proud to have used this increase to expand the Legal Service to five days a

week; fund the Casework Department to give financial advice; establish a resource pool for activists; increase funding to collectives; give the Honi editors a well-deserved pay rise; give a ~more reasonable~ amount to 'the NUS'; and end up with a slight surplus. Throughout the year we had perfect attendance at Executive and Council meetings. In sum, we turned up and got stuff done.

To the students who will run the SRC next year: the easiest way to be an effective student representative is to forget your factionalism; use the incredible resources available to you, particularly the SRC

staff; and spend more time doing things than you spend talking about doing things. Just because a project can't be completed in your term does not mean it isn't worth starting—the SRC needs a better long term vision. Students would benefit from wider engagement with the University policy process, more collaboration between the Executive and other representatives, and a group of Office Bearers willing to skillshare for a stronger student movement. Many of these things have happened this year, and we hope they continue to be prioritised for the benefit of students.

So we must now board the strike bus and ride off to the eternal picket. Farewell friends, comrades and those we lost along the way (Tony, SLS, optimism and Vitamin D).

For now but not forever, Unicorn Faction.

Wom*n's Officers' Report

Subeta Vimalarajah and Xiaoron Shi

What a year! It is a pleasure to write my last Honi Soit report as Wom*n's Officer. 2015 has undoubtedly been a huge year for the Wom*n's Collective. It has been one of the most difficult, but rewarding years of my life. I have been lucky to have so much support from members of the Wom*n's Collective, who have given countless hours of unpaid labour to our campaigns and initiatives this year.

The nature of collective organising is that there are always too many names to name, but there are two people that I must thank individually: Anna Hush - there is not one campaign or initiative I have run this year without your enthusiastic

involvement. You have been the greatest source of support, wisdom and friendship. Julia Readett - not only did you commit completely to your year as Wom*n's Officer, you guided and supported me through my term (and your honours year!) as well. You were there when I needed intra-Collective grievances resolved, to answer my questions and to assure me to continue as Wom*n's Officer, even when I considered resigning.

The year has involved too many projects to list, so I will just draw attention to the 'biggest' ones I've been a part of. The University sexual harassment and assault campaign! We are nowhere near finished

with this project, but we got a great survey that will continue this important conversation on an institutional level.

Our campaign against gendered violence! From the panel at Radical Sex & Consent Week, through to the workshop recently given by Karen Willis and the money raised in collaboration with the Sydney University Law Society (SULS), each event and initiative is something we should be proud of.

The feminist education workshops! Talking to students about intersectional feminism and introducing them to figures like Laverne Cox, Stella Young and Zadie

Smith has been, and will continue to be, such a rewarding experience.

And of course, the tampon tax. We did not succeed, but to be on national television with the Wom*n's Collective holding a giant tampon behind me and to get a 'yes' from a Liberal treasurer, was, to put it modestly, a moment I will never forget.

Activism by its nature is thankless, but I want to thank everyone who has worked with me this year. I look forward to a bright future of continuing to smash kyriarchy!



Residential College Officers' Report

Tim Sullivan, Issy Hellig, Will Khun and Laura Webster

The University and Campus Infrastructure team have recently launched an initiative to examine the lighting and safety measures around campus, in a bid to increase campus security and the safety of students. A recurring issue for students who are on campus after dark has been the complete lack of sufficient lighting, especially on Western Avenue which students who live in the residential colleges and student

housing have often cited as a significant issue. The SRC has participated for the past few weeks in campus 'walks' to determine these areas and Western Ave and the somewhat frightening after hours' trek to St Johns and Sancta Sophia, have been noted as areas of great concern and a priority for the University thanks to the work of the SRC President and Vice President who were very vocal about

this matter. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their work on this issue.

On another note, we strongly encourage all students to take a look at the colleges websites if they are interested in applying for 2016 or beyond as each college has announced an array of exciting and generous scholarships for students

studying at the University of Sydney.

As always, don't hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have at Residential.colleges@src.usyd.edu.au

DID YOU KNOW?

If you apply to
discontinue a subject
before the last day of
semester* you will get
a Discontinue Fail (DF)

This WILL incur HECS or fees, and WILL affect your "academic progression", but WILL NOT affect your WAM. This is particularly important for students avoiding Show Cause & Exclusion.

* Semester 1: June 5, 2015
* Semester 2: October 30, 2015

Need help or advice? Your SRC is here to assist you.

