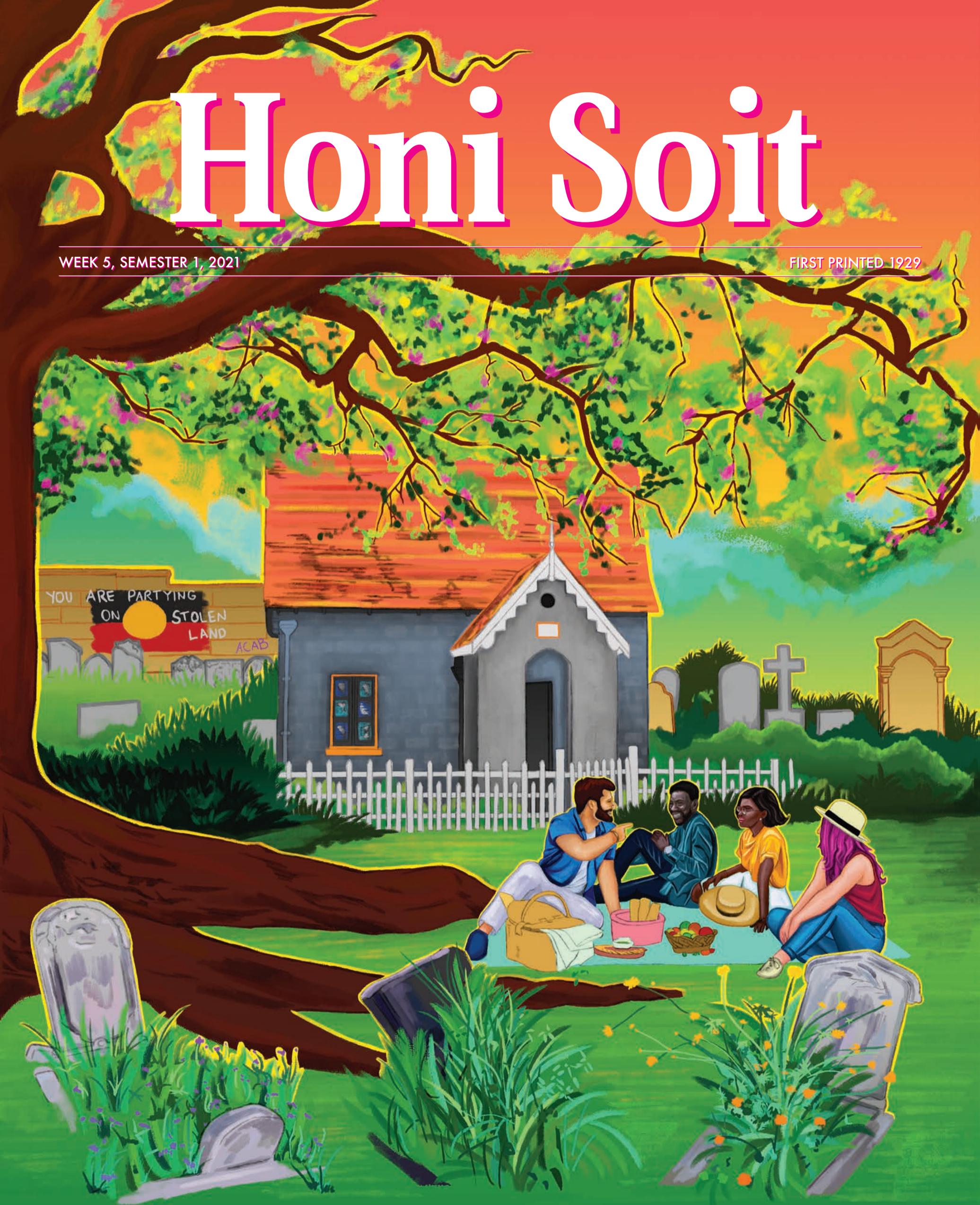


# Honi Soit

WEEK 5, SEMESTER 1, 2021

FIRST PRINTED 1929



## Unearthing Camperdown Memorial Rest Park / P 12

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In memoriam Malcolm X / P 16



# Acknowledgement of Country



*Honi Soit* is published on the sovereign land of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, who were amongst the first to resist against and survive the violence of colonisation. This land was taken without consent and sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Indigenous students and staff at the University.

As a team of settlers occupying the lands of the Gadigal, Dharug, Wangal,

Bidjegal, Kuringgai and Wallumedegal people, we are the beneficiaries of ongoing colonial dispossession. The settler-colonial project of 'Australia' and all its institutions, including the University, are built on the exclusion of First Nations peoples and the devaluation of Indigenous knowledge systems. Beneath the sandstone buildings of USyd lie thousands of years of Aboriginal history.

Colonialism is not a one-time event that occurred in the distant past; it is

an ongoing structure. The genocide of First Nations people is perpetuated and enabled by the government, who push ahead with the forced removals of Aboriginal children from their families, their Country, and their cultures. Aboriginal peoples are the most incarcerated on earth, and there have been nearly 450 documented Indigenous deaths in custody since the 1991 Royal Commission.

We pledge to actively stand in solidarity with First Nations

movements towards decolonisation through our editorial decisions, and to be reflective when we fail to do so. We commit to being a counterpoint to mainstream media's silencing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We remain cognisant that *Honi's* writers and readership are predominantly made up of settlers, and aim to platform Indigenous voices in our paper.

There is no justice without Indigenous justice.

## Editor in Chief:

Vivienne Guo

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Deandre Espejo, Samuel Garrett, Marlow Hurst, Jeffrey Khoo, Juliette Marchant, Shania O'Brien, Claire Ollivain, Max Shanahan, Alice Trenoweth-Creswell.

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Altay Hagebet, Amelia Koen, Claire Ollivain, Eleanor Curran, Laura Bancroft, Maxim Adams.

## Cover artist:

Chloe Callow (@chloe.callow.art)

# Editorial

I'm sitting in a room by myself in the early AM writing this editorial. I can hear my fellow editors laughing in the next room, and whispers of *Elephant* by Tame Impala are curling at my weary ears. It's been a strange and chaotic night; the Wentworth Building, the basement of which we call home, was evacuated only hours ago to the shrieks of the fire alarm. After a chaotic relocation to the Royal Hotel, we ventured hesitantly back to the SRC. From the decidedly unsung facade of the building, I can only assume that whatever hazard lurked on Level 3 had been dealt with by the prompt arrival of the fireies. I guess we'll never know.

I first got involved with *Honi Soit* in my second year of uni. My editor at the time (and now one of my very best friends) Liam Thorne came up to me at Welcome Week as I sat burrowed into a corner at the ACAR Stall and chased me up on my pitch.

I can't thank him enough for taking a chance on me as a green reporter. I also can't believe that he passed me off to the inimitable Amelia Mertha in the second semester of that year (but ultimately, absolutely no complaints there).

This edition is filled with dreamers and dissenters. A few come to mind that I'd urge you to read and read again: Kowther Qashou interrogates the myth of settler pioneerism on page 9, and Amelia Koen touches on the colonial nature of museums on page 10. Claire Ollivain, whose relentless curiosity and sharp wit I admire greatly, digs into the history of Camperdown Memorial Rest Park (old burial ground turned popular Inner West haunt) on page 12. Outrageously tall (and handsome) Max Shanahan tells us that the weather up there is actually lovely, reminiscing on the comfort of wet weather on page 14. And at last, who could forget dear

'Gamer Spread' on page 17; while I pen a queer, anti-capitalist love letter to *Stardew Valley*, Marlow Hurst answers our questions about the feminisation of virtual healing.

A few last thanks to some old friends (really, they need to graduate): Liam Donohoe, of SRC Presidency fame and fortune, Pranay Jha who once thought to fill an otherwise comfortable silence by telling me about his leg workout that day, and Amanda Dheerasekara who was a beacon of reason and comfort in the last year: thank you, thank you, thank you for your love and support. Here's my first EIC edition! Thank you for keeping me company in a year of isolation and hopelessness. I will buy you a new floor lamp.

Love always,  
Vivienne

# Letters

## On the state of the Union

Dear Editors,

We have recently learnt of the grave injury inflicted on a piano under the USU's care. The instrument in question was left out during a week of storms. As far as we are aware it is still there, open to the elements, in a fairly degraded state of decomposition. While we acknowledge that we are piano enthusiasts, and perhaps the general population isn't, it does seem to verge on obvious that an instrument, made of delicately tuned wires, felt, and light wooden hammers, isn't designed to be waterproof.

Even in the generous instance in which the Union acquired the piano and had it painted for free (questions of coercive wage theft here aside), our own insider knowledge suggests a piano removalist charges at least \$300. This means that after the waterlogged rubble is removed, the Union's escapade into public entertainment has cost at minimum \$600, Union administration costs (and dumping fees) non-inclusive, for the sum benefit of about 3 weeks of noise pollution on Eastern Avenue. At best this is negligence verging on incompetence, and at worst a heinous disrespect for the most mysterious and expressive of instruments. And all this could have been avoided if someone had the foresight to move it exactly 3 metres to the left when the weather forecast said: dangerous storms - Sydney Region.

There is maybe something to be said of an organisation that, in its eagerness to invest in creating a [perception of] vibrant student life, made no plans to preserve its assets, or indeed even entertained the foresight that to leave an instrument out of shelter for many weeks is about as appropriate as doing the same to a computer (or any other distinctly indoors item). Then again, given the extensive water rot (and now

electrical damage) that has continued to degrade the Union's spiritual home ground - the Holme Common Room - for over a year, perhaps the Union's view of water is one of peaceful coexistence.

Blake Falcongreen,

On behalf of The University of Sydney Piano Society

## Semenal artworks destroyed

Dear Honi,

I am rather incensed to have discovered that the historical Seminal Stairs (south staircase, level 9) of Fisher library have been cleaned up completely.

I discovered this as I entered the stairs to answer a call, and heard what sounded like a wet mop, so I left. I came back a few days later and discovered that it really was a mop, there was a strong smell of paint thinner and they were back at it again.

Previously there was a large collection of artwork, records of sexual encounters, and general messages of loneliness and stress dating back to the early 80s.

I have some pictures of the art prior to its destruction, as well as a few specimens that have not completely been erased as of yesterday.

Strangely the vast majority of it was from the 80s and 2005-2009, with nothing from the 90s, and comparatively little from 2010 onwards.

Andre Mare

## Ask Abe

Dear Abe,

I'm in love with the De Rucci man. I long to feel his whiskered cheeks brush against my supple flesh and feel his bony fingers around my neck

at night. Do you think he would be as firm with me as he is with his pillows?

I bought a De Rucci mattress a few months ago just to feel close to him - Queen size, in case he ever comes by - but I'm starting to worry he won't realise the way I feel about him before I graduate. I used to catch the bus down Parramatta Road every day just to catch a glimpse of his steel-rimmed eyes on that billboard, but ever since the outlet on the corner of Pymont Bridge Rd closed I haven't been able to sleep at night and it's starting to affect my grades.

How do I confess my love to him and is it true he's just an English teacher from rural China?

Sincerely,

Smoochie from De Rucci

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Smoochie,

Thanks for your question. I have done some digging with my cute little paws, and it appears that Mr. De Rucci left the country early last year amid rumours of a cannibalism scandal. However, De Rucci is not presently a high-school teacher in rural China. In fact, he has made the pivot from the mattress business to the adjacent psychoanalysis industry, establishing a practice in his hometown of Bologna. I can pass on the address if you wish.

As regards your sexual desire for De Rucci, did your father wear glasses?

If this is affecting your grades, please explain your situation in a Special Considerations application, or contact an SRC caseworker.

Kind regards,

Abe

In a moral/sexual/existential bind? Send your questions to Abe at editors@honisoit.com.



# Madame mal y pense

To the filthy pigs reading this,

Madame mal y pense is the new girl in town. My arch nemesis (and ex-girlfriend) Miss Soit has been hospitalised with third degree burns on her ass after the friction from her hot doggy-style date with Abe caused a fire in the Wentworth building. That's what you get for dating a straight man, you dirty bitch! I have scoured through Miss Soit's Google docs to create this column which I am contractually obliged to do after I signed a deal with the devil (Shaytan Swapnik).

## Switch in the (ballot) sheets

Madame mal y pense can confirm that the Switch nominees for USU are Innocent Isla Mowbray and Tempting Telita Goile. Will they both end up on top? Many think it's impossible, but I've seen stranger things in my time. Does the left have a new master-plan in the works for dominating the board?

## Busted Baxter

Turns out that Nicole 'Santa Baby' Baxter and Angelina 'Give Up Now' Gu can't keep their mouths taped shut. Madame has heard through a leaked screenshot from some fake friends that Nicole may not be running for USU Board after all! Turns out, it was all a pathetic attention-grab for SASS and Gu's USU run. Miss Soit, you pathetic cow. I shouldn't be surprised you can't get your facts straight - I knew you had no integrity long before Fabian exposed you as a pathological liar.

## Horny 4 Pres

Ben Hines, you tiny two-timer. Madame has heard that Horny Hines is rearing not one, but two candidates for USU Board - Delicious David Zhu and Succulent Susan Chen. While we know the USU loves rambunctious in-camera orgies, Madame mal y pense hears that this cozy threesome is purely political. How else will Bodacious Ben tie up the presidency for himself? The only thing he likes more than a stacked bod is a stacked board. So watch out USyd, this is one Libdependent who can't be tamed...

# What's on this week

## Talks for Good: Tech and Social Movements

31 March, 11am-12pm  
Eatz on Abercrombie

Tech for Social Good are holding their first Talks for Good meet up. Head to Eatz on Abercrombie to meet like-minded tech enthusiasts with a social conscience.

## SUDS Slot 3: Rotare

31 March - 3 April  
The Cellar Theatre

The Sydney University Drama Society is holding a showcase of vignettes performed by the society's newest members. Directed by long-time SUDS collaborators, it'll be an unmissable production.

## 2021 Arts Revue Auditions

13-16 April  
University of Sydney

Are you a budding actor or comedian? The University of Sydney Arts Revue is holding auditions next week. Check out the Facebook page for more information.

## Quiz-ine Night

1 April, 4-6pm  
ABS Seminar Room B2010

Show off your culinary knowledge this Thursday with USyd Food Adventure Society's Quiz-ine Night. There will be fantastic food trivia and a range of prizes. Pop over to The Royal afterwards for a chance to socialise with your fellow foodies.

## Write to us!!



Tired of waiting a month for USyd Rants to post your submissions? Want to have a go at one of our articles or declare your love for Miss Soit?

Email your letters to [editors@honisoit.com](mailto:editors@honisoit.com), use the anonymous tip form on our page, or send mail to:

Honi Soit Editors  
Students' Representative Council,  
University of Sydney  
Level 1 Wentworth Building (G01)  
University of Sydney, NSW 2006



## Arts faculty considers reducing long-form essay assessments

Deaundre Espejo reports.

Students in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) could be seeing less essays in their future assessment schedules.

Several staff have confirmed to *Honi* that in a staff meeting on Thursday, Dean of FASS Professor Annamarie Jagose said she believed the faculty should move away from its over-reliance on long-form essays as a method of assessment.

This is in line with the University's ongoing plans to diversify assessment in order to "reduce over-assessment" and "improve the realisation of the

University's assessment principles."

Staff have criticised the suggested move away from the essay-focused model, calling it a cost-saving measure.

A staff member who attended the meeting said that "the statement came in response to questions about the legitimacy of the piece rate and what [Jagose] plans to do with the wage theft it produces."

Currently, USyd staff are paid a 'piece rate' of 4500 words per hour when marking assessments — any time spent beyond this is unpaid.

Staff have repeatedly asserted this is insufficient time to properly mark work, which means many do unpaid labour.

A spokesperson from the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) told *Honi* they believed Jagose wants to rely on other assessment forms — which could include multiple choice and short-answer exams — to speed up the marking process instead of paying staff for the full time it takes to mark essays.

They also noted that the move would be "pedagogically disastrous"

for FASS students.

