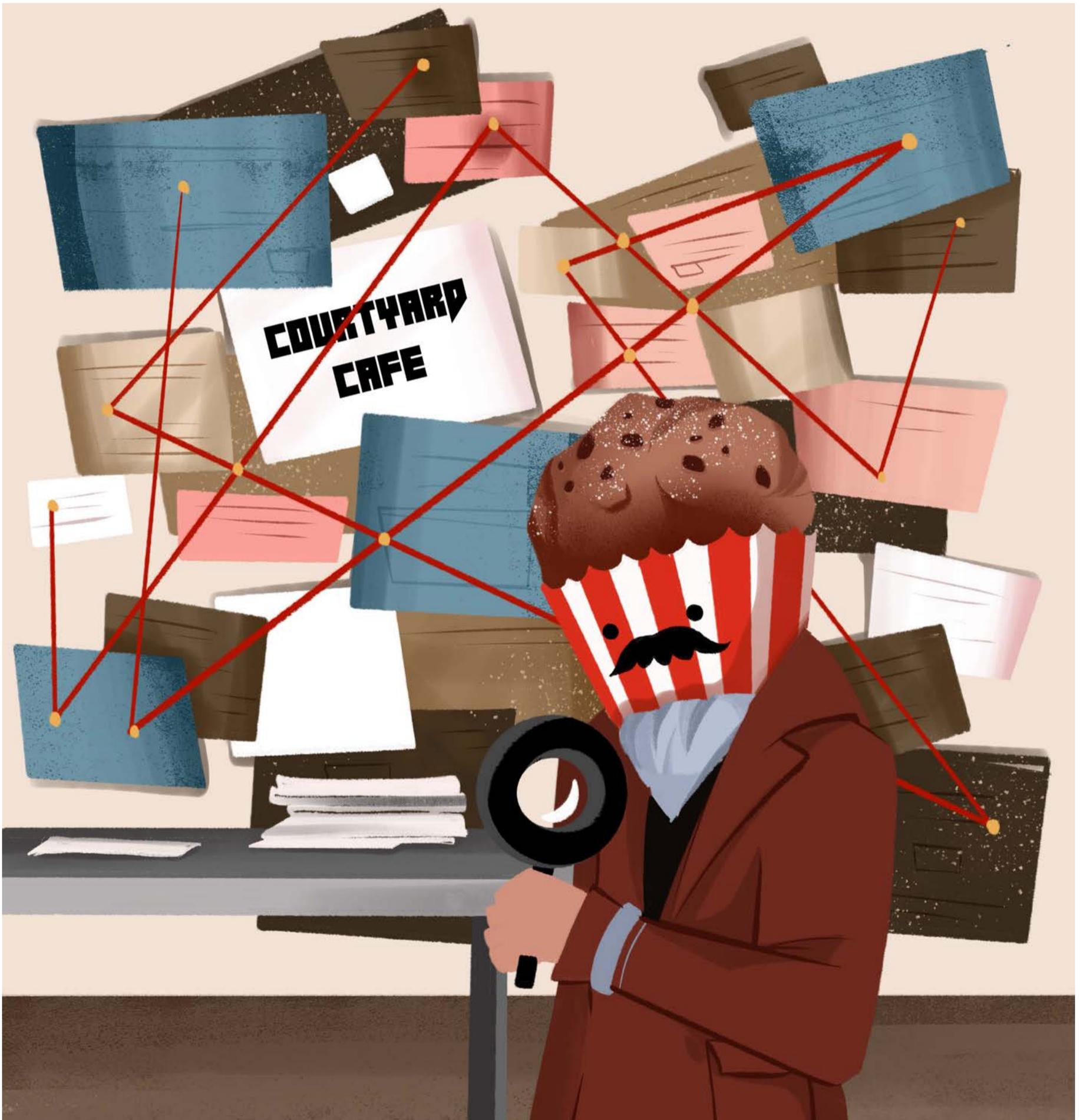


Honi Soit

WEEK 9, SEMESTER 1, 2021

FIRST PRINTED 1929



Why won't courtyard heat up muffins? / P 12

How to launch
a campus coup / P 17

SLAM faces axe;
two departments likely to be cut
with job losses expected / P 4

Otter-ly delightful / P 18



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 over 474 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.