Phone for an appointment. The service is FREE, independent and confidential. We are located at: Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01), University of Sydney (02) 9660 5222 | help@src.usyd.edu.au | src.usyd.edu.au | [facebook.com/src.help](https://www.facebook.com/src.help)

If it is not possible for you to come to our office, a caseworker can meet you on a satellite campus, or speak to you on the telephone or Skype.





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The Postgrad Pages

PRESENTED BY  SUPRA

Confidentially Raising Your Issues and SUPRA Representation

By **Adrian Cardinali**, SUPRA Advocacy Coordinator.

Earlier in the semester I wrote an article about the multidisciplinary nature of the professional advice and advocacy

In Semester 2, 2015, we assisted student representatives to win changes during the drafting process of the new *Progression*

article. Myself and the whole advocacy team will be providing case examples and information that will help to defend student-friendly conditions in the *Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree Research Policy* and related procedures. For example, we are looking to maintain the amount of time students have to comment on examiner reports at certain stages of the process, against a move to significantly cut times in an overdone look for efficiencies.

In the end what I describe in brief above is a nexus between postgraduate students accessing our services, professional advocacy staff respectfully meeting you where you are and using a range of disciplinary expertise to meet your range of needs, and then respecting what we learn from you even more by then using that information to confidentially inform work to help postgraduates more broadly. In the end it makes for stronger, more nuanced and better policy than would otherwise be the case. It means too that every time you come and use our service you can contribute to a bank of information that benefits the whole

We have been assisting student representatives through the semester to argue for and achieve appropriate

In the end it makes for stronger, more nuanced and better policy than would otherwise be the case.

provision for informal extensions on assessments without the requirement for medical or similar documentation.

We are presently also reviewing a new *Professional Placement Policy* which will go to the Academic Board at the end of October. We are using casework experience right now to inform changes SUPRA will call for to improve the policy for students living with health or disability issues of various kinds.

Changes to the *Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism in Coursework Policy* are currently being proposed and SUPRA will be using de-identified concrete experiences of postgraduate students as examples to help us argue for decent and fair provisions. Changes are also likely to pass by the end of the year and your student representatives are rightly engaged in a lively debate about which changes are appropriate, and they are using case experience to inform their positions.

and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy of the University so that, for example, assessments must be made of adequacy of supervision and facilities as part of any research student's APR. The policy complete with these and many other improvements is likely to be passed at the October meeting of the Academic Board.

We received details of widespread systemic concerns over the conduct of coursework assessments in the University's Business School and, though the University never conceded all the concerns we have, we note with satisfaction that increased teacher support and training, revised language support arrangements, and improved formative assessment have all followed from our complaints — and students are already telling us they can see the improvement.

We also assisted in the preparation of a strong and productive SUPRA submission in response to the University's 2016–2020 strategic planning discussion papers.

Looking ahead and beyond systemic work already completed that has either improved postgraduate conditions or will likely do so in future, there are several serious issues in development right now. The University's Graduate Studies Committee and Academic Board is considering changes to the PhD examination process as I write this

services provided by SUPRA. The advice and advocacy services I am employed to coordinate are and have been over time, staffed by professionals from a range of backgrounds including law, social work and psychology as well as activists who have trained up in delivering casework services. I argued that the sometimes intense and multifaceted nature of the study experience and issues faced by postgraduate students was such that a team of staff working together and from a range of different backgrounds was the best fit for an advocacy service for the postgraduate population. What I did not say in the article was, aside from individual positive results we achieve with and for students, what contribution might follow for the postgraduate population as a whole from students coming to see us.

Beyond individual casework services, myself and my team offer briefing and policy support to elected SUPRA student representatives. One of the things we do in that work is to provide de-identified examples of issues students present to SUPRA through casework that can then be used when SUPRA's elected student representatives go to University Committees or meet senior University management or prepare submissions. This stage of semester and almost four months into our current Council's term of office is a great time to take stock of the kind of work that we can get done in collaboration with your student representatives.



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Presidential Power: Meet your SUPRA Executive

Christian Jones is the Co-President of SUPRA. Joshua Preece enters the upper echelons of SUPRA to find out what makes him tick and what SUPRA can do for postgrads.

JP: *What do you study?*

CJ: Master of Public Health (Professional Practice).

JP: *Why did you get involved in SUPRA?*

CJ: I've been a postgrad for a year and a half, and I'd felt that SUPRA was lacking in visibility on-campus. That's been something that I've been keen on improving this year. For example, talking to the media, including the SMH and the ABC, regarding mass-failures of postgrads by the Business School. When fighting against the scrapping of simple extensions, I've also sought to have a higher visibility campaign by working together with the SRC. I think it's

important that postgrads are aware of the work we do in their interests.