In a statement to *Honi*, a University spokesperson said that "Professor Jagose is an advocate for assessment diversification — not primarily as a way of saving money, but as a more inclusive approach to assessment that sees students engage with a range of assessment methods."

They noted that this includes long-form essays which "remain key to learning outcomes in the humanities and social sciences."

## University buildings flooded due to extreme weather

Shania O'Brien reports.

Multiple University buildings have experienced flooding and leaks in light of the extreme weather conditions that have hit Sydney in the past week.

Impacted buildings include the New Law Building, the Peter Nicol Russell Building, and Abercrombie Business School.

Students have been reallocated classes in the meantime, with a University spokesperson claiming

their Incident Response Team (IRT) has been working to "ensure the safety of the campus community and animals, as well as its infrastructure."

The IRT initiated preventative measures across high-risk areas last week which included installing sandbags, drain cleaning, and putting in place lessons from past events.

The University insists that the overall impact to campus remains "medium to low" with "no major

disruptions to teaching or research" being reported. However, repairs have been commenced and the IRT is expected to be in place until Wednesday March 24.

There have been multiple defects caused by the University's infrastructure recently, including urine flooding PNR building's study spaces and a door closing mechanism falling off the Susan Wakil building, injuring a student.



## Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Education to retire

Max Shanahan reports.

University of Sydney Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Education, Professor Philippa (Pip) Pattison, will retire at the end of 2021.

Pattison moved to USyd in 2014 from the University of Melbourne where she was chair of the Academic Board and Deputy Vice-Chancel-

lor (Academic). Her academic background is in quantitative psychology.

In her seven years at USyd, Pattison often attracted the ire of students and unions, spearheading significant changes to degree offerings, curriculum, and semester lengths.

Many of the changes instituted under Pattison's leadership share similarities with the so-called 'Melbourne Model' which saw degree options slashed and semesters shortened.

In 2017, 2020 and 2021, Pattison led pushes to reduce semesters from 13 teaching weeks to 12. The National Union of Students has criticised this policy as "show[ing] transparently that the University only thinks of students in dollar amounts...A 12 week semester is a step down the path to trimesterisation and the further commercialisation of our universities."

Pattison was also behind the decision to cut undergraduate degree options from 122 to 42.

The most substantive change under Pattison's leadership came with

the introduction of the Bachelor of Advanced Studies and the much maligned and oft-criticised 'Open Learning Environment Units.'

In a letter to staff, Vice-Chancellor Stephen Garton praised Professor Pattison for "her remarkable contribution to Australian higher education" and said that "During her tenure with us Pip has transformed the University's strategy for teaching and learning, and our students' educational experience."

"Working closely with faculties and University schools to realise our strategic ambitions, Pip has overseen the institution-wide renewal of our curriculum and cultivated new approaches in pedagogy, learning and teaching analytics.

"Pip was also instrumental in the development of the Student Experience Strategy to improve and transform the experience of our diverse student cohorts."

Pattison will remain in her role until the end of 2021.



## Hundreds gather in Sydney demanding justice for refugees

Amelia Raines reports.

Activists gathered at Belmore Park on Sunday in support of the Justice for Refugees rally.

The rally, organised by AMSA Crossing Borders and Palm Sunday Rally Sydney, demanded the release of Medevac refugees trapped in Australian hotels, as well as refugees in offshore detention centres.

It also demanded that refugees in Australia be granted permanent visas. Organisers criticised temporary and bridging visas for creating barriers to accessing work and facilitating cycles of poverty.

A diverse array of contingents attended the rally, including the National Tertiary Education Union, Labor for Refugees, Grandmothers Against Detention of Refugee Children, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Refugee Action Coalition, the Uniting Church, and Catholics for Refugees.

Aboriginal Elder Aunty Rhonda Dixon-Grovenor delivered the Welcome to Country, declaring: "We stand here in solidarity with all refugees."

Aunty Shirley continued the Welcome to Country, making links between her experience as a member of the Stolen Generations and the plight of refugees seeking asylum in Australia.

"I'm sorry how your people are being treated," she said. "They're doing the same to you as they did to us."

Margot Pearson, the Vice President of the Australian branch of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, criticised Australia's active role in the refugee crisis due to its close military ties with the US.

The crowd also heard from Thanush Selvasa, a Sri Lankan Tamil refugee who had spent eight years in the detention system, moving

between Manus Island, Christmas Island and Papua New Guinea before being moved to Melbourne.

Selvasa spoke of the struggle of finding work on a temporary visa, referring to this as one of the many "challenges" of adjusting to life in Australia. "Eight years of my life [were] taken from me," he said.

Sarah Dale, a Principal Solicitor at Refugee Advice and Casework Services, spoke to her experience working in a number of refugee cases. She criticised the precarious nature of bridging visas, noting that 26,000 people are living on temporary visas, "despite being found to need Australia's protection."

Other speakers included Mark Northam, Secretary of the Independent Education Union of Australia for NSW and Uniting Church minister Reverend Tara Curlewis.

Protesters then marched down Broadway to Victoria Park, with chants including "Free, free the refugees!" and "Say it loud, say it clear: Refugees are welcome here."

At Victoria Park, Renuga



Photography by Amelia Raines

## Nominations for USU Board open

Jeffrey Khoo reports.

Nominations have opened for this year's USU Board elections in mid-May.

Six candidates will be elected as Board Directors for a two-year term, replacing Irene Ma (Independent), Nick Forbutt (Labor Left), Cady Brown

(Liberal), Benny Shen (Independent), Di Wang (Independent, formerly Panda) and Nick Rigby (Liberal, filling a one-year vacancy).

Any student who wants to nominate must become a USU member. While it is early days, names that have been tipped to run include Isla Mowbray (Switchroots), Telita Goile (Switchroots), Angelina Gu (Labor Right), Nicholas Comino (Liberal), David Zhu (Independent), Susan Chen (Independent) and Nicole Baxter (Independent).

With new CEO Andrew Mills recently starting his role, issues that candidates must tackle include

Inpakumar then spoke on behalf of the Tamil Contingent, demanding the government to "#ReleaseRajan", a refugee who is battling leukemia and has been in detention for eleven years.

The rally concluded with Ian Rintoul thanking the crowd and demanding justice for detained refugees, adequate healthcare access, and for their immediate release.

"You can judge a government always by how they treat the most vulnerable in society," Refugee Action Collective founding member Ian Rintoul told *Honi* during the protest.

"We want all the people out of detention and out of the hotel prisons in Australia, we want all the people who are on Nauru and Manus Island brought to Australia where they can get care and protection."

*Honi* also spoke to Dr Graham Thom, who spoke of the variety of ways to support the movement: "online petitions, Twitter actions, postcards to MPs... It does make a difference. We are setting people free... it's the only way to change policy."

## USU buoyed by \$55,000 surplus

Marlow Hurst reports.

The USU Board met last week to discuss financial performance, Welcome Week, the new C&S grant funding, and the recent mass shooting in Georgia.

USU CEO Andrew Mills reported that the student union was \$55,000 ahead of budget, owing to overperformance from their commercial operations. While food and beverage staff have returned to 100% capacity, Mr. Mills announced that all USU teams would be operating at 100% capacity by March 29. Honorary Treasurer Cady Brown echoed these thoughts, announcing a positive cash balance for July 2021 and the elimination of the organisation's debt. These figures do not include forecasts for graduation revenue, and Brown noted that increased surpluses were likely for the student union going forward.

Board Director Prudence Wilkins-Wheat expressed concern on behalf of a number of clubs and societies over reduced membership numbers owing to single day stall allocations during Welcome Week. With the USU's new funding arrangement in full force, Wilkins-Wheat asked if membership tiers should be scaled to account for this. Vice President Nick Forbutt responded to this by saying that many clubs and societies he had spoken to had actually experienced more sign ups in a far shorter period of time. Board Director Nick Rigby voiced support for Wilkins-Wheat's concerns and fellow director Ben Hines suggested more opportunities for C&S recruitment throughout the semester.

Secretary Benny Shen touched on both the mass shooting in Atlanta, Georgia and the USU's response to Canberra's ongoing sexual assault saga.

"For over a year, Asian people have been fighting another virus, a virus of hate," said Shen.

Acknowledging that there was much work to be done, Shen highlighted the importance of combating racism and xenophobia in Australia and on campus.

Following this, Shen and a number of other board directors addressed the present issue of sexual assault and harassment on campus. According to USU President Irene Ma, the union's sexual misconduct document has been revised and will be made available to society executives, along with a poster and an infographic. Ma also expressed an interest in reinstating Consent Week and will be collaborating with the SRC to set wheels in motion.

## “Our education is not a commodity”: Students and staff protest ongoing uni cuts

Patrick McKenzie reports.

A contingent of students and staff gathered in front of Fisher Library on Wednesday to protest continued cuts to staff and courses throughout the higher education sector.

Co-organised by the Education Action Groups from USyd and UTS, the rally saw protesters speak about the impacts of staff redundancies, subject cuts across multiple faculties, and university fee hikes.

Casual tutor Robert Boncardo described the University's cuts as “pandemic profiteering,” alluding to the University accepting hundreds of voluntary staff redundancies despite ending 2020 in a surplus.

Boncardo also described the “ridiculous” workload metrics that casual staff are subject to, and cited upcoming enterprise agreement negotiations as “an unprecedented opportunity to ask for better teaching and learning conditions.”

SRC President Swapnik Sanagavarapu criticised the University's proposal of twelve week semesters.

“Students and staff have recognised that it is adverse to their interests, it worsens the quality of their learning and ensures that more content is crammed into less time... casuals have to do even more work for

even less pay,” Sanagavarapu said.

Protestors marched down Eastern Avenue and City Road to meet another contingent in front of UTS Tower.

Marching protesters were escorted by a considerable police presence, including approximately fifteen officers on foot and several patrol cars. Six mounted police were on standby in Victoria Park.

At UTS Tower, protesters listed their demands for no job or course cuts, free education, no forced online learning, and no exploitation of international students through fee hikes.

UTS casualised academic Mark Gawne argued that if universities are allowed to continue with cuts, staff and students would be forced to “foot the bill for this [economic] crisis”

“Many of the worst case scenarios projected for the sector did not materialise...Despite this, we were told by the University that we had to accept the cuts to save the institution itself.”

UTS Ethnocultural Officer Melodie Grafton questioned UTS' decision to cut specific courses including ‘Sex, Race and Empire,’ which explores the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism.



Photography by Aman Kapoor

“Racism requires your silence, anti-racism demands your voice... Where is your voice UTS, do you stand with us?”

UTS International Students Officer Luna Manandhar also spoke, saying that “treating international students like a money pot is not acceptable — don't use us as a business.”

NTEU organiser and academic Paddy Gibson spoke about the precarity of work faced by university staff, saying that over twelve years of employment at UTS, he has been

kept only on single-year contracts.

“Untold numbers of casuals and insecure staff have lost their jobs...the University wouldn't even provide the NTEU with their figures,” Gibson said.

The protest ended with a final march to the UTS Alumni Green in front of the Chancellery.

UTS Education Officer Ellie Woodward said: “This is not a business, our education is not a commodity to be bought and sold. Our education is a human right.”

## USyd academics linked to CCP recruitment schemes, sanctioned universities

Maxim Shanahan and Alice Trenoweth-Creswell report.

Honi Soit has identified current University of Sydney engineering academics who have been associated with controversial Chinese government talent recruitment schemes, and have collaborated with sanctioned Chinese universities on research with potential military end-use applications.

The University of Sydney declined to comment on whether individual academics had appropriately disclosed foreign relationships, and the results of due diligence processes applied to collaborations with sanctioned universities. The University further failed to answer questions regarding the appropriateness of international collaboration with these institutions.

By contrast, when Honi put the same questions to UNSW, a spokesperson was able to deny the involvement of their staff in talent recruitment programs.

### Talent Recruitment Schemes

Chinese Communist Party talent recruitment programs seek to attract top academics to Chinese universities, aiming to achieve self-sufficiency in advanced sciences and engineering, — reversing a brain-drain of academics towards Western states.

The programs offer participants lucrative funding and access to laboratories and staff. They often allow academics to draw a second salary while maintaining employment at their original institution.

While international academic talent recruitment is a common practice, and by no means inherently wrong, the acceleration and increased secrecy of China's academic talent recruitment programs in the last five years has caused concern in some Western nations.

The United States has characterised Chinese talent recruitment efforts as “a threat to national security.” The ongoing ‘Australian Parliamentary inquiry into national security risks affecting the Australian higher education and research sector’ has heard that such schemes “are widely associated with misconduct, intellectual property theft or espionage; contribute to the People's Liberation Army's

modernisation; and facilitate human rights abuses.” While the Thousand Talents Program is the best-known scheme, hundreds of other recruitment programs exist at national and regional levels.

In recent years, the secrecy surrounding talent recruitment programs has increased markedly. In 2018, after the arrests of a number of Thousand Talents Plan participants in the US, Bloomberg reported that Chinese state media had been forbidden from mentioning the program. At the same time, a leaked directive “told those carrying out recruitment work...not to use email when inviting potential recruits to China for interviews, and instead make contact by phone or fax under the guise of inviting them to a conference.” Recruiters were also instructed not to use the term “Thousand Talents Program.”

Furthermore, much online open access material relating to talent recruitment schemes has been removed. For example, the official Thousand Talents Plan website went completely offline in 2020 after references to individual participants were removed in 2018.

While the majority of talent recruitment schemes relate to academic research, scholars are sometimes encouraged to join as ‘entrepreneurs’ rather than as academics and are supported in the commercialisation of their research. These entrepreneurial schemes often see multiple patents filed in China, and close relationships developed with local companies for the use of the technology.

Talent recruitment programs have also been associated with substantial intellectual property theft. Programs such as Thousand Talents often require the copyright of any research or inventions to be registered in China, despite the majority of research being conducted overseas.

In the United States, several criminal charges have been laid against members of Chinese talent recruitment programs. The majority of these have occurred since 2017.

In August 2020, Charles Lieber, the Chair of Harvard University's Chemistry and Chemical Biology Department, was charged with making false statements regarding his involvement with the Thousand

Talents Program. Lieber, an expert in nanomaterials, allegedly failed to disclose a US\$50,000 monthly salary he received as part of the program.

In the past two years other American research institutions such as West Virginia University, the University of Kansas, and NASA have seen employees arrested and charged with fraud and making false statements regarding their involvement with the Thousand Talents Program.

The *Wall Street Journal* has reported that officials at Texas A&M University found that over 100 of their staff had been involved in Chinese talent recruitment schemes. Only five had disclosed their participation.

The Australian Research Council, which provides highly competitive government research grant funding, requires the disclosure of external affiliations, activities, and relationships with foreign entities.

### Talent Recruitment at the University of Sydney

Alex Joske's Parliamentary Inquiry submission cited 19 instances of USyd scholars believed to have joined CCP talent recruitment schemes.

The *Australian* has previously reported that Professor Ruibin Zhang of USyd's School of Mathematics and Statistics, who specialises in Quantum Field Theory, accepted a Thousand Talents program with Shandong Normal University in 2018. He has also been listed as an academic and doctoral supervisor at the University of Science and Technology of China.

Honi Soit has identified two more Sydney University academics — both employed at the Engineering Faculty's Centre for Advanced Materials Technology (CAMT) — with past or present links to talent recruitment schemes.

### Professor Lin Ye

Professor Lin Ye is the Director of the CAMT.

Before its website was taken offline, Professor Ye was listed as President of the Federation of Chinese Scholars in Australia (FOCSA), an organisation founded in 2004 “with the energetic support

and aid of the Chinese Embassy in Australia's education office.” At the organisation's founding ceremony, then Ambassador Fu Ying said she “hoped that experts and scholars would be able to transfer advanced technological achievements back to China.”

In 2007 Ye was appointed as a Visiting Professor at Harbin Engineering University.

In 2015, an “entrepreneurial” team led by Ye were announced as the recipients of 10 million Yuan (2 million AUD) in funding under the Guangdong Provincial Department of Finance's Pearl River Talent Program. The project aimed to pursue the “research and industrial application of nano-composite new air purification pyroelectric materials” and was purported to hold “16 authorised patents” with “two new products successfully industrialised.”