Always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Editor-in-Chief:

Marlow Hurst.

Editors:

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

Writers:

Chiara Bragato, David Brophy, Danny Cabubas, Christine Chen, Maddie Clark, Nandini Dhir, Kimmy Dibben, Keira Fairley, Charlene Gee, Ariana Haghighi, Sarah Jasem, Veronica Lenard, Minh Nguyen, Mia Pasilow, Grace Roodenrys, Swapnik Sanagavarapu, Ellie Stephenson, William Solomon, Khanh Tran, Tom Wark

Artists:

Olivia Allanson (@olivia_overlord1o1), Lauren Lancaster, Isla Mowbray, Janina Osinsao (@janina.png), Ellie Stephenson, Em Thomas (@Emily.thomas_visual)

Cover artist:

Seda Coskun (@artofsed)

Editorial

Muffins are very important to me. To many, they might just seem like a rotund little bundle of glutenous goodness. I first conceived of them like that as well. But as the years went by, they took on a life of their own. They began to take on connotations of comfort, suggestions of support, the imagery of my very own identity. This is before Courtyard ripped my heart out and served it for trivia night nibbles. Ever since 2019, muffins have taken on a new meaning for me: one of bitter betrayal. It's not so much anger that fuels me, but confusion: why can't they just get a microwave, why do they have to make it so hard. While it was once about the muffins, now it's about the principle. And like a dog with a bone, I will not yield!

In other news, people who aren't me wrote for this edition of *Honi Soit*. Fellow editor Samuel Garrett provided us with an instructive

and highly entertaining guide to launching a campus coup (I'll be sure to test it out soon). Ariana Haghighi, who wrote the cover article for my last editor-in-chief edition, knocks it out of the park again with her in depth exploration of the curious and cute behaviour of otters. Danny Cabubas takes us down the highway of Pixar's Cars and does it at just the right speed. I somehow wrote a total of 5 articles for this edition, so thanks to me again I guess! Finally, Shania O'Brien, who'll be editor-in-chief for next week, wrote a lengthy, darling, gorgeous, exquisite review of Netflix's adaptation of Shadow and Bone with Vivienne Guo. I loved this edition. I loved writing it. I loved editing it. I loved laying it up and I loved laying it down. And I'm sure I'll love reading it all in print! When I was paginating this week, I had a moment of absolute clarity: almost every article in this

edition ... spoke to me. Some louder than others, but they all meant something to me. And I love it when things mean something to me. Each and every day, *Honi* means more and more to me. I may grumble when my fellow editors decline to squeal in delight at something I find absolutely salacious, but every Sunday I come in and think to myself: "How is everyone so completely incredible?"

So, read this edition, take it in, absorb every morsel and don't let it slip. Because there are some excellent thoughts knocking around on these pages (and some equally excellent art). To quote Gandalf: "I found it is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay ... small acts of kindness and love." A warm muffin may indeed be small, but many times, it's kept the darkness at bay - for me, and for many others.

Letters

A review of the Revue review

[Facebook comment on Semester 1 Week 8, Daanyal Saeed, 'Review: POC Revue 2021']

This review seems unnecessarily harsh. I think linking an inexperienced cast to an inherently bad show is not a good hill to die on and feels like we should expect any show that goes on this year to not be of quality. Imo, we should be celebrating newer faces in the revue scene getting to experiment with comedy and sketch-writing, and celebrating the fact that revues are back, not yearning for the less important parts of the pre-covid revue experience (programs etc). I also just reckon the show was very funny and that the jokes about colonialism hit the mark; it is unnecessary and gatekeepy to overwhelmingly interrogate the politics of it all. Congrats on a great show PoC Rev!!!!!!

- Roisin Murphy

Applause for Adams' Animal Wots-Its + solidarity

[Semester 1 Week 8, Maxim Adams, 'Fantastic campus beasts and where to find them']

Dear Honi

I write as a USyd staff member/info-servicesbot to thank Maxim Adams for their highly entertaining animal tidbits. You've peeled some of the anthropocentric scales from my eyes. If you ever find the time/inspo/energy, you'd do well to host lunchtime walking tours of the campus pointing out these natural wonders. I'm sure a fair few of my tree-hugging commo colleagues would be interested. I certainly would.