JP: *What's your favourite thing that SUPRA does for postgrads?*

CJ: SUPRA employs 5 caseworkers to advocate for students who need advice on almost anything! From academic concerns to financial advice to accommodation information, our friendly Student Advice and Advocacy Service can help you out. I work pretty closely with them and I admire the work that they do.

JP: *Any advice for USyd postgrads?*

CJ: Getting involved in on-campus culture will improve your time here

immensely. I'd highly recommend that postgrads consider getting involved in SUPRA and student clubs and societies. Student politics has been a transformative and powerful experience for myself and I think it'd be great for more students to consider joining a political club.

JP: *Lastly - favourite on-campus haunt?*

CJ: I love Courtyard because it's super close to the SUPRA Office. The pizza is amazing and I'm always happy to support USU outlets!



Student Advice & Advocacy Service for postgraduates

SUPRA Student Advice & Advocacy Officers provide a professional and confidential service that is independent of the University.

Academic areas we can help with include (but are not limited to):

- Academic appeals
- Show cause & exclusion
- Harassment, discrimination & bullying
- Special consideration
- Academic dishonesty allegations
- Supervision difficulties.

Our Student Advice & Advocacy Officers (SAAOs) also possess a wealth of knowledge about the range of non-academic welfare and wellbeing issues that can affect postgraduate students, such as those involving tenancy/housing, finances, employment, mental health and disability.

During our drop-in times you can see a SAAO without making an appointment. Drop-in times are 2-4pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays (please arrive no later than 3:30pm).

Students are seen by the SAAO on-call for that session in the order they arrive, so you may have a short wait.

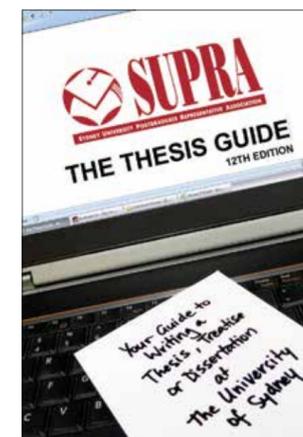
You can contact SUPRA to make an appointment at another time or to receive advice via email, phone or Skype.

Phone: (02) 9351 3715
Toll-free: 1800 249 950
Fax: (02) 9351 6400
Email: help@supra.usyd.edu.au
Web: www.supra.usyd.edu.au
Hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm (closed for lunch 12pm-1pm).

Address: Level 2, Holme Building (A09), Science Rd, Camperdown Campus.

Access via the lift in the Holme Courtyard (next to Courtyard Restaurant and Bar).

Our offices are accessible however the nearest accessible toilet is on Level 3 of the Holme Building, adjacent to the Holme Courtyard.



Your essential guide to writing a thesis, dissertation, treatise or long essay at the University of Sydney.

It contains tips and ideas on topics such as working with your supervisor; researching & writing your thesis; submission & examination and looking after yourself throughout the process. It also explains the relevant University policies and your rights & responsibilities as a postgrad research student at the University of Sydney.

The Thesis Guide is brought to you by SUPRA, your postgraduate student association, and funded by your Student Services & Amenities Fee.

Download *The Thesis Guide* from our website at http://supra.net.au/supra_publications.html

Trans Pacific Partnership Celebrated by Samoan Queer Community

To free love and free trade

Almost two hundred family and friends of Kiuga Lavez Tupai and Esther Sulusi Sila have gathered in the seaside village district, Salelologa, Samoa, to formalise a relationship of nearly ten years.

Tupai (a trans man) and Sila (a trans woman) have been dating since high school and officialised their relationship in a modest ceremony in a non-denominational chapel with a view of the ocean on Saturday afternoon.

“He has always been there for me,” Sila says. “And I hope I have returned the kindness. I can’t imagine spending my life with anybody else. I just know Kiuga will be a devoted husband.”

Rankings Reveal State’s Worst Puppy Schools By NAPLAN Results

Spot goes to school and does badly

In a nail-biting week for dog teachers and dog pupils everywhere, the NSW Department of Education has released its 2015 rankings of puppy schools on NAPLAN results.

Phil Garmon, who compiled the list, says it’s important that the facts are out there.

“We know there is a cyclical effect to publishing lists like these, but Labradors and Golden Retrievers everywhere must be able to make an informed decision.”