Professor Ye is also currently listed as a Professor and Doctoral Supervisor at East China University of Science and Technology's School of Mechanical and Power Engineering.

None of the above associations have been publicly disclosed on Ye's University profile.

A spokesperson declined to comment when asked if the University of Sydney was aware of Professor Ye's associations. Professor Ye was unable to be reached for contact. He is presently overseas on annual leave, touring laboratories at the University of Nottingham Ningbo and giving a lecture on ‘3D printing on Continuous Fibre Composites.’

Honi Soit does not allege that Professor Ye has engaged in any wrongdoing.



### Professor Yiu-Wing Mai

Professor Yiu-Wing Mai is USyd's Chair of Mechanical Engineering and a member of CAMT.

Continued on pg. 8

## ‘Bottoms and tops, we all hate cops’: Trans rights protestors march through Newtown

Robbie Mason reports.

On Saturday the 27th of March, a crowd of roughly 400 protestors gathered at 2 PM outside the Newtown Hub to continue the fight for trans liberation post-Mardi Gras. A conglomerate of community organisations including Pride in Protest, Trans Pride Australia, Community Action for Rainbow Rights, Trans-Action Warrang and Scarlet Alliance worked together to organise the event — a Trans Day of Visibility rally.

Greens MP Jenny Leong, the first speaker, expressed solidarity with First Nations communities. “It is an absolute disgrace that in recent times we have seen four more Aboriginal deaths in custody.” Pointing out that trans women of colour are disproportionately subject to violence, Leong criticised trans-exclusionary radical feminists (TERFs), asserting “you are not our friends.” She continued, “There is no silencing this community... we are not going anywhere”.

Mish Pony, from Scarlet Alliance, emphasised the importance of decriminalising sex work, stating that “trans sex workers are at the flash points of moral panics”.

Genevieve Doyle, from Trans Pride Australia, spoke on birth certificate reform and the high financial cost of gender reassignment surgery.

Referencing Mark Latham's “Parental Rights” bill, April Holcombe, from Community Action for Rainbow Rights, suggested that trans communities “face the biggest legislative attacks on our community in decades”. The bill threatens the safety of gender diverse kids by denying their existence and prohibiting their education on trans issues. It also puts teachers and school counsellors at risk of losing their jobs if they support and affirm the identity of a trans or gender diverse student. Holcombe pointed out that the NSW Liberal Parliamentary Secretary for Education, Kevin Conolly, recently expressed support for Latham's bill

(“this is no fringe view”) and called for support for the April 17 “Kill the bill” rally.

Mikhael Burnard, from Pride in Protest, MC for the rally, closed the speeches by picking up on a common theme: “We keep ourselves safe.”

Trans flags, rainbow-decorated signs and slogan-laden placards galore, the crowd then took the road and marched down King Street to Victoria Park, chanting the whole way.

“Mark Latham, fuck you, we deserve a future too!”

“Bottoms and tops, we all hate cops!”

No arrests were made and police did not brutalise protestors, in contrast to a trans right rally in October last year.

The rally comes days after news broke that a man convicted of manslaughter — for choking and killing Mhelody Bruno, a Filipino transwoman, during sex — had avoided prison due to a sentencing

error, sparking outcry among trans activists. The man, a former RAAF corporal, will now be re-sentenced on 29 March. National watchdogs and reports suggest that trans violence has increased in many neoliberal democracies in recent years. Since the Human Rights Campaign, the largest queer advocacy organisation in the US, began logging data on violence against gender non-conforming Americans in 2013, the organisation has reportedly never recorded a year with higher fatal violence than 2020. While data on violence against trans bodies is notoriously difficult to collate, due to underreporting, crime data being recorded in gender binaries and a failure of bureaucracy, one survey published in June last year suggests that trans women of colour in Australia particularly vulnerable to abuse. They were more likely than other women to report having been assaulted by a stranger. They were also twice as likely as other women to be sexually assaulted 10 or more times.

# USyd academics linked to CCP recruitment schemes, sanctioned universities

Continued from pg. 7.

In 2017, Yiu-Wing Mai was reportedly recruited into Huazhong University of Science and Technology's High-end Talent Introduction Program and has been employed as a professor at the School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering of Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST).

Whilst Mai's employment at HUST is disclosed on his University profile, mention of the High-end Talent Introduction Program is omitted.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute has designated HUST as 'high risk' for its six defence laboratories and close links to China's defence industry. HUST engages in research and production for classified weapons and military projects, with a particular focus on material science, artificial intelligence and mechanical engineering and image processing.

Mai's research with the Huazhong University of Science and Technology works towards manufacturing high-performance thermal interface materials, used in microelectronics, electrical engineering, aerospace, and defence.

Professor Mai could not be reached for comment. *Honi Soit* does not allege that Professor Mai has engaged in any wrongdoing.

## Collaboration with Sanctioned Universities

University of Sydney researchers and departments continue to collaborate with Chinese universities which have significant defence and weapons links, have been implicated in economic espionage cases, and added to sanctions lists. While it is entirely appropriate and natural for international collaboration to occur, questions over the propriety and extent of due diligence undertaken by Sydney University in regards to these collaborations cannot be answered without more transparency.

The University declined to comment on the results of the specific due diligence processes undertaken regarding the individual collaborations with sanctioned

universities. However, a University spokesperson told *Honi* that their evaluation process covers a range of relevant laws and information in the public domain including the United Nations Security Council sanctions and the Defence Sensitive Technologies List. The process considers issues surrounding human rights, privacy, and inconsistencies with the University of Sydney's values. The public domain is consulted for media articles, military and defence connections, publications, and funding associations.

### National University of Defence Technology

China's National University of Defence Technology operates under the auspices of the People's Liberation Army, conducting research into supercomputers, hypersonic missiles, and artificial intelligence among other things.

In 2015, NUDT was added to the Entity List of the United States' Bureau of Industry and Security, having been deemed to be involved in "activities that are contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the United States." Specifically, it was alleged that NUDT had used "US origin multicores, boards and (co)processors" to produce supercomputers believed to be "used in nuclear explosive activities."

Several USyd academics have collaborated with NUDT on academic papers. Professor Tao Dacheng, an artificial intelligence expert, is perhaps the most prominent of these figures, collaborating with NUDT on 23 academic papers, four of which have come since moving from UTS to USyd. His most recent NUDT collaboration was a paper titled "Semi-online Multi-people Tracking by Reidentification." The lead researcher, Long Lan, hails from NUDT's State Key Laboratory of High

Performance Computing.

As recently as 2018, Tao was listed as a doctoral supervisor at NUDT. In 2017, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that — despite NUDT beginning to take on civilian students — Tao was listed as "willing to supervise only PLA personnel." Professor Tao did not reply to requests for comment. It is unclear whether he is still a doctoral supervisor at NUDT.

Sydney University declined to comment on the due diligence it had undertaken with regards to the governance of NUDT and the end-use applications of its collaborative research.

### Centre for Advanced Materials Technology

USyd's Centre for Advanced Materials Technology lists a number of overseas "international partners." Among these are Chinese universities that have been implicated in economic espionage and been placed on sanctions lists. CAMT researchers regularly collaborate with these universities on research with dual-use potential. Other CAMT "international partners" on US entity lists are Harbin Engineering University, Harbin Institute of Technology, and Northwest Polytechnic University.

For example, Sun Yat-sen University (SYSU), which is listed as a CAMT international partner, was added to the US Government's Unverified List in October 2020, which places restrictions on US exports to the university. Entities are added to the Unverified List if the US Government is "unable to satisfactorily carry out end-user checks" on them. If the US Government is unable to ascertain research end-use with certainty, it is reasonable to question whether the University of Sydney can.

USyd declined to answer any questions *Honi* asked about

due diligence it had conducted regarding collaboration with these universities.

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When asked about talent recruitment programs, The University of Sydney maintained the importance of international collaboration in university education and research, yet failed to respond to much else.

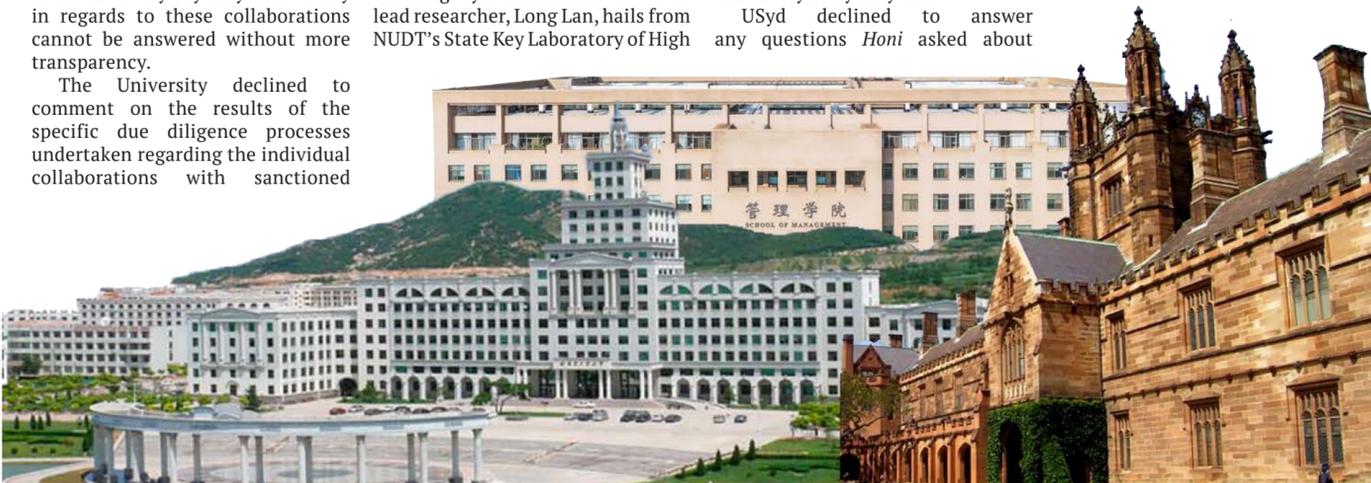
"We strongly defend the rights of our staff to collaborate with colleagues around the world in line with all relevant Australian laws and government guidelines," a University spokesperson told *Honi*. "We take our responsibilities seriously and have systems to monitor and review our activities."

*Honi* does not allege any of the Professors mentioned above have engaged in any wrongdoing, nor does *Honi* allege that University due diligence processes are insufficient. However the lack of transparency surrounding the conduct of individual staff members and the results of due diligence checks make evaluating both individual and University behaviour difficult.

The Australian Research Council and The University Foreign Interference Guidelines both call for increased transparency regarding talent recruitment programs.

Whilst the University has expressed some concern about the transparency of talent recruitment programs, their lack of disclosure does little to engender confidence that their present procedures identify all instances of potential foreign interference.

Art by Deaundre Espejo



# The myth of settler pioneerism

Kowther Qashou unpacks colonialist agriculture practices and the idea of the pioneer.

Commonly found throughout nationalist history and lore is the idea of the 'Pioneer,': Those who came before us, founders, discoverers, and Firsts. Colonialism and settler discourses rely heavily on this idea to drive the continuity of the settler-colonial state, and serve to erase those who truly came before, such as the Indigenous peoples of a land.

Beyond the naming of places after so-called pioneers, agriculture was a prominent way colonisers established dominance over land. Until recently, narratives of Indigenous peoples being 'hunter-gatherers' were peddled to depict them as 'uncivilised' and 'savages' to prove they had no territorial claims compared to the 'civilised' European settlers who knew how to farm. In Australia, Many early British settlers were granted hundreds of acres of land where they built large estates and farms. Modern suburbs that sit atop these former estates often take their names from these settlers, erasing their original Indigenous names. Agriculture and farming thus cemented a permanent place for settlers in the new colony. The construction of the 'pioneer' has deliberately justified and excused colonial expansion over centuries to establish the image of settlers as persevering and innovating in a new land. In reality, pre-existing Indigenous knowledge was essential to these efforts. For instance, many early 'explorers' relied on Indigenous paths and guides to navigate terrain and 'discover' new areas. This is true not only in Australia, but in other colonies too.

Much of Israel's pre-state history rests on the veneration of kibbutzim. First founded in 1909 by the Yishuv (the Jewish residents of Palestine prior to the establishment of Israel), a kibbutz is traditionally an Israeli agricultural commune. Today the number of kibbutzim has grown to 274. Long hailed as 'socialist' communes, the aims of kibbutzim were to create a rural egalitarian utopia, infused with Zionist nationalism. Despite Zionist claims of "making the desert bloom," Palestine's fertile regions and tropical climate were already ripe for the successful establishment of these communes.

Agricultural practices were tied to the mass displacement and forced dispossession of Indigenous peoples. The violent acquisition of land in Australia disrupted traditional Indigenous ways of life, resulting in violent clashes between Indigenous people and settlers. As Indigenous people were continually dispossessed of their land and denied access to food and water sources. Farms became sites of resistance where crops were burned and cattle were killed, sometimes as means of obtaining food, other times, it was retaliation for settler violence targeted towards Indigenous people. Efforts were also made by the colonial government in the 1800s to 'civilise' Indigenous peoples by introducing farming and gardening activities into protectorates and missions.

In Palestine, villages, towns, and

cities were ethnically cleansed of their Palestinian inhabitants to make way for newly-established settlements, including kibbutzim, and the newly-created Jewish state of Israel in 1948.

The introduction of European farming methods and non-native animals had a great ecological impact. Indigenous plants and animals reacted negatively to European crops and animals, and the introduced species were consequently designated



as "pests." The introduction of non-native animals also led to a decline in, and the extinction of, many native species. Between 1870 and 1910, dense forests were cleared, and with them native flora and fauna, to convert them into dairy pastures. The destruction of these forests for farming purposes greatly disturbed the environment, leading to decreased rainfall, large-scale fires, and an increase in floods, erosion, frosts and pests.

In the case of Israel, the Jewish National Fund (JNF), a non-profit organisation dedicated to buying and developing land, planted thousands of non-native pine forests across historic Palestine. These forests were planted in part to cover up the ruins of Palestinian villages and towns that had been depopulated and destroyed since 1948. The extreme flammability of these non-native trees have greatly exacerbated Israeli wildfires, notably in 2016.

The Aussie farmer is frequently construed by the media and politicians as a passive victim of climate change. While there is some truth to that, the agriculture industry has caused an untold amount of environmental harm over the years since colonisation. While many farmers are presently struggling, modern agricultural practices which are rooted in Western colonial techniques, have proven unsustainable in the long-term. Furthermore, the growth of industrial agriculture and increased trade has facilitated pollution, and the exploitation of natural resources. In Australia, land clearing, deforestation and irrigation have threatened biodiversity and resulted in land degradation through soil erosion, salination, and waterlogging, to name just a few.

Kibbutzim were mostly driven by Labour Zionism, the same strand of Zionist ideology that oversaw the construction of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Today, these settlements are supported by the Israeli Right through the evocation of Jewish ties and history to the land as a

justification for continued land theft and settlement. Regardless, Zionism, no matter its political alignment or form, is the same nationalist ideology responsible for the destruction of thousands of olive trees, the seizure of Palestinian land, and the dispossession of Palestinians from their land. Palestinians living in the West Bank continue to experience water shortages and face violent attacks by settlers. Many Palestinians rely on

face shortages and increasing restrictions as they are increasingly isolated from international markets and forced to rely on Israel for economic support.

In Australia's rural areas, the struggles of Australian farmers are prioritised over Indigenous peoples, who are equally, if not more, affected by climate change and the state-sponsored destruction of sacred sites and degradation of Indigenous land. In the West Bank, Jewish ties and history spanning millennia are evoked by the far-right to justify the expansion of Israel's colonial settlement project and the continued destruction of acres of Palestinian land. In both cases, it is evident that notions of pioneerism continue to drive dispossession and displacement today.

The establishment of settler societies and introduction of foreign species did not innovate in any way, it simply destroyed pre-existing practices. Without Indigenous knowledge and access to vast fertile land that had been tended to over time, much settler pioneering would have not succeeded.