And speaking of comms - Abe: it is true that the majority of our union's members are 2-legged. However, I'm sure the NTEU would consider any calls for support from our animal friends. Cu on the next climate change walk-off to discuss this further, perhaps? After all comrade -2 legs or 4- we have nothing to lose but our leashes.

In solidarity and (strictly legal) animal love,

Zippy

That's not very cash money of you

Dear Editors,

What the fuck is up with SSAF allocation? I was having a no thoughts day and somehow found myself looking up SSAF allocations. WTF?? SUSF and the USU, the only two organisations that actually have a revenue get big fuck off cuts of our amenities fee. Literally \$5m+ EACH? THAT IS OBSCENE. I HAVE NEVER EVEN USED ANY OF THE SPORTS AMENITIES BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR THEM SEPERATELY. I'VE BEEN AT USYD FOR 4 YEARS!

I was horrified to see that the SRC only gets \$1.9m (absolute crumbs in comparison). Even more despicable is the fact that student support services get under \$3000 from our SSAF.

Seriously fuck this, Anonymous, pissed off student

In memoriam Starburst

Dear world,

Why is no one talking about the

quiet death of Starburst lollies?!

I grew up in the 2000s. Starburst snakes and fruitful mix were my favourite lollies; The zest and perfect melding of colours and flavours always left a zing in my mouth.

Circa 2015, a wide range of starburst lollies were axed from woolworths and coles chains everywhere. The loss is significant: Snakes, Fruitful Mix, Party Mix etc.

I'm sitting down, baked, looking for my latest snack. I've been trying to buy Starburst Snakes online for 20 mins, but they're either nowhere to be found (or up to \$32 for a pack).

Where did this noble candy go? Coles and Woolies cited unfavourable sales... stock on the shelf is dictated by the ever powerful Dollar.

It frankly pisses me off that much like the banana predecessor of the now-common Cavendish usurper, that one day we will never be able to taste Starburst lollies again. This little morsel of deliciousness has been lost to the gaping black maw of capitalism and I think that's pretty sad. we don't even get one good thing huh?

Now the only place I can get Starburst lollies (Snakes specifically) is in the odd convenience store or one particular lonely vending machine in the Carlaw Building (they're \$8 there).

I ask nothing of readers except this: Remember Starburst lollies! Green and pink were my favourite.

In despair, Viv



Miss Soit

Sydney Uni's SAUCIEST socialite!

Dear plumpious beauties,

I write this from my bubbly bath overlooking the Bacchic Barossa Valley. While I might have taken a brief autumn sapphic sojourn from the Fisher fishbowl, my petite leeks and slippery sources have made sure that this chardonnay socialist remains across all the dirty details of Sydney Uni's most sordid secrets!

For Butts? Who knows...

My favourite Honi editor Magnanimous Marlow 'High-society' Hurst was working on a super secret expose of bullshit Board Directors' pitiful promises, when Venerable Vice-President Nick 'Frothing' Forburt hacked into the Google Doc mainframe and mysteriously removed his unfulfilled promises from Mighty Marlow's secret spreadsheet. I wonder what Filthy Forburt could be hiding? The fact that he has failed to cum good on his promises? Or evidence of the USU's sadistic in-camera sex cult? My petite leeks spotted the dirty directors watching *120 Days of Sodom* at their outdoor cinema on Eastern Avenue, while the Pilliga Mouse who lives under the Holme Building floorboards tells me they creaked extra loud around 2.30 last Friday ... While I'm not opposed to rambunctious group copulation (First Thursday of the month, DM me for details), such things should be done outside of the board room, as I found out to my own detriment in 1972.