The Greater Western Sydney Public School for Dogs came in at the bottom of the list, but headmaster Mark Pickering says that this should not be a

Modern Church Highlights Dated Views

The Future is Now and It’s Clean

Sleek lines. Reflective surfaces. Touch screens. It might look like an inner-city gallery or artists studio, but in fact it’s the Murray Heights Pentecostal Church, and it’s ultra-modern from a purely aesthetic perspective.

The pastor, Jono, wears a t-shirt and string bracelets. He’s a skater, an indie music fan, and a proponent of abstinence-only education. He says the church is eternal, so it’s not rooted in the past any more than the present or future; it’s just the texts, scholarship and fundamental teachings which are backwards-looking.

“Today everything is online, everything is so fast – the challenge is finding new and exciting ways to deliver the same old

While the Samoa Meteorological Service had predicted a chance of showers in the afternoon, the skies remained unseasonably clear, and the sun unseasonably bright. “We thought that someone might be watching out for us,” Sila joked.

The couple refused to address fears that the secrecy of the agreement’s drafting might result in policy that was in the best interests of an elite few in industry and government only.

“We are so happy to be with one another,” says Tupai. “It’s just a bonus that the state recognises it. Our friends and family have been so supportive for so long.”

condemnation of the school.

“We don’t have the resources for textbooks for dogs, or facilities for dogs as is. When numbers like these come out, budgets are trimmed and we’re less and less able to make sure these dogs can make a meaningful contribution. People forget that the dogs here deserve an education as much as anyone else.”

Garmond, though, is less sympathetic.

“If these dog academies don’t lift their game, it will mean a generation of dogs incapable of holding down jobs, and drastically behind on literacy, numeracy and sitting.”

conservative values.” For example, women are still discouraged from speaking in church, but are encouraged to retweet relevant Biblical passages. These are displayed on multiple screens in the church’s hall, atrium, and ‘chill room’.

Architect Sam Weathers was excited about the new challenge of designing a church. “Normally I’m doing corporate offices or function centres – a church is a very different kind of place. But obviously I made it look the same.” His design brief said ‘Fresh, modern, no gargoyles’. It was understood that the only twisted, stony monstrosities spewing hate from their cruel mouths in this church were to be occasional guest preachers from the American South.

Nigerian Prince Struggles To Fulfil Pledge To Give Away 99% Of Wealth

Dear sir/madam

His Most Royal Highness, Olatunde Sarima, was shocked Wednesday to hear that his attempts to seed the next generation of entrepreneurs via a random email giveaway of his three-point-six billion dollar fortune has had a less than 3% response rate.

The Prince, whose immense material wealth is gauged in innumerable precious stones, oil deposits, and gold bullion, reportedly made attempts to contact anyone who would listen, requiring only a small deposit to ensure the transfer would take place.

“I ask only that they cover the fee for service. I have explained as much, in perhaps broken English, to all those I have emailed but people seem disinclined to make a small commitment.”

To add legitimacy to his appeal, The Prince has enlisted the help of a lawyer who specialises in inheritance, particularly of estranged relatives in Spain.

Social Outcast Enjoys Post-Shooting Reprieve From Bullying

ENTJs rule, ISFPs drool

Billy McNab, an eighth grader from Forrest View Junior High, was reportedly elated on hearing about a shooting in neighbouring McNerney, which will guarantee him at least two week’s reprieve from being bullied.”

The student body—hyperaware that descriptions of McNerney’s shooter mirror McNab—have been sighted offering him spaces at their lunch tables, saying hello to him in the hallway, and pointedly not throwing his bag from the window of the school bus.

“He’s just such a nice boy, and so quiet and courteous—you can just tell he’s a real catch for someone,” said Courtney Sleigh about McNab, whose awkward gait and niche interests make him a clear target for ridicule. She later continued, off the record: “we’re really just hoping he doesn’t snap.”

At time of publishing, the fear had subsided and a stronger more popular student was seen throwing McNab into a bin.

Product Recall

Remember How we did that EZ Squeeze sauce that was purple and green? It was pretty weird but how cool was it?

Like, there’s no fault here, we just thought of it and hadn’t thought of it for ages.

You could put it with your chicken nuggets and mum would only ever buy one colour even though you wanted both.

The secret is mostly just a bit of food colouring. The recipe doesn’t really change because purple doesn’t have a flavour. Neither does green, but it has flavours associated with it, so we tweaked that a bit accordingly.

It was really just such a pleasure to give you guys a go at a top notch product. Nothing wrong with it, we just wanted to help you remember it.

Imagine if we did blue.

If you want to talk about this weird stuff give us a call on 1800 255 5750



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