Art by Laura Bancroft

## Notice of Council Meeting

93rd Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney

**DATE:** Wed 7th April  
**TIME:** 6pm  
**LOCATION:** Via Zoom

To attend please email:  
secretary.council@src.usyd.edu.au



**src** activism  
advocacy  
representation

src.usyd.edu.au | 02 9660 5222

# Museums: Dismantle, Decolonise, Re-build

*Amelia Koen is rethinking museums.*

The historical foundations of our public institutions are irrevocably entrenched in imperialism, European supremacy and colonial violence — our museums are no exception. In these spaces, artworks, artefacts and relics are deliberately estranged from their acquisition and native histories, allowing for their public presentation to become de-historicised into a Eurocentric nostalgia for empire. In museums as they exist today, art-historical perspectives prevail, without attempts to decolonise our understanding of the object at hand. Not only does this contribute to the global erasure of Indigenous culture, but in doing so, it upholds racist and classist structures within society. In particular, 18th and 19th century European art is the single biggest culprit of depicting empire in a deeply problematic, self-reverential light. Our galleries are filled with ornate portraits of slave owners, pillagers, and colonisers, escorted by trivial words about who they were and what they did; it is easy for the viewer to take in the glistening image of an artwork without its gruesome history.

To grapple with the problematic state of our modern museums in their totality, and understand why decolonising them is not as simple as it first seems, it is critical that we understand the origin of the museum as a symbol of white aristocracy. The early ancestor of the museum is

the ‘cabinet of curiosity’, arising in central Europe in the 13th century. These cabinets were owned by royalty and aristocratic men, rapidly becoming the most prominent display of one’s power. Filled with foreign objects taken as trinkets and trophies from their conquests, the cabinet of curiosity was a place a man could bolster his wealth, knowledge and colonial expanse. As cabinets became shelves, and shelves became rooms, museums were born out of the private collections of the colonial European aristocracy, comprised of ‘exotic’ objects removed from their native place and history, just as they remain in our museums today.

So if museums were born as a byproduct of empire, made possible only by the wealth generated from colonisation, this history begs the question: is it ever possible to decolonise the museum?

We cannot fix the problem by simply removing problematic artworks from display, because they represent real people with real, troubling histories. To dismiss this history would be an act of injustice and disregard for the continued effects of European colonisation on Indigenous cultures globally. A first step instead may be to diversify our galleries beyond Eurocentric art. However, this is misguided, as it is critical to acknowledge that decolonisation and diversity are not synonymous. The

inclusion of non-Western art created by people of colour in galleries is imperative, but this is not a means to an end for a gallery-space to become ‘decolonised’. Decolonisation is the process by which the canon of history is reviewed, questioned and re-constructed to do justice to the stories of those who have been oppressed by colonialism. A truly decolonised gallery must change the narrative it presents alongside colonial art in the form of labels, blurbs and information that seeks to represent the work in a non-Eurocentric and historically elucidative fashion. Simply including non-Western art in a gallery is not enough. It is interesting to note that cabinets of curiosity purposefully went without labels in order to withhold knowledge, providing the owner with more power over viewer interpretation. This deliberately exclusionary sentiment is apparent in the euphemistic (or altogether erasive) labelling of many European artworks in modern museums.

Deliberately poor and incomplete labelling is a significant hurdle to overcome in the effort to decolonize museums. Notably, sociological scholars, such as Aníbal Quijano, describe the private control of subjectivity and historical knowledge as a key pillar in the colonial matrix of power. This scrupulous control can only be dismantled through the accommodation of objects, artworks



and portraits with labels that reveal the subject or owner’s identity, the source of their wealth, political contributions, purpose for commissioning the work, and the lineage of ownership to the present day — these are the keys to building a decolonised understanding of a colonial object. Though the institution of the museum cannot be removed from its colonial heritage, it is the responsibility of curators and art historians today to begin the arduous process of decolonising artworks and objects. Alongside this, greater efforts need to be made to include non-Western art, historically dismissed from art-history as less extraordinary and unfit for gallery display. Acknowledgement and understanding through the decolonisation of the art-historical canon must be the road undertaken to transform museums into cultural institutions that reclaim and represent our collective histories — unpleasantries and all.

*Art by Amelia Koen*

# Voluntourism: not a glowing resume line

*Ariana Haghighi unpacks the saviour complex.*

People insist on the pursuit of altruism. Psychologists have promulgated various theories to explain why we seek to help others: they claim we are motivated by compassion; a sense of guilty obligation to the less fortunate; our own definition of morality; even the egoistic search for accolades. It follows, then, that we chase altruistic acts we can use to extend our CV. Studies have provided copious evidence for the benefits to individuals when we volunteer - from improved mood to stronger relationships and even a longer life. But what of the other side of the equation, the groups for whom we volunteer, those we claim to protect and serve?

The phenomenon of ‘voluntourism’ has amassed a throng of committed disciples, but whilst it has garnered media attention and attracted many fresh high school graduates, the wave of popularity has dissolved families and demolished vulnerable communities. It is a widely accepted practice to visit extremely impoverished communities with the intention of providing help, unfettered by regulations or rules that would ensure safe behaviour. In comparison, you would be met

with ridicule if you attempted to contribute similarly in Australia without adequate qualifications such as TAFE certificates or experience. One can apply this logic to almost any voluntourist trip undertaken by overzealous high-school or gap year students — they brick-lay walls, care for young children, and carve wells into land with little respect for the desires of the local community. Often, voluntourists complete jobs overseas for which they would fall into legal trouble here.

Whilst voluntourism can often generate positive, tangible change; it is not guaranteed nor long-lived. Untrained volunteers may have good intentions but often trigger an onslaught of harm due to their lack of skill. For example, construction projects are often butchered and thus require more resources to be rectified. Tourists inadvertently create imbalances in local communities, favouring certain orphans with trinkets or affection. For example, Kenyan woman Jane Karigo runs a Children’s Home in Mombasa and recalls once a child was gifted an iPod, leading to tension and infighting. Communities are well aware of the growing voluntourism market,

brimming with those desperate to travel. This has transformed how they display themselves. Research conducted by the British charity Lumos suggests that orphanages in South Asian countries are often facades, painted with a veneer of vulnerability to draw in unsuspecting volunteers. 80% of children housed in these institutions may have a living parent but are coerced into these living situations for money. Frequently, the money that volunteers bring is distributed unequally or used to enrich the quality of their own experience rather than provide substantial benefit to an area.

The performance of unethical voluntourist work in overseas countries for citizens of colour is driven by the white saviour narrative, leading to claims that this work is ‘neo-colonialist.’ The idea of Western superiority to other countries is institutionally ingrained, imparted to children in primary school when tasked with projects on solving poverty and brainstorming benefits of Western aid and the imposition of our ‘morally preferable’ values, such as democracy. The narrative is revised when volunteers use brown and black children as photo

props — again, a phenomenon that would be considered unethical with white children considering the lack of parental consent given before wide dissemination on lifestyle platforms. This perpetuates a toxic narrative of the moral high ground and paints countries in Africa and Asia as characterised by poverty and malnourished children.

Daniela Papi, the author of *Learning Service*, a book about ethical altruism, believes voluntourism is not inherently evil, but that we need to reframe our approach. “We sell a lie when we call it volunteering,” she claims, “[it] makes it seem like success comes from changing someone else. Learning how to serve the rest of our lives has the [greatest] impact.” Many orphanages can provide a stable, loving place for abandoned children, and subsist on the donations of caring volunteers. Rather than blanketly criticising all volunteer work, we need to employ a critical lens and evaluate experiences using a case-by-case approach. And if we genuinely cannot find a justifiable way to help the impoverished with our current competencies, then it is time we stop pursuing them for bold resume lines.

# The value of ownership

*Chiara Bragato meditates on the value of ownership in the era of streaming.*

Over the past decade, streaming services such as Netflix, Spotify, and Amazon have become increasingly popular. Whilst these platforms provide access to large amounts of content at an extremely cheap rate (on a \$/item scale) there is a corresponding decrease in the rate of permanent ownership.

Given the nature of streaming services, consumers do have some power to demand content and influence the service providers. In 2018, public backlash resulted in Netflix paying \$100 million to keep *Friends* on their platform for another year. Aside from isolated anecdotes though, the streaming landscape is growing more and more hostile to the consumer, with corporations steadily monopolising the movie and TV industry, with Disney owning 20+ media businesses. The corporatisation of the arts makes it increasingly difficult for smaller groups or individuals to break into the market, with policies limiting their exposure and profits, such as Apple

refusing to pay artists for the first 3 months on their platform. Smaller content creators who could previously rely on free-to-air revenue and the profits from DVDs, CDs, or books, are struggling as the saturation of the market has established streaming services as exclusive. Artists employed by larger corporations are losing out as well. TV shows are being pumped out at a drastically increasing rate, but content creators are getting paid less, with many companies no longer giving them a share of the profits, and retaining less creative autonomy.

In addition to creating an ever more monolithic and domineering entertainment industry, the rise of streaming has led to the loss of ownership. With many people unable to pay the endless subscription fees, we cannot experience art and media that we previously could have. No longer do you buy a DVD and add it to your collection, you simply add another subscription to your list. Now

purchasing a DVD or a book tends to cost more than a month’s subscription to a favourite service. Why buy a CD for \$20 when I can stream it on Spotify for free?

This access comes at the cost of ownership. The inability to own a piece of media forces us into a cycle of streaming, which we can never really leave. Not only do consumers lose the benefits of permanent ownership (never-ending re-watches, one-time payment for all-time access, the ability to share with friends, just to name a few), but there is no viable alternative. This shifting market limits our choices and forces us into a corner in order to gain access to ‘exclusive content’ (despite paying subscription fees, movies like *Mulan* and *Raya’s Last Dragon* still cost an additional \$34.99 to watch). Despite paying for content, we have no control over it. The service provider could easily remove your access, as such the idea of ownership is disappearing.

Public content is also on the decline. As movies and TV shows become direct-to-stream, the worldwide premier is practically a thing of the past. The lack of public access to media also has significant consequences, as individuals who can’t afford streaming suffer.

Re-watching that show from your childhood which makes you nostalgic, reading a book you love for the first time, playing the same CD on repeat while you write your mid-sem essay — the ownership of these things is an important part of life. Streaming makes these moments even more fleeting than they already were. The art that helps shape us is now entirely subject to the desires of corporations that care only about the bottom line. The rise of streaming forces consumers into a cycle of endless subscriptions, destroying the idea of permanent ownership, and cementing media as a money-making enterprise. And we have Netflix to thank for it all.

# Cancel culture in the art world

*Tiger Perkins is [CENSORED].*

The issue of whether art galleries should show works by morally contentious artists has permeated discussion in the art community over the last several decades. For galleries, there seems to be no easy path to take; they are damned if they do and damned if they don’t, facing backlash both when they censor art and when they don’t. In the case that we did decide to censor morally contentious artists, who would be the arbiter of such censorship anyway? Is objective censorship even possible or will it always be subject to capricious surges of public opinion?

It is an unfortunate reality that if we were to suddenly decide to remove and censor the works of all the world’s morally condemnable artists, there would be myriad blank walls in our galleries. In addition to this, it would become very difficult to teach the history of art without being able to examine the works of these artists. For instance, just as it would be impossible to tell the history of the Western world without reference to Adolf Hitler, how could one hope to teach Cubism without including Pablo Picasso? A number of works featured in Picasso’s *Vollard Suite*, comprising 100 intaglio prints, depict animalistic scenes of rape and murder. Perhaps the most tormenting of the prints, however, is *Minotaur Caressing a Sleeping Woman* (1933). The work shows a Minotaur hunched over a sleeping woman as it caresses her cheek. Its taurine face, rendered in incredible detail and in stark contrast to the line drawing of the rest of the print, rests gently on its own hand,

showing a deep agony bordering on self-hatred.

Sally Foster, of the National Art Gallery of Australia, notes that Picasso saw himself as the Minotaur and through the work attempts to portray his struggle with the “animalistic urges” that both plagued and devastated him during his life.

human experiences. A depiction of Picasso’s internal torments, fraught with the dichotomies of pain and desire, pleasure and self-loathing, *Minotaur Caressing a Sleeping Woman* is but one example of art that is so painfully honest in its twisted portrayal of human nature that it must be seen by the world. To exclude



*Minotaur Caressing a Sleeping Woman by Pablo Picasso (1933)*

“He doesn’t hide it,” says Foster. “He’s not being secretive about it, he puts all his psychological tensions...in his work for all of us to see.” Whilst it is not the singular purpose of art, great artworks often share the quality of being able to authentically describe the world we live in, and offer insight into either our own lives, or broader

from artist’ debate often clouds the discussion that we are having around whether or not to show the works of morally condemnable artists. It is folly because of course we should never view a work as separate from its artist — to do so would be to ignore the fact that understanding the artist is an integral part of understanding the art. New York artist and editor of *Silica Magazine*, Shannon Lee is dismayed that: “the artistic canon has consistently disregarded [Picasso’s] personal tumult with women in favor of keeping the ‘art separate from the artist.’” She continues: “If anything, an artist’s flaws ought to provide us with potential opportunities to revisit and re-contextualize their work.”

The experience of viewing a work of art on an aesthetic level, in combination with an education around the context of the artist, including any potential ethical issues, allows for a much deeper understanding of the work as a whole. If we were to look at Picasso’s *Minotaur Caressing a Sleeping Woman* on a simply aesthetic level, it would be a skillful, albeit deeply disturbing work of art. However, if we understand it as an exploration of human nature and an authentic insight into the self-loathing produced by acting on animalistic instinct, it becomes a triumph of artistic skill from which it is difficult to look away. Whilst I won’t argue in an absolute sense against the censorship of art, I would err on the side of allowing humanity to learn from these works.

It is important to recognise also that the folly of the ‘separating art

# Unearthing Camperdown Memorial Rest Park

Claire Ollivain digs through the past and present of the Inner West's central meeting place.

CW: Graphic mentions of sexual and racial violence

Camperdown Memorial Rest Park, one of the only green community spaces in an area which has changed its face over decades of gentrification, is in some ways the last refuge of what was once working-class Newtown. The park, which is on Gadigal Country, holds a palimpsest of memories both national and local, visible and invisible, as multi-layered as the dirt beneath the picnickers and dog-walkers who frequent it daily.

Used as a significant social hub with a playground and an open green area holding everything from community gatherings and rallies to the Newtown Festival, the question of crime has long been a defining point in the park's history. What many of us don't realise or often forget about the place affectionately dubbed 'Campo', is that its historic cemetery enclosed by a high sandstone wall once covered the park in its entirety. 18,000 bodies are buried just below our feet at the centre of life in the Inner West; their headstones and monuments, of which there are only 2,000, have been relocated inside the walls.

Founded in 1848, Camperdown Cemetery was the main cemetery in Sydney after the burial sites at Town Hall and Central railway station filled up. During the early 20th century, the local council responded to complaints that the overgrown cemetery was a threat to public health by making intermittent efforts at turning it into a park. The proposal was rejected by successive governments and looked upon with scorn by the cemetery's

**It's not easy to imagine death outside the realm of the distant and abstract, even when it is knitted into the fabric of a place.**

trustees who were concerned with its historical — and particularly colonial — significance. It wasn't until 1946, after missing 11-year-old girl Joan Norma Ginn was found raped and murdered in long grass between headstones, that the conversion into a park was finally prompted. News stories from the time provide a glimpse into residents' views that the cemetery was "a rendezvous for undesirables", an "uncared for blot on our community" and the "Newtown Jungle"; attitudes which have uncannily re-emerged in the past decade.

When I attend a tour of the overgrown cemetery on a clear Sunday, I am greeted by birdsong and dappled light which dances from grave to grave, filtered

through the many trees which have been planted in people's memory. I notice the locals in attendance exchanging raised eyebrows over teenagers with dyed hair and goth outfits who are having a party amongst the tombstones. As we sit on the 170-year-old roots of the Moreton Bay fig tree at the entrance, a pair of attendees tell the group that they went to school with Joan Norma Ginn's siblings. "All they talked about was their sister who was murdered, and the whole school was fascinated by it." The woman solemnly recalls the strong impression that a picture of Joan stuck up at Newtown railway station left on her as a child, and how it was later removed during renovations.