Edging Andrew

USU CEO Amaretto Andrew Macrophallus Mills had the Honi editors frantically forging friendships with fuckwit Board candidates after his *Erectoral* Officer ordered that no interviews could be conducted before the start of the official campaign period on May 8. Well, *May Dies*, you will be glad to know that Magnanimous Marlow dominated the *Erectoral* Officer into reversing her decision after forming an *unholy* alliance with the cantankerous candidates for the *upcoming* election. While I appreciate this win for transparency and democracy, I'm not sure I want these horrid hopefuls and ambitious arseholes hanging out around my innocent *Honi* editors.

Cancelled by Queers

After reply guy Deciduous Daany 'Sucker' Saeed *slammed* the People of Colour Revue in a *piping hot* review, some *keen* commenters were quick to *lay the boot* in to this vicious Victorian. Dickhead Daany derided the "dire lack of new content" in the revue, which compelled Raging Roisin 'Macdaddy' Murphy to *slam* our "unnecessarily harsh" reviewer. Nudist Nicole 'Santa Tell Me' Baxter suplexed Saeed, calling him out for "undermining [POC revue cast's] right to be human beings"! So it was no surprise when Queer Revue called up to officially "disendorse" *Honi* from sending a reviewer. Those quaking queers must have gotten the fright of their lives when *Honi* showed up *through the back door*. A piece of advice for snowflake students: any publicity is good publicity, my darlings..!

Art by Lauren Lancaster

What's on this week

USYD Womn's Revue 2021: A Naughty New Year!

Wednesday 5 May - Saturday 8 May 7:30pm Seymour Theatre

Throw away your smartphone and pop on a sparkly party hat because Womn's Revue is heading back to 1999 to bring in the new year! This sketch comedy show will leave you truly glad that the world didn't end in 1999, so that you could be alive to see it. Catch you at the countdown to midnight!

USYD Law Revue: Auditions!

Wednesday 5 May - Friday 7 May 6-9pm Location TBA

A USYD Law tradition as hallowed as crying in the Lawbry and begging your lecturers for extra marks... be a part of the USYD Law Revue! No preparation required - fill out the form on their Facebook page and keep an eye out for location.

USYD IJM goes to Glebe Markets

Saturday 8 May 10am-4pm Glebe Markets

While it is difficult to find slavery-free clothing brands, you can never go wrong with thrift shopping! Come to our stall for twice-loved fashion items and some thought provoking chats about modern slavery! All proceeds will go toward supporting IJM.

Your friend graduating

Across May The Great Hall

Graduation season continues in May with Law, Arts, Business and Engineering students dressing up in robes and a cap to celebrate getting out of USYD. If you see a friend graduating, pop along to the Quad, bring flowers and take photos with them for this momentous occasion!

48 hr film making challenge!

A new category has opened in the Sydney University Film Festival. A prompt will be released on Saturday the 8th at 8 am. You will have 48 hours to create a 2-3 minute film. To register email sudsthewash@gmail.com and put 48hr in the email subject! There's over \$1000 worth of prizes up for grabs !!

Write to us!!



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

Email your letters to editors@honisoit.com, use the anonymous tip form on our Facebook page, or send mail to:

Honi Soit Editors
PO Box 794 Broadway NSW 2007



SLAM faces axe; two departments likely to be cut with job losses expected

Maxim Shanahan and Claire Ollivain report.

In a meeting on Thursday afternoon, about 90 staff in the School of Literature, Art and Media (SLAM) were informed that their School could be abolished under a scheme codenamed ‘Operation Bluestar.’

SLAM faces extinction despite posting a surplus last year.

‘Operation Bluestar’ involves the complete disbanding of SLAM, reducing the number of FASS schools from six to five, while the Departments of Studies in Religion and Theatre and Performance Studies are likely to be closed entirely.

The Media and Communications Department, which has maintained high undergraduate enrolment and profitability, is likely to be moved into another existing school. The Writing Studies Department may also be amalgamated into the Department of English under the scheme. Linguistics staff have also expressed concern that they may be impacted by the restructure.

A University spokesperson acknowledged “the possibility of restructuring the current six schools as five, and closing a number of departments and programs. Studies in Religion and Theatre and Performance Studies are among the departments considered as options for closure...The Faculty is committed to reducing its costs, but how that will be achieved is not yet known.”

The staff meeting was called after rumours of an impending restructure began to gain strength among staff.