In 1948, two years after the murder, four acres were cordoned off for the current cemetery. The above-ground monuments were brought inside the walls and a foot of soil was placed over the site, the bodies left in the ground where the park is today. Archaeologist Jenna Weston tells me the reason not everyone buried in the cemetery had a headstone may be because their relatives were unable to afford one. "The common interments, where the government paid for the burial because the relatives couldn't even afford that, were not allowed to have headstones... and they were mostly located outside the current wall, on the outskirts of the cemetery."

While visible monuments give an idea of the wealth of some of the people buried in Camperdown Cemetery, many poor people were put in mass, unmarked

graves. Little is known of their lives beyond their names and causes of death. During a measles epidemic in the mid-19th century, there were days where up to a dozen people were buried in communal graves. Sitting in the park with friends, I speculate with morbid curiosity about whose grave might lie just a few metres below us; it's not easy to imagine death outside the realm of the distant and abstract, even when it is knitted into the fabric of a place.

Wanting a better understanding of whose stories have been remembered and forgotten in the cemetery, I visit Fisher Library's Rare Books & Special Collections where a disintegrating copy of *Prominent Australians and importance*

of Camperdown Cemetery by P.W. Gledhill is stored. The Chairman of trustees from 1924 until 1962, Gledhill was devoted to the cemetery. It becomes abundantly clear from his foreword alone that the cemetery functioned not simply as a place where bodies were laid to rest, but served an ideological purpose in its commemoration of British colonisers. Gledhill wrote in 1934 that the trustees wished to "safeguard and treasure" the cemetery's monuments in order to "inspire reverence for those pioneers whose self-denying and courageous exertions securely established the future of our Nation."

**While visible monuments give an idea of the wealth of some of the people buried in Camperdown Cemetery, many poor people were put in mass, unmarked graves.**

One of the 'pioneers' buried in the cemetery is surveyor-general Thomas Mitchell, whose recumbent tomb stands out in an unmarked grassy area and is flanked by a tall iron fence. According to Gledhill, Mitchell's funeral procession in 1855 was the largest, save William Wentworth's, that had ever been seen in Sydney. Like Wentworth, who founded the University of Sydney, Mitchell was abhorrently racist. Known for 'exploring' the Darling River, Mitchell and his surveying party massacred at least seven Barkindji people on Mount Dispersion in 1836, later describing them as "treacherous savages" in his journal. In the hegemonic narrative of history, Thomas Mitchell is remembered for his "valuable work" as Gledhill describes it, while his involvement in the genocide of Indigenous peoples is either omitted or given little emphasis.

In another section of Gledhill's book called *Early Australians: A Plea for Perpetual Gratitude*, Secretary of the British Empire Union in Australia M. F. King writes, "how good a thing it would be to collect the mortal remains [of the pioneers] and inter them in a vast mausoleum in a conspicuous part of Canberra. Quite the next best thing to this would surely be to see that the known resting places of their bodies are preserved for all time as properly cared for shrines of remembrance. One such place is Camperdown Cemetery."

The excessive nationalistic appraisals of the cemetery — which played a part in the decades-long conflict between the trustees and council over

its conversion into parkland — are almost laughable when read in contrast to the current usage of the space. One can only imagine how Gledhill and King would turn in their graves if they saw the political graffiti which emblazons the inside of the cemetery walls, or the swaths of young people who come to the park to drink in preference to the upmarket bars of King Street.

The cemetery's landscaping and neo-Gothic sexton's lodge, like the University of Sydney Quadrangle, were designed to have an "English appearance". Not far from the entrance is a Gothic headstone in memory of colonial architect Edmund

Blacket, who designed the University's main building as well as St Stephen's, the Anglican church inside the cemetery. The sandstone buildings designed by Blacket needed lime mortar for the laying of bricks, and this was sourced by burning shell middens created over thousands of years by Aboriginal people, recorded to be structures 100 metres wide in some places along the coast. As Peter Myers writes in *The Third City*, "Sydney's Second City is probably the largest urban system ever built from, and upon, an existing fabric... directly constructed from the urban structure of a preceding civilisation."

Perhaps the most frequently visited and largest tomb at Camperdown Cemetery is the mass grave of the Dunbar shipwreck, which is adorned with a rusted anchor. In 1857, the Dunbar was wrecked at South Head during a night of heavy rain and strong winds. Out of the 122 passengers on board, only one survived. A day of public mourning was declared, the city closed down for a funeral attended by around 10,000, and most of the recovered bodies were interred in a single tomb at Camperdown Cemetery. Annual memorial services were held, and the Dunbar took its place in the settler-colonial imagination as a symbol of perseverance. In a 1952 meeting of trustees, Gledhill suggested that an avenue of 24 trees be planted "to the memory of the pioneers of Sydney," including the Dunbar victims.

If you enter the park opposite from the Courthouse Hotel, you might notice a stone plaque to the right of



the footpath. This area is called 'Cooee Corner'. The plaque is inscribed: "this tree was planted to the memory of Mogo, an Aboriginal who was buried here on 9th November 1850." Little information is available about the lives of Mogo and the other Aboriginal people buried at Camperdown Cemetery, or why Mogo in particular is commemorated. After the annual Dunbar service in 1932, a pilgrimage was made to the graves of Mogo and William Perry, which were covered with shells from a Pittwater midden. During the memorial service, Dharawal man Tom Foster spoke and played a hymn on a gum leaf. Foster was known as a critic of the Aboriginal Protection Board which was responsible for racist child removals; he later went on to speak on the eve of the first Day of Mourning in 1938.

In *The reality of remembrance in Camperdown Memorial Rest Park*, Hannah Robinson draws attention to the disparity between the commemoration of colonisers versus Aboriginal people, all of whom, bar Mogo, are buried in unmarked locations in the park. A peculiar 'Rangers' League of NSW Memorial' obelisk sits just opposite St Stephen's Church as 'a tribute to the whole of the Aboriginal Race' according to its inscription. Robinson writes "This baffled me. The state of the monument which had been previously vandalised, and the grouping of Aboriginal people as a collective rather than individually being given burial sites, seemed to contradict this message."

Newtown folk legend holds that the real-life Miss Havisham from Charles Dickens' 1861 novel *Great Expectations* is buried in the cemetery. After an English

lecture in second-year on the Victorian novel, I recall a friend telling me that the story of Miss Havisham closely parallels that of a woman buried in the park in 1886, Eliza Donnithorne. Donnithorne's bridegroom was said to have jilted her on their wedding day, causing her to suffer a breakdown and become a recluse at her home in Cambridge Hall, on what is now King Street. The story tells that the wedding breakfast remained undisturbed until after her death, and that all her communications with the outside world were through her doctor and solicitor. *The Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder* in 1946 tells that: "When death at last came to Eliza, those who came to carry her to the greater peace of Camperdown Cemetery found her still clad in her bridal gown."

One theory on how Dickens may have heard the story before writing *Great Expectations*, proposes that social advocate Caroline Chisholm corresponded with Dickens about it while she lived in the Newtown area. Other historians have suggested that readers of the book in Sydney gradually added details to the urban legend — for which historical evidence is scarce — so that it aligned more closely with the story of Miss Havisham.

Donnithorne's headstone is located in a shaded part of the cemetery, where an overgrown carpet of English ivy crawls through tombs cracked by tree roots. Constructed from marble and stamped with lead letters, it is clear that the cross-shaped headstone belonged to a family of wealth. We are told on the tour that when the headstone was vandalised in 2004, the UK Charles Dickens Society put money towards its

restoration. Gesturing toward a row of headstones opposite the Donnithorne grave which are held up by wooden boards, the guide tells us that because sandstone is easily crumbled by vandals, the cemetery is in a state of "graceful decay."

In recent years, Camperdown Memorial Rest Park has been the site of increased police presence with residents demanding they put a stop to "anti-social behaviour," which they say includes underage drinking, drug use, threats of violence, and public defecation after nightfall. A statement from residents to the *Inner West Courier* complained that "The park at night, especially after 9pm, is being used like a pub". At the tour, our guide tells us that she often has to pick up condoms and syringes in the cemetery. In April 2016, police set up a command bus with four officers deployed "as a deterrent to any crime that might arise." From the murder of Joan Norma Ginn to incidents of assault and harassment today, the actions of the police have done little to deter sexual violence in the park.

On 19th January 2018, a 'civil disobedience picnic' with live music was organised by community group Reclaim the Streets to protest against a council proposal to implement alcohol free zones in the space. Reclaim the Streets argued that the proposal would disproportionately target young people, Indigenous people, and the homeless, and that it would have the opposite effect intended since violence in the park was occurring after the alcohol prohibition came into effect at 9pm. The removal of lighting at night to prevent people from congregating in the park has also been

criticised as counterintuitive.

The Sydney lockdown laws, which were lifted in Kings Cross only this month, have also contributed to a changing cultural scene in Newtown and the park. The laws have been connected to an increase in queerphobic violence as a result of more people heading from the city to the Inner West for nightlife. Many queer people in the area will tell you that they, or someone they know, have experienced harassment and no longer feel safe in Newtown.

The counterintuitive effects of increased police surveillance and laws combined with the gentrification of the area mean that the inclusive atmosphere of Camperdown Memorial Rest Park is under threat. With many who have fallen through the cracks of middle-class Newtown relegated to the park, the use of public space has always been an expression of the community it belongs to.

As I leave the quiet park and re-enter the bustling, colourful streets of Newtown, I think of the thousands of stories buried in this place that have gone unwritten. While I had initially set out to research the stories of people from early Newtown like Eliza Donnithorne whose memories are preserved in the park, what I had not anticipated to learn about this place is how intertwined its history is with that of colonialism and class interest. There is nowhere in this country that is not a deathscape once you scratch below the surface of its monuments.

Art by Eleanor Curran

## Wet weather

*Maxim Shanahan gets caught in the rain.*

Imprecision has demanded that I navigate this La Niña without the protection of an umbrella. As a result, I have developed an increasingly close acquaintance with the norms and nature of New South Wales' rainfall — developing a farmer's predilection for measuring millimeters and refreshing radars. Accordingly, I will recount some of my recent rainfall experiences.

### Last Week (Rain as Comfort)

Last week, in the midst of a once-in-fifty-year rainfall event, I sat down and read fiction for the first time since the last time it rained. The downpour cleared away — at least briefly — the stagnancy of Sydney's fetid early autumn, allowing for an early sampling of winter's Tindulgences:



tea, doonas, fiction. Performative wintering is an art well-practiced by certain Sydneysiders, and puffer jackets and designer raincoats soon were promptly whipped out of closets with an air of self-satisfaction to make their season debuts under extravagant umbrellas. To Sydneysiders with roofs that don't leak, this sort of rain is mostly an ambivalence, a public transport inconvenience at worst. More a conversation starter than a cause for concern. In this environment of Scandi-LARPing, of rain as fashion opportunity, it is difficult, both literally and figuratively, to gauge and understand the scale and effect of rain just beyond Sydney. My rain gauge only takes 150mm. Much of the North Coast took over 200mm on a single day.

A house floating down the Manning River on its owners' wedding day seems from Surry Hills more like the makings of an apocryphal pub tale than a real personal and local tragedy. Only the news that the couple's dog went down with the house has the effect of provoking much sympathy.

### Cricket

James Joyce wrote: "In the soft grey silence he could hear the bump of the balls: and from here and from there through the quiet air the sounds of the cricket bats: pick, pack, pock,

puck: like drops of water in a fountain falling softly in the brimming bowl."

Rain and cricket go hand in glove. For the amateur cricketer, a working proficiency in meteorology is a basic of the pastime. One quickly gains an understanding of precipitation percentages, vectors and variabilities of local wind patterns, and an intimacy with isobaric charts.

Every year at the SCG Test it rains. Each year a different rain: fine mist, soaked in soaking, southerly buster. But the patricians in the Members don't mind — it at least reinforces their claim to be a traditional (read: English) test ground. And regardless, they spend the time pissing up in the bar, drinking out of glass schooners, gazing from the balcony at the plebs in ponchos, plastic cups in hand, rain pick, pack, pocking on the old tin roof.

### Southerly Buster

Heat settles in the Sydney basin on rancid summer days. Weatherboards warp and floorboards stick to bare feet. Non-air-conditioned Sydneysiders lie defeated in syrupy air on couches, in backyards, at beaches, bobbing up and down in the water. We chew up time in stagnant silence, waiting for the sound and action of the southerly buster as it blows up the coast.

A good buster is an event to remember.

### Two Rains

Les Murray, *Honi Soit* alum and poet of the Manning River region, writes best about our rain:

*Our farms are in the patched blue overlap*

*between Queensland rain and Victorian rain*

*(and of two-faced droughts like a dustbowl tap).*

*The southerly rain is skimmed and curled*

*off the Roaring Forties' circuit of the world.*

*It is our chased Victorian silver*

*and makes wintry asphalt hurry on the spot*

*or pauses to a vague speed in the air,*

*whereas, lightning-brewed in a vast coral pot*

*the tropical weather disgorges its lot*

*in days of enveloping floodtime blast*

*towering and warm as a Papuan forest,*

*a rain you can sweat in, it steams in the sun*

*like a hard-ridden horse, while southern rain's absorbed*

*like a cool, fake-colloquial, drawn out lesson.*

Art by Claire Ollivain

## The magic of the pen-pal experience

*Leo Su is putting pen to paper.*

Whilst others baked banana bread or learnt how to crochet during home quarantine, I decided to try my hand at another craft — pen-palling. At its simplest, pen-palling is the act of writing letters regularly to a stranger, often in a different country. Digital variations exist, but the tradition has always been rooted in postal correspondence.

The first step in my pen-palling journey was, unsurprisingly, to find a pen-pal. Living in the age of the internet meant there was no shortage of websites I could use to find one. After a few failed attempts with people across various continents, I managed to get into contact with Josef, a boy my age from Manchester. We swapped addresses, and regular correspondence ensued. Save for a few instances of Gen Z incompetence — such as the time I mistook a gummed stamp for a self-adhesive one — my experience pen-palling so far has been nothing short of wonderful. There are so many reasons why one might look for a pen-pal: it exposes you to different cultures; it allows you to explore the world vicariously through another person. You might also want to practise a foreign

language or connect with a kindred spirit halfway across the globe. Communicating with Josef opened my eyes to the Mancunian cultural scene (The Smiths!) alongside the fascinating differences between our lives at a quotidian level. But I also gained insight into some of the other qualities of snail mail pen-palling which make it so intrinsically enjoyable. If you will, the magic of the pen-pal experience. In the digital age, we often find our fingers hovering over the backspace key. We have the liberty tweaking the structure of our messages, changing a word here and there. But when you write a letter, the ink is indelible on the piece of paper. Your sentence isn't retractable. What's there is there, in all of its irrevocable glory. This proved to be a source of personal anxiety when I first started pen-palling. Unhappiness with the phrasing of a particular sentence led me to scrap the entire page it was on. But I soon learnt to embrace it. My letters became more organic and flowing, a stream of consciousness in written form. Pen-palling helps you gain confidence with your message construction and fearlessness with your expression. The effort and time

it takes for a letter to be delivered warrants a message more meaningful than 'lol' or 'wyd.' There's a degree of deliberateness — you are choosing to write specifically for the sake of the message as opposed to the reactionary or pragmatic nature of instant messaging. Don't get me wrong, this isn't a rant about the downfalls of social media. Without the immediacy of the internet, I wouldn't have even gotten into contact with Josef. But in our 'always on' culture, there's something to be said for delayed gratification, and the anticipation of waiting for a letter makes it all the better when it finally arrives. In 1935, German scholar Walter Benjamin famously argued that the mechanical reproduction of art diminishes its 'aura.' In other words, it is stripped of its authority and authenticity. When your messages can be easily forwarded or copied and pasted, how authentic are they? Think about generic university emails or the canvassing DMs you receive from people during stupa season. Contrastingly, there is something so personal about a handwritten letter. It has its own essence in the scent of the paper and the individuality of someone's

handwriting. You hold the very same letter which your pen-pal held and sent across the world. As Benjamin would assert, it has a unique presence in space and time. It has an aura. The physical objects you can enclose with your letter — polaroids, annotated maps, and brochures — all enhance this experience to the next level. Pen-palling teaches you about other places, but it also works the other way round. In the process of telling Josef about Sydney, I inadvertently found myself gaining a renewed appreciation of the city. Whether it was the specific species of the eucalyptus tree in my neighbourhood or historical facts about the Harbour Bridge, my attention to detail became heightened. Pen-palling provides you with fresh insights into the mundane, and the regional idiosyncrasies of your hometown.

The pen-pal experience is truly remarkable. There are nuances of the craft and the enjoyment it brings which cannot be expressed in words. For anybody considering finding a pen-pal, I could not recommend it more. The magic of pen-palling is something you need to experience firsthand.

## 'Rage fright': our problem with angry women

*Zara Zadro on the power of anger.*

Women are angry. Western media announces this time and time again, briefly casting its eye over the rage that imbues the everyday experience of being a woman.

Within this statement is the message, normalised in our society, that where 'women' prefaces 'angry', the anger is irrational, excessive, threatening, and somehow worthy of a headline. And yet, angry women are nothing new. It's ironic that in a context where we are denied anger, it's women, not men, who have so much to be mad about.

I have always been an angry person, and yet I write little about it. It's odd, but I cannot recall ever deconstructing my rage, or another woman's, on the page. Since I was a toddler, my frustrations were converted into white hot rage that rattled door frames and burst pillows at the seams as they were walloped against furniture. The reasons would be trivial: taming my thick curls, or my father teaching me a difficult piano piece. It could kindle out of nowhere, clawing its way out of my throat in words sharpened to cut, and I would relish the satisfying thunk of them landing in their target, despite the guilt that always followed. I still often do, though it lands me in more trouble now as a woman, rather than a small girl.

Anger is a primitive part of the spectrum of human emotion, and studies show women are no more or less angry than men. It has evolved to promote survival by triggering our fight-or-flight instinct, inspiring recklessness. 'Anger hormones', in the right context, can also improve sports

performance, political negotiation, business decision making, and trigger creativity. Women relinquish the power of anger, a part of our evolutionary toolkit, when we're taught to conform to gendered norms of emotional expression.

"Anger remains the emotion that is least acceptable for girls and women because it is the first line of defense against injustice," writes Soraya Chemaly in *Rage Becomes Her* (2018). When we get angry, we violate 'feminine' qualities of passivity,

**When society tells women they cannot be outwardly angry — that it's more socially acceptable to be sad — that same anger is directed inward.**

maternity, compassion, softness, and subordination to masculine power. An angry woman is not a woman, says patriarchy. She's a 'bitch', 'psychopath', 'madwoman in the attic', 'witch', 'mean girl', or a 'femiNazi'. She is 'shrill', or 'annoying'. She won't 'give us a smile'.

Posing this topic to certain men, I was affronted with the argument that the stigma around women's rage has dissolved. That it's a fable more relevant to the 20<sup>th</sup> century than our own. But any claim that the campaigning of several feminist waves has destigmatised women's anger belies the omnipotence of the Western patriarchy today. In fact, this is the same argument wielded against 21<sup>st</sup> century feminism, claiming its superfluity.

In fact, the male gaze is far more powerful when it is invisible. When society tells women they cannot be outwardly angry — that it's more socially acceptable to be sad — that same anger is directed inward, upon one's inability to measure up to social standards. In such a way, depression, anxiety, self harm, and low self-esteem are pathologised as symptoms of girlhood, evidence of women's innately 'insufficient' biology, according to feminist theorist Angela McRobbie.

Male anger, and associated violence, is shorthand for the hypermasculinity and emotional repression that men are rewarded for in imperialist-patriarchal culture. The anger glorified in ancient stories of battle, heroism and honour, such as Homer's *The Iliad*, differs little from the bloody pornographies of modern warfare depicted by today's historical films like *Gallipoli* (1981) and *Dunkirk* (2017). These images permeate male-dominated action films, religiously-followed sports, and the rhetoric of male political figures.

Yet women's anger continues to disempower them, vilified by patriarchal systems of meaning. A 2008 study by Harvard Kennedy School found that professional women suffer a decline in perceived competence for displays of emotion in

the workplace, while men expressing anger are more likely to be hired and given more autonomy at work. Serena Williams was famously criticised for outbursts on the tennis court as issues of race and the 'angry black woman' stereotype were brought to the fore.

In the political sphere, Hillary Clinton and Julia Gillard were notoriously demonised in their election campaigns by political opponents and the media, intent on sustaining the sexist narrative that angry, powerful women are manipulative, licentious, 'too emotional' to make decisions, and even sub-human.

There are exceptions, you might say. Gillard's rage-filled misogyny speech has racked up millions of views on Youtube, and Australian of the Year and sexual assault survivor Grace Tame's passionate speech at the National Press Conference was positively received by mainstream media.

Yet this proves the socially acceptable expression of women's anger is excruciatingly narrow. It is demarcated by whiteness, calmness, eloquence, being cishet-passing, and often attractiveness. There's little, or no, space for 'outburst', or intersectional difference. It is an exception to the rule, not equality.

"Women are angry," says the media. If this statement is valuable in any way, it must be as a reminder to hold onto our anger and stoke its flames. Because women's anger is above all else *human* anger. It is transformative. It is our fight-or-flight instinct, in a world where the odds have always been stacked against our survival.

## The unexplored potential of the second person

*Shania O'Brien is writing your story.*

You are going to write a story, you declare. You sit at your desk, back straight. It will be great, your magnum opus! People will cite it in their biographies as a formidable moment. The story will inspire piles of Bildungsroman literature and Netflix will fight for the rights. Fan wikis will pop up to codify your work, picking apart each and every detail for morsels of lore. And you'll be invited to sit on panels, speak at conferences, and participate in Q&As with seminal authors of the genre. This will be your greatest dream come true.

But how does it begin?

I have been thinking a lot about writing lately. Of the specifics, the little decisions you don't realise you have to make until you start writing. And in that spirit, I have spent my time going through various forms of writing advice in search of a better place to start. And, invariably, I

happened upon narration. The first step is picking a style to write in and giving your character a voice. There are only two options: first person and third person. Writing in the second person is famously regarded as a feat on par with chasing clouds.

But the first person perspective limits you. The writer is trapped in a single person's head and cannot offer nuanced perspectives on situations without unrealistic dialogue that sounds like an inner monologue being forced out loud. Writers get stuck in the monotony of a single viewpoint, and all their books start sounding the same. And the third person, in the opinion of someone who has used it on multiple occasions, is a cop out. It's simply too easy!

The main argument for the second person is its immersive experience. For this reason, it has been used extensively in non-fiction self-help

books. It's easier to say, "You will wake up in the morning and make a kale smoothie," than it is to say, "They will wake up in the morning and make a kale smoothie." The words are speaking to the reader directly like I am talking to you right now. With this exchange, we are having a conversation to which you are beholden and which you are compelled to finish.

But much like a conversation, there should be a natural end. In my excursions into the genre, I have found that it reaches its fullest potential when the pieces are fast-paced and short, with plots that revolve around everyday things that the average person can relate to. The second person has been likened to a ballad for a lover, but the effect can be lost in long-form writing when used indulgently. "Your hands blaze with a brilliant white light as you scream and

tear the sky in two," fails to engage the reader by page 401.

Some books have attempted the task, like *Bright Lights, Big City* by Jay McInerney. But even when a book accomplishes this lofty feat, immersion isn't necessarily a good thing. *Bright Lights, Big City* was so intense, I did not finish it and do not think I ever will. The book screamed at me, the narrator's anxieties and fears ringing in my mind.

The second person is a world of its own, but the line between immersion and exhaustion is a thin one. While writing long-form pieces, you find that it is actually quite hard, that characterisation is almost impossible, that being the object of your own story is uncomfortable. You do not read books for yourself; you want a character you can follow, someone you can experience from a safe distance away, in a place you can escape to.

# Malcolm X: The prophetic radicality of activism, redemption, and love

Mahmoud Al Rifai deconstructs the life and legend of an Muslim icon.

February 21, 1965. 21 gunshots brought about the death of a man whose name would receive every reaction conceivable. It was the end of the story of a fierce advocate of agency, power and civil rights, nothing short of mythical: Malcolm X.

Malcolm X, whose Muslim name is el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz, was a martyr. He had become a *shaheed* — one of the highest honours a Muslim can ever possess. While his rise with the authoritarian Nation of Islam became his ironic downfall, he knew very well the death that awaited him, which added an almost prophetic quality to his epic, heroic tale.

His experiences mirrored his community's movement from rural peasantry, to industrial proletariat, to post-industrial redundancy. Allied to this is his spiritual redemption and movement away from nihilism. Factor in his yearning for knowledge, how can one not be inspired by the Malcolm who educated himself in the midst of a jail sentence?

He moved away from the dogmatic, exclusionary Nation of Islam to the pluralistic, inclusive Sunni Islam which transcended racial and cultural creed. Much like the literary and Abrahamic prophets of old, there was a struggle, a calling to faith and the building of a world built on the tenants of radical liberation. We have much to learn from an almost messianic tale that embodied activism, redemption, and love.

Indeed, prophetic and messianic are immense forms of praise. Followers and admirers of Malcolm X understand this. So did his enemies. In a memo to the offices of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, former Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, stressed the need to nullify Malcolm X's influence to prevent the rise of a "Messiah" who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement." Hoover also enunciated a final goal of preventing the growth of militant organisations and rhetoric amongst young people.

But these were forlorn plans. The prophetic model of Malcolm, so beautifully detailed in Malcolm's and Alex Haley's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, inspired thousands of young adults: Afro nationalists, Communists, Marxists, Muslims. Decades later, his work has become part of the canon of many university courses.

Both Muslim and non-Muslim youth, with a sharp criticality and sophistication, became readers of Malcolm's philosophies. I am the former, a young Muslim, struggling with his identity and the capacity to find Muslim heroes who changed the world as I knew it — a Western

world plagued by racism, the ravaging devastation of colonialism and a painful shortage of agency.

As a Levantine Arab, I cannot entirely, and without some degree of friction, claim the Malcolm who reinvigorated the resistance of African American communities as my own. I can only respect, admire, learn, and express my utmost solidarity and support for such a struggle. However, I can genuinely claim Malcolm the Muslim, el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz, who I believe can be of much guidance to those to those with a deep commitment to societal and personal transformation.

After his trips to the Islamic worlds of Africa and the Middle East, el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz linked African American liberation to global liberation of those who suffered the brunt of US imperialism. This was a Malcolm who began to vehemently oppose the global machinations of American power and propaganda that had subjugated not only Africans but Arabs. Malcolm had begun to dedicate himself to the umma, the collective body of all believers united in faith and inseparable by any material means.

As a Muslim of Palestinian heritage, to me Malcolm X had not only become a hero I could only admire and respect from afar, but a hero I could call my own as he criticised Israeli injustices against my own people. Malcolm had stressed the necessity of claiming justice for all; that justice for some would not be a cause worth pursuing. As poverty, racism, sexism, colonialism and war continue to plague the world we find ourselves in, we would do well to follow Malcolm's model: recognise the universality of a struggle, tied in with all causes against that which is inhibitive, repulsive and shameful.

Redemption should be at the core of such a struggle, which is the very thing that Malcolm exemplified. His conversion from crime, hatred and nihilism to that of the Islamic faith, and his reconsideration of his own racial illusions regarding 'whiteness' is mythical. Malcolm was willing to question his once held convictions. After his iconic pilgrimage to Hajj, he wrote:

*There are Muslims of all colours and ranks here in Mecca from all parts of this earth. During the past seven days of this holy pilgrimage, while undergoing the rituals of the hajj [pilgrimage], I have eaten from the same plate, drank from the same glass, slept on the same bed or rug, while praying to the same God—not only with some of this earth's most powerful kings, cabinet members, potentates and other forms of political and religious rulers—but also with*

*fellow Muslims whose skin was the whitest of white, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, and whose hair was the blondest of blond—yet it was the first time in my life that I didn't see them as 'white' men. I could look into their faces and see that these didn't regard themselves as 'white.'*

This redemptive open-mindedness was further shown in Malcolm's discussion of Islam with Tariq Ali at Oxford University. As Ali rebuked faith with a scorn, Malcolm listened respectfully and attentively and replied, "it's good to hear you talk like that...I'm beginning to ask myself many of the same questions."

There was a humility to Malcolm that accompanied his conviction in faith and political activism. This humility and redemption should be cause for hope: people are capable of change. Hatred would not be a weapon against injustice. Malcolm recognised that and began to engage with something more radical: love.

Cornel West affirmed that justice and love were inseparable. Malcolm's

faith; my faith; was one that affirmed that one cannot truly believe until we love others as we love ourselves. Malcolm took up that mantle of Islam and revolutionary love. One only has to consider and appreciate this prayer he once opined to understand:

*I pray that God will bless you in everything that you do. I pray that you will grow intellectually, so that you can understand the problems of the world and where you fit into, in that world picture. And I pray that all of the fear that has ever been in your heart will be taken out.*

Grow intellectually. Remove fear. That's what Malcolm prayed for. Find a way to claim some part of his almost prophetic, Messianic tale as I have claimed him; while Malcolm died on February 21, 1965, his cause and ideals did not. Find a way to express and harness the radicality of activism, redemption, and love. The world needs that triune of progress that my Malcom, the Muslim Malcolm, came to embody so well.

**Find a way to express and harness the radicality of activism, redemption, and love.**



Art by Altay Hagrebet

# The feminisation of virtual healing

Marlow Hurst presses pause on support discrimination.

Healers truly are the most downtrodden of the video game classes. The backbone of our dear virtual society, yet treated with disdain by so many. Every day, thousands of Mercy's, and Lucio's toil away to make sure damage can be done and tanking can be taken. Truly the unsung heroes of every match.

And yet they're thanked with insults and disrespect. I say this as I weave through a number of online multiplayer games, passing out pamphlets to support classes asking them to unionise. "You have strength in numbers!" I say. But they do not listen. Their DPS (damage per second) and Tank masters are already shooing me away.

This has long been an observed phenomenon in online gaming. Healers are held to unreasonably high standards, blamed for the mistakes of others, and their input to victories not fully recognised. But why?

Well, there are many theories. Firstly, it's much more difficult to perceptively quantify a healer's contribution to a victory. While a DPS character might secure the final blow, a healer just ... heals. An important role,

but not flashy or, in many ways, active. Another, and to me quite convincing, reason is that of feminisation. For eons now, scholars within the field of gaming have observed a trend often dubbed "the feminisation of healing." While DPS and tank roles are coded and read as masculine, the role of healer has long been considered feminine. This is due to the socialised expectation that feminine bodies are a source of nurturing and maternal care. Playing as a healer is often met with disrespect or dismissal, as players project their personal bigotry onto those who play them. But the treatment of support classes is just a fraction of what women experience in these spaces.

Healing isn't the only thing that's been consistently feminised, though. Magic has long been gated as a female art within many games. Hit Chinese fantasy-RPG *Genshin Impact* has a roster of magic users identified exclusively as women. *Black Desert Online*, on the other hand, gender locks certain classes so that when creating a custom character, users are only able to select certain classes if they choose the female customisation option. Many of these classes reflect the trends

I've already discussed in this article. But magic is in many ways the same as healing (at least for the purposes of this discussion). Both have historically been considered female arts (often practised by the same person) and both lack a certain physical agency. Magic, and its results, is separate from the body of its user in a way that say a sword or bow and arrow could never be. Magic is feminised because it puts as much distance between women and the action of a gaming environment. It's feminised for the very same reason that healing is.

These practices have become second nature to so many in the gaming industry. While games like *Overwatch* are making meaningful strides to make their rosters more inclusive and reflective, with classes having reasonably even gender compositions, the attitudes and perceptions remain the same. Disrespect, toxicity and harassment often hurled at women in online gaming spaces are transposed onto support players. With much of the technical side of gaming coming into line with modern demographics, but attitudes are miles behind. Gaming will never be an open space to female



Art by Altay Hagrebet

players if characters are gated and archaic conceptions of gender imposed on multiplayer classes.

And give our healers some goddamn respect!

# Stardew Valley, I love you

Vivienne Guo is starting a commune.

It was the summer of 2021. The twinds of January carried with them a lingering sense of malaise, a reminder of last January, which dumped a litany of horrors at our door: the stirrings of an 'unprecedented' pandemic, unrelenting thoughts of bushland aflame, and the looming threat of the capitalist-induced climate catastrophe ever-present in my mind. Yet, as the weeks wore on, this January rang with new, golden promise. I had discovered *Stardew Valley*.

I was gifted *Stardew Valley*, an indie farming game, on Steam by some friends for Christmas. It was, in short, a revelation. It is impossible to spend time in this desktop countryside without feeling intimately drawn to its green splendor. This kind of deep connection is muted by the everyday humdrum of life in a rapidly-moving capitalist society; as students and

workers, we are robbed of leisure time to experience nature and reconnect with our planet. We forget that we have the capacity to shape our world with our actions and choices, and with such a deficit of time and energy as our spirits are constantly sapped by capitalism, it is understandable to feel the urge to escape.

In *Stardew Valley*, the player, disillusioned with their dreary 9-to-5 desk job at Joja Corp, quits and moves to the idyllic countryside after inheriting a dilapidated farm in the heart of the magical Stardew Valley. The farm is located on the outskirts of the quiet Pelican Town, populated by an eclectic community of characters. You spend your days growing crops, fishing, foraging and raising livestock as you rotate through the four seasons, exploring the monster-infested mines and chopping wood in the Cindersap Forest.

The beauty of *Stardew Valley* is that there is no end goal, no final destination at which to close your laptop for the last time. It is a wonderfully open-ended game, punctuated by quests and directed by a coherent narrative flow as you explore the valley and uncover its secrets. The player finds peace in the undefined possibilities of directly shaping and caring for this world.

It was a warm afternoon when I started playing and in two shakes of a lamb's tail, I had racked up over 100 hours of gameplay. My farm,

affectionately named Fairywren Farm, quickly grew to house chickens and cows. I set up little cabins so that my friends could join me on my first steps towards my dream commune. Venturing into town, I befriended the lilac-locked Abigail, the aspiring seamstress Emily, the tent-dwelling Linus, and even the eccentric wizard Rasmodius, who lived alone in a tower on the edge of Cindersap Forest. I fell back in love with digital gameplay, in this valley of peace and possibility. I was a troubled student no longer, becoming instead a budding farmer aspiring to be besties with pretty girls in the village.

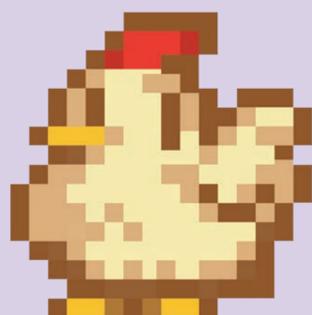
There are lessons to be gleaned from this tiny digital world. I'd point out that simulation games often appeal to players as vessels through which we can create the world of our dreams. Indeed, *Stardew Valley* has the power to make us keenly aware of a modern yearning for an alternative to capitalism, and reconciles this yearning with its community-based gameplay, in which you can give and receive gifts from the townspeople that you befriend and work to improve the town through the Community Centre (that is, if you don't join forces with Joja Corp, which is in my opinion the wrong way to play the game). If Joja Corp is a metaphor for the callous behemoth of capitalism, *Stardew Valley* and its inhabitants are a glittering epitome of a world

structured around strong communities and respect for the environment; a world just beyond our reach.

In addition, I would argue that *Stardew Valley* can also be a site of queer awakening and self-actualisation. In the game, there are a diverse range of characters that the player is able to court and marry, regardless of their gender identity. Video games today are heavily saturated with cis-heteronormativity, and it is refreshing to have queerness so naturally integrated into *Stardew Valley's* gameplay. Within the confines of my screen, I am allowed to explore what in my reality seems like a sapphic pipe-dream. The game understands that queerness is as intrinsic to the world as the air that we breathe; that in itself is a gift and a potent antidote to heteronormativity.

The magic of *Stardew Valley* is quite plain to me. It allows me to imagine a place beyond capitalism, and encourages me to find peace in human connection and community. It is a world punctuated by undefined horizons of possibility, and the capacity for queer self-actualisation. I love that I can grow crops in my greenhouse, raise cows and chickens and sheep, and marry a girl with purple hair and an affinity for adventure. I love my little house, I love Pelican Town, and I love the little digital life that I have built for myself. That is more than enough.

**This article contains spoilers for *Stardew Valley*.**



## Sunlight and hazy introspection: In conversation with Spacey Jane

Amelia Raines speaks to lead singer Caleb Harper about the band's songwriting and success.

After their past year of swift success, a runners up spot for Triple J's Hottest 100, and unrelenting support from meme pages, Spacey Jane have staggered onto the scene with an entourage of sugary guitar riffs and nostalgia-drenched lyrics.

Their debut studio album, *Sunlight*, was a comfort album for many during the turbulence of 2020. Slouchy melodies and pensive lyrics fused to make *Sunlight* an easy and compelling listen, an escape from the confines of lockdown. For an album with flickers of stoicism on the cover, it boasts laudable lyrical sensitivity track after track.

"Most songs start as a short riff or progression and a vocal melody," lead singer Caleb Harper says about their songwriting process. "When I find something that immediately grabs me it feels like that's a good place to start."

"Lyrical content and inspiration usually comes from ideas I've written in my phone notes. I try to find a theme in there that matches the mood musically and build from that. Then, I bring something that sits between a lone chorus and a full song to the band and we start composing from there."

*Sunlight* paints pictures of hazy introspection, as well as freckled recollections of the past with a coming-of-age feel echoing through each track. "I suppose there's a level

of subconscious influence from my hometown... Your environment shapes you in various ways as you grow," Caleb says, reflecting on the band's inspirations. "Sometimes I reference home in abstract ways, but it's more to do with family and adolescence than a physical place."

After a scheduled gig at Manning Bar was quashed under COVID's clenched fist, Spacey Jane's tour felt perpetually postponed. Now that gigs and dancefloors are back on the cards, the band feels energised and ready to get back on the road.

"There are a lot of shows in a pretty short amount of time so there's some nervous anticipation," he says. "But playing live is our favourite thing to do, we can't wait."

"We've been lucky enough to play some shows in Canberra and Adelaide over the last month... It was so nice to get on a plane again and feel like things are slowly returning to normal."

The albums they'll be spinning on their upcoming road trips include *Stranger in the Alps* and *Punisher* by Phoebe Bridgers, as well as the classic *Graceland* by Paul Simon.

After their track *Booster Seat* clocked in at number 2 in a highly competitive Triple J Hottest 100, Caleb said they never anticipated a response of this calibre: "...The closer it got to the day, the more we began to think: we might be at the pointy end of the

countdown. But we never imagine it would actually be that high."

"The support is truly overwhelming, we're so grateful for every vote we received."

They continued their streak of Triple J notoriety with a fan favourite Like a Version, covering The Beatles' *Here Comes the Sun* — infusing it with their distinctive citrusy vocals and subtle nods to surf rock. "I think most people would tell you to leave [a Beatles song] alone," Caleb laughed. "In saying that, the song writing is so good...you can kind of take it any way and something beautiful will come out of it."



Photo credit: Daniel Hilderbrand

So what can listeners expect from Spacey Jane for 2021 and beyond?

"We're working hard to get the rest of our second album tracked at the moment," Caleb said. "We've got a bunch of Australian touring in the pipeline after this album tour is wrapped — which we can't wait to announce... Fingers crossed some international touring is on the cards sometime 2022!"

*Sunlight* is available to stream on all platforms. Spacey Jane are returning to Sydney in April to play six sold out shows at the Enmore Theatre.

## The DVDs we kept along the way

Harry Gay presses rewind on his latest obsession.

I am obsessed with collecting DVDs. I have accumulated 500 so far; they sit in monolithic piles in the corner of my room. Ushering in memories of my time as a child wandering the aisles of my local video store, I can spend hours staring at my collection, struggling to decide what to watch, with my fingers slowly tracing down the spines of the DVDs and taking in every title.

It's hard to say when the obsession started. Perhaps it was when I first started working at my local op shop. As the resident movie buff, they entrusted me to sort, stack, price and organise the vast collection of donated DVDs they had accumulated in the backroom. Every shift I would go through boxes of DVDs, throwing away any of the 'undesirables' — bootleg copies of films shot on a camcorder, multiple rereleases of public domain shlock. Anyone else who is in the business of DVD collecting and op shop bargain hunting will recognise these familiar titles.

But every so often, there would be little gems that would shine through, like diamonds in the rough. For

every Zulu, there'd be a Chungking Express; for every Honey, there'd be a Cinema Paradiso; and for every Night of the Living Dead, there'd be an Autumn Sonata. From there I was off to the races, buying bucketloads of any vaguely highly rated film I could. I would use databases such as Letterboxd to determine whether or not the DVDs I was purchasing were of high value, with the 5 star rating system serving as my guide for what to buy and what not to buy. I'll admit, there's an air of elitism in buying only films that rate highly, and perhaps putting my opinion in the hands of random online strangers wouldn't serve me well. But nevertheless, I was hooked on the movie drug and nothing was going to stop me from buying 12, 20, or 40 DVDs!

As uni has recommenced, I am spending more time away from the DVDs, and spending less money on them. Now I stalk the aisles of Fisher Library's 7th floor, sitting on the floor with stacks of movies surrounding me, deciding which ones to borrow. I don't know what it is about DVDs

in particular — there's something satisfying about cracking open the case, pressing your finger in the hole and having the disc pop out in your hand. The smell of a newly pressed disc, the soft plastic casing; it's a sensorium that adds to the viewing experience — a return of cinema's ill-fated 'Smell-O-Vision', perhaps? Flipping the disc over, a colourful collage of psychedelic light shines off its surface, like a rainbow leading viewers to a pot of gold. The spines stand to attention along my shelves, colour coded so they bleed into one another.

It seems others share my passion. In a world of streaming services, there is some deeper yearning to own, collect and possess DVDs. Companies such as the Criterion Collection do masterful home releases of classic or oft-forgotten films, with 4K restorations and a plethora of commentary tracks, behind the scenes info and critical analysis. In a way, DVDs are the closest we can come to resolving one of the biggest philosophical issues plaguing film scholars, the fact that

film is, as Raymond Bellour suggests, "unattainable". Film is unquotable, and does not lend itself to the same tactility as literature, music or visual art. One could argue that you could hold or take possession of the film reel, but these are mere individual images, not set in motion by the projector. Once wrung through the machine, we cannot hold the abstract formations of light that dart above our heads. On Netflix and other streaming services, they are mere lines of code. Only the DVD, which we can hold, evokes the surreal nature of film not as individual 24 frames a second but an abstract pool of images. We flip the DVD upside down and we can see the whole film all at once. Albeit flattened and compressed, but it's all there before our very own eyes. The senses of smell and touch that we feel as we caress the case and eject the disc — those belong to the film as well. By collecting them, I am taking possession, and engaging these films in a bodily way that is wholly unique to any other mode of consuming cinema.

## January, 2001

Words by Grace Roodenrys

*This month I am twenty,  
which means that twenty times  
I have watched the flowers bloom  
on my father's magnolia tree,  
twenty times  
I have weathered this miracle  
and wondered how many might be left.*

*When others were younger  
the world could have saved itself.  
When others were younger  
the future must have seemed an endless garden:  
beating of wings, babbling water,  
a wide, kind, shimmering place.*

*Still, I wasn't promised nothing.  
I was promised freedom —  
weren't you? I was promised life,  
was given language, was shown the poem  
and pointed to beauty and told  
both could achieve so much.*

*It's difficult, now, to imagine this.  
The poem feels mute  
in a world that winces at a mention of itself,  
beauty impossible in a century  
that has its eyes sealed shut.*

*In late Winter the magnolias glisten,  
they hold the light like something they love,  
and I think, I am twenty.  
For much longer will I have  
a name for hope?  
Wasn't I once trusting,  
Wasn't I once tender,  
Wasn't I once promised so much more than this.*



Art by Maxim Adams

## Review: Stop Girl

Roisin Murphy reviews Belvoir St Theatre's latest production.

Content warning: frequent mentions of war, trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Often, a playwright's first work is a dress rehearsal, lacking in the *something* they find through practice. The opposite is the case for Walkley-award winning journalist Sally Sara's *Stop Girl*. Sara's intimate lived experience tells the stories of her characters in a way so genuine that their heartache and triumph becomes your own.

Sara spent 2011 reporting for the ABC on the war in Afghanistan, delivering to our childhood television sets the conflict as we understood it. But an untold story of this time, and of journalism generally, is the trauma reporters take on when telling these stories, and which rose to the surface of Sara's life a few years after coming home.

The PTSD she experienced is the premise of the show. As an audience, we are pulled between sweet moments of laughter and the sound of suicide bombs, in a way that makes each joke create an anxious pit in your stomach

for what it might foreshadow. The authenticity of this is a credit to the production team and the videos of Jack Saltmiras. It is often a fine line between a projector adding to the plot and taking away from it, but in *Stop Girl* the former did not present itself once.

There were moments where characters' wins felt manufactured in order to keep the audience involved — like a checkbox to make us laugh once every 20 minutes, before throwing us back in the deep end. Throughout the show, however, it became clear that this was an important part of Sara's representation of PTSD — a perfect way to take us through the rollercoaster of trauma her character was experiencing.

Sheridan Harbridge (Suzie) performed the lead role of this tug-of-war seamlessly. Her character exists in a world separate to those she shares a set with: her body is home in Sydney, but her mind is in Afghanistan — and

the characters around her only seem to serve as a reminder of that.

Harbridge is supported by Amber MacMahon (Bec), who acts as a sort of Chelsea-to-Raven side character; the best friend who is there to highlight the extremities of the main character's emotion. Bec brings forth Suzie's trauma in the most subtly frustrating and authentic way, representing the kind of feeling you just can't put words to until someone else does it for you.

The only mild grievance was a subtle feeling of guilt — why is it that we only listen to these stories of war and bloodshed when they are delivered between neat packages of jokes about dogs in Potts Point? Much of the show felt like an inaccessible in-joke; if you didn't live in Sydney, watch the ABC, know who has won Walkley's for the past few years and understand the dynamics of Potts Point, much of it would be lost on you. Like a lot of Australian theatre, television and cinema, it begged the question of who

we are telling our stories to.

This feeling was exacerbated by the plot-line of Suzie's mum (Toni Scanlon), who acts as a voice of middle-class reason, reminding Suzie that life is still hard if you're not in a warzone. However, this issue was simultaneously mended by Atal (Mansoor Noor), whose frequent role of reminding Suzie of her privilege felt like the reminders were just as much for the audience, too.

Despite the bizarre feeling that comes along with hearing stories involving non-white people at the theatre, a place where the audience is almost always jarringly white, *Stop Girl* was immaculate and heartbreaking and full of love and life and loss; all those things playwrights dream of making an audience feel.

*Stop Girl* runs until 25 April at Belvoir St Theatre.

## President

**Swapnik Sanagavarapu**

This week, my attention has been focused on opposing various degradations of the student experience.

The largest share of my time has been dedicated to continuing the fight against 12 week semesters at the University. On Monday, I was a part of the first meeting of the "Semester Advisory Group" convened by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). Alongside me at the meeting were representatives from SUPRA, the NTEU, the CPSU & staff representatives generally. There was an overwhelming consensus from the staff and student reps at this meeting that a 12-week semester would adversely affect staff and students. On Tuesday, I attended a meeting of the Academic Standards and Policy Committee (a subcommittee of the Academic Board), where staff representatives

and I strongly made the same case about the dangers of 12 week sems. Finally, we concluded the SRC survey into 12 week sems this week. Out of 374 respondents, 350 were not in favour of the change. The students have spoken - it's up to the University whether they listen.

Alongside 12 week sems, I also spent some time looking into changes to University systems that may have a detrimental effect on students. Firstly, the SRC has heard some rumblings about changes to Student Services that may involve significant restructure and job-cuts. While we welcome any attempts to improve the abysmal state of Student Services, cutting jobs and centralising roles will not offer any improvements to student services. Instead, it is likely to exacerbate current issues and create a whole suite of new issues. Secondly,

at the meeting of the Academic Standards and Policy Committee, I offered some critical suggestions about changes to the Academic Appeals process.

Finally, for some fun stuff! I spoke at a protest on Wednesday organised by the Education Action Group in response to the continual cuts to Education over the past year. I spoke about 12 week sems (surprise, surprise) and the continual underpayment of casual staff at the University. An anonymous email circulated to staff alleged that the University had been registering record high financial surpluses. If this is the case, any attempts at cost-cutting and job-cutting must surely be opposed. Aside from the protest, I've been organising a staff-student forum to discuss educational issues and 12 week sems. This will

be on the 22nd of April, so keep an eye out for more details.

Until next time,  
Swapnik.

## Ask Abe

*SRC caseworker help Q&A*



**It's safer to be informed about Recreational Drugs**

Hi Abe,  
I am from overseas and I find things very difficult at the moment. My family are financially very affected by covid and I feel very lonely. I have been using N20 bulbs which helps me to not feel so sad, but my friend told me I could die. Do you know if this is true or if he is just trying to scare me?

Nangs

Hi Nangs,

I am sorry to hear that you are finding things so difficult, and that you are sad and lonely. It would be great for you to feel able to talk to someone about how you feel. Headspace.org.au are an organisation for people under 25, and provide one on one counselling, as well as forums and online information. Have a look at either their uni students' forum or

the international students' forum to see if you can relate to the difficulties other students are facing. It might be good for you to share how you feel and maybe even help someone in the same situation as you. With recreational drugs, it is always good to know the science behind what you are doing. There is a lot of myths and misinformation around, so get your information from reliable sources, like [health.nsw.gov.au/aod](http://health.nsw.gov.au/aod). They will tell you about the drugs and the risks that you are taking. I hope that this information is helpful to you, and that you feel less lonely and sad soon. If you need to talk to a caseworker about how your studies are going please feel free to email us at [help@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:help@src.usyd.edu.au). Our caseworkers offer a free, confidential service, that is independent of the Uni. Abe.

## Vice Presidents

**Roisin Murphy and Yue (Maria) Ge did not submit a report.**

## General Secretaries

**Priya Gupta and Annie Zhao**

Hello all,

We hope the first few weeks of Semester 1 have been going swimmingly for everyone, particularly those who are new to USyd!

Massive reminder that Census Date is coming up fast - Wednesday 31st March! If you haven't already, have a serious think about if you want to drop any subjects. The time to pick subjects up has passed, but if you want to decrease your study load now is the last chance to do so without having to pay for the subject or have it appear on your transcript as a fail. Go to the cursed section of Sydney Student where you

pick subjects to delete one.

There are a few important events coming up! The SRC collectives are putting on a series of events leading up to the BLM rally on 10th April for 30 years since the final report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC). Both in week 5 - on Tuesday there is an abolitionist panel on imagining a world without prisons, and on Wednesday a film screening of *In My Blood It Runs*. Check out the SRC FB page for more info and to join the contingent to the rally.

Also, a save-the-date for the SRC's first

forum of the year - Wednesday 22nd April! This will be on the University's (awful) proposal to move to a 12-week semester model from our current 13 week one. This would mean the same amount of content for the same fees, but with less teaching time. We expect the outcomes to be similar to other universities - more work for staff, more stress for students, and higher fail rates.

Reminder that there is a great opportunity to volunteer for the Food Hub (done by the SRC in collaboration with the USU and Student Life) - a program which provides free essential groceries to students. It is on-campus, regular,

and offers the chance to meet and help some fellow students - what more could you ask for in volunteering! Any student is also welcome to a grocery pack, all you need to do is register a time to pick it up from the Wentworth Building. Register or sign-up to volunteer via the SRC website.

Yours,

Priya and Anne

## Welfare Officers

**Lia Perkins, Shreyaa Sundararaghavan, Katherine (Haimingyue) Xu and Owen Marsden-Readford**

The Welfare Action Group has been continuing to hold meetings and actions. We had our speakout in week 2 which went very well, a huge thanks to all of the other office bearers and students who spoke about a range of issues, some being: #80aday, education cuts, sexual harassment and disability justice. If any students would like to join the group and attend meetings email or message us!

Public housing forum and campaign

On Wednesday 17 March we held a forum about public housing and student housing in NSW. We had a speaker from Hands off Glebe, Friends of Erskineville, Shelter NSW and a USyd international student. The audience and myself came away with a strengthened understanding

of the campaign, and lots of important things to do to mobilise with residents and unions.

Street kitchen

We are helping out with the Community Defence League (CUDL) street kitchen at Martin Place on Sunday 28 March. We will be cooking a huge meal and bringing a load of volunteers to assist where we can. If you've missed out and would like to come next time join the Welfare Action Group Facebook page.

Cross-collective events and April 10 BLM rally

Along with many of the other collectives we are organising educational events to build

for the April 10 Stop Black Deaths In Custody rally (at Town Hall). These include a reading group, forum and film screening. It's been over 30 years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and nothing has changed.

Other activism

I (Lia) will continue to attend rallies organised by the women's collective about ending sexual violence at school, in parliament and everywhere in society, demanding justice for survivors. leafleted, postered for, and spoke at the Education Action Group rally on 24 March demanding NO CUTS, NO FEES. Owen was involved in the organisation of the Students for Palestine - Palestinian Lives

Matter Rally. I (Owen) am also beginning to build for the Community Action for Rainbow Rights protest against Mark Latham anti-trans "Parental Freedoms" Bill. This appalling attack has now gained support from Liberal MP's so it's even more important to come protest on April 17 against Mark Latham and anti-trans bigotry.

Student housing

Another focus for this year is student housing. Students should have access to safe, subsidised and affordable student housing. We are going to organise a contingent to the public housing rally on May 12 among other actions!

## If you miss an assessment because you are sick or injured, you can apply for 'Special Consideration'



**What if I am sick for an assessment or examination? Is there any way not to get a fail?**

If you are too sick to complete an assessment, you can apply for a Special Consideration. Go to the University special consideration website or your subject outline to review the requirements. See your doctor (or if yours is not available, any doctor) and get your Professional Practitioner's Certificate (PPC) completed. This

late applications are not successful. Be careful to select the correct boxes when applying for specific subjects and assessments.

Remember that Special Consideration is for a temporary illness, misadventure or exacerbation of a long-term illness. It is not for long term illnesses per se. That should be dealt with through the Disabilities Services Unit.

**You must submit your application within three working days, unless you have a very good explanation (with proof) for why you are late. Most late applications are not successful**

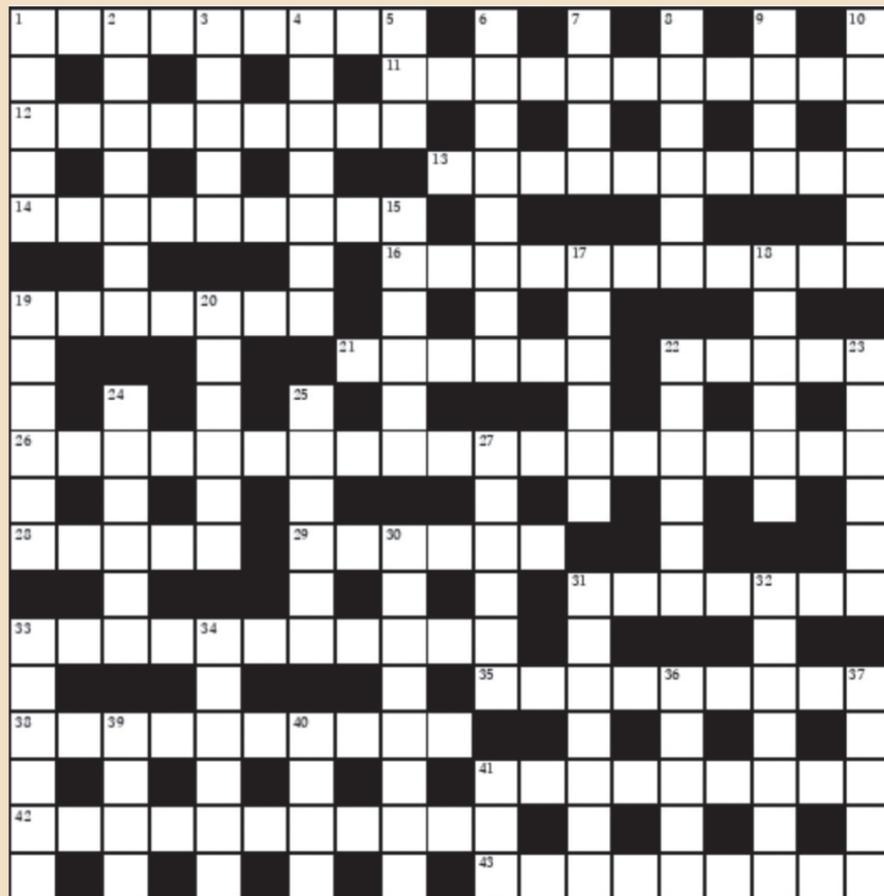
needs to be on the same day that you are sick and should not be backdated. If your doctor is not available you will need to see another doctor, which can even be through a home doctor service. Your doctor does not need to disclose your illness, but it might help to give a brief description of the things that you are unable to do, e.g. attend university, leave bed, sit up for longer than 10 minutes, etc. They will also need to assess the severity of your condition. If you are not severely affected by your illness you might find it difficult to get special consideration. You must submit your application within 3 working days, unless you have a very good explanation (with proof) for why you are late. Most

**What if I am sick for the supplementary examination or every assessment in a subject? Is there any way not to get a fail?**

If they reschedule your exam and assessments, but you are still affected or affected again, by illness or misadventure you should apply again for special consideration. All of the same processes apply. If successful, your faculty will grant you another supplementary assessment or, if that is not possible, award you a DC (discontinue not to count as fail) grade. If you receive a DC you can apply to have a refund or re-crediting of your fees. Email an SRC caseworker for the appropriate form.

Puzzles by CloudRunner

# Big Quick Crossword



## Across

- 1 Relating to money and stuff (9)
- 11 Birthplace of Leonhard Euler, Roger Federer, and Alain de Botton (11)
- 12 Denoting something previously mentioned (9)
- 13 What Tony Abbott vowed to do to Vladimir Putin (10)
- 14 The making and repairing of barrels (9)
- 16 Employed hyperbole (11)
- 19 Retires (7)
- 21 Tissue attaching a muscle to a bone (6)
- 22 A more definite option than 'Maybe' on a Facebook event (5)
- 26 1949 document (3,6,10)
- 28 Injection of fluid into the rectum (5)
- 29 Without difficulty (6)
- 31 Sweet home to Lynyrd Skynyrd (7)
- 33 Rick, to Morty, or Mona, to Bart (11)
- 35 Swaps one currency for another (9)
- 38 What a fishing company hopes to make (3,7)
- 41 Extra fee (9)
- 42 European city that is pretty small (7,4)
- 43 Besmirch the reputation of (9)

## Down

- 1 Currency of 11-Across (5)
- 2 New right-wingers (7)
- 3 North, to Khloé (5)
- 4 Slanty letters (7)
- 5 Lysergic acid diethylamide (3)
- 6 Interpreted incorrectly with the ears (8)
- 7 Anti-revolutionary European leader (4)
- 8 Like better (6)
- 9 Torres Strait Islander who campaigned for land rights (4)
- 10 What FIT did for Honi last year (6)
- 15 European city in 11-Across (6)
- 17 European city located on the mouth of the Rhône (6)
- 18 Useless information (6)
- 19 Baby's toy (6)
- 20 European city featuring the famous Reformation Wall (6)
- 22 European city where the Red Cross was founded (6)
- 23 European city where the World Wide Web was invented (6)
- 24 European city featuring the famous Jet d'Eau (6)
- 25 European city where CERN is based (6)
- 27 Recently (2,4)
- 30 Makes certain that something will be done (4,2,2)
- 31 Treaties, or Hondas (7)
- 32 Enraged (7)
- 33 European lake featured in 'Smoke on the Water' (6)
- 34 What Michelle Guthrie will no longer do at the ABC (6)
- 36 Regard with hatred and disgust (5)
- 37 Paid money (5)
- 39 Revolutionary European leader (4)
- 40 Provide cash for (4)
- 41 \_\_\_ Barrett, founder of Pink Floyd (3)

Feeling puzzled? Go to [honisoit.com](http://honisoit.com) for answers

# This Way or That

Clues across and down are the same.  
 1 Parts of a play (4)  
 2 Stylish (4)  
 3 Arena variety (4)  
 4 Jazzy vocals (4)

1	2	3	4
2			
3			
4			

## Target

Minimum 4 letters per word.  
 Make as many words as you can, using the centre letter.  
 10 words: First-wave  
 15 words: Second-wave  
 20 words: Third wave  
 30 words: Fourth-wave

I	F	I
S	S	T
M	E	N

## Quiz!

All answers begin with the letter F.

1. The oldest building in the NSW rail network is the station master's quarters at which Sydney train station?
2. Farrokh Bulsara was better known by which name?
3. 'Change' is the final song on which Taylor Swift album?
4. In 1971, Noam Chomsky famously engaged in a debate about human nature with which philosopher?
5. In which game would you find Misty Meadows and Holly Hedges?
6. Which country refers to itself as 'Suomi'?

# THE BOOT

## Secret plans reveal Thales airstrike targets on campus

Chief Espionage Officer Samuel Garrett reports.



## USU releases new guidelines on how to ethically embezzle from clubs and societies

Marlow Hurst reports.

"Embezzlement is a healthy and natural part of campus life. We'd prefer it if club and society executives did it responsibly and where we can see them."

This was part of a statement made by USU President Irene Ma as she announced a raft of new measures to ensure C&S embezzlement is carried out with the welfare of perpetrators in front of mind.

Disgraced former USU board candidate Tina Lee expressed concern that not enough was being done for executive who had embezzled before the new regulations were introduced.

"Too little, too late. Just because I was at the cutting edge of campus financial crime, doesn't mean I shouldn't benefit from future developments in the regulatory framework."

Along with a simple step-by-step guide to basic C&S embezzlement, the USU also plans to offer banking services for any embezzled funds.

The corporate world has applauded the USU for their enlightened decision, congratulating the student union for bringing the uni in line with the private sector.

## School of international relations pivots to exclusively produce Suez Canal memes /p.666

## In this issue

Opinion: I'd Fuck Me /p.25

We forced a bot to read 1000 hours of Honi articles and now it's a queer eco-feminist / p.38

Wankers expelled from Liberal party; membership drops to zero / p.48

Arghhh me hearty: pirate chuckles at Suez Canal tweet as business booms / p.61

Private school boys allowed to harass women at nightclubs again after restrictions lifted / p.88w

WA liberals reclassified as small club, \$80 funding cap for semester / p.0

English student finds inconsistent comma in Graffiti tunnel / p.%&

Science Road to be re-named in latest round of STEM cuts / p.999

Arts Faculty essays to be replaced with kahoots / p.420

**STOP  
ABORIGINAL  
DEATHS  
IN CUSTODY**

**BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER**

**30 YEARS SINCE THE  
ROYAL COMMISSION...  
...STILL NO JUSTICE**



**PROTEST + MARCH**

**SATURDAY 10 APRIL  
1PM SYD TOWN HALL**