Neither FASS nor University administration have spoken to SLAM staff

At first General Meeting in 14 years, students vote to join climate strike

Deaundre Espejo reports.

Almost 300 students attended a Student General Meeting (SGM) at the University of Sydney today, where they unanimously voted to join the May 21 Climate Strike and build “the widest possible shut down of campus.”

At the meeting, organised by the USyd Enviro Collective, students also unanimously voted to call on Interim Vice-Chancellor Stephen Garton to publicly waive all penalties for staff and students who join the strikes.

“We make history today,” Lauren Lancaster said, noting that it was the first SGM to be called since 2007 and only the third in the University’s history.

“For so long, we’ve been told by University management and politicians to sit down and be quiet. But we as students have power to challenge and bring down the institution.”

Seth Dias, who gave the Acknowledgement of Country, reminded audiences of the connection between the climate crisis and Indigenous deaths in custody: “Since the start of March, we have seen seven Aboriginal people die in prisons or at the hands of police.”

“As we see people exploiting this continent for profit, we also see death at the

about the secretive operation. According to a statement from the USyd Casuals Network, FASS Dean Annamarie Jagose recently spoke of departments with an “axe” hanging over their heads.

A member of the Arts Faculty Board told *Honi* that, at a recent meeting, Jagose said that small schools were at risk, before “playing a game” with attendees to guess which FASS school was smallest.

A University spokesperson told *Honi* that Jagose had been “speaking frankly with colleagues...about the particular challenges FASS faces.”

One MECO staff member, whose department will survive the restructure, told the meeting that “it is time that some of these people [senior management] came into these classrooms, or came into these staff meetings, and [saw] people crying, [saw] people retire early...it’s absolutely horrific for staff well-being.”

“We’re in a rich institution and I’m just sick of people being treated like absolute crap.”

At least nine permanent staff and several casuals may face redundancies from the two departments, and if SLAM is axed its administration staff may also lose their jobs.

NTEU USyd Branch President Kurt Iveson told *Honi* that the proposed restructure “will be severely disruptive to the working lives and job security of academics and professional staff...At the very least, staff deserve a guarantee that no jobs will be lost in any restructure... It seems there is not a single problem that our managers think a top-down restructure

hands of the state. It all comes down to one system, one Parliament, and one sect of the ruling class who are fucking us all over every single day.”

Tiger Perkins, who co-chaired the meeting with Lancaster, spoke about the importance of attending climate strikes due to ongoing climate inaction by politicians.

“Our money-grabbing, power-hungry politicians ... have made no attempt to shut down the fossil fuel industry. Instead, they expanded it and greenlighted \$56 billion worth of new gas projects last year.”

He condemned Scott Morrison’s recent refusal to commit to a net zero emissions target by 2050 — an already modest target compared to other countries — and the Labor Party MP Joel Fitzgibbon’s continued support of coal mining.

“It’s clear that climate responsibility falls to students and workers.”

India Pardoel criticised the Federal Government’s plan to accelerate a gas-led recovery, noting that “Gas is a fossil fuel that emits 117 pounds of CO2 emissions [per MMBtu] — just over half of what coal produces.”

They also stressed the need for the publicly-owned renewable energy, given the “precarious” and “exploitative” nature

won’t fix.”

One staff member told *Honi* that Studies in Religion is one of the only departments left in the country which engages critically with religion, which is “important in the time of Mark Latham and Safe Schools,” with most universities offering only theology.

The Department of Theatre and Performance Studies is the oldest in the country, and staff fear that if these departments are merged their specific knowledge of cultural practice will be devalued.

These slashes are situated in a broader context of attacks on the arts, with the passing of the Job-Ready Graduates Package last year and the denial of JobKeeper to universities.

Staff and students have vowed to organise a fight back.

Students’ Representative Council President Swapnik Sanagavarapu told *Honi* that “The SRC is strongly in opposition to the proposed cuts and restructures in the School of Literature, Art and Media. What’s worse is that there has been little to no consultation with students or staff in relation to this proposal.”

“Jobs and livelihoods will be permanently lost, and decades of academic and institutional knowledge will disappear. Students will lose the invaluable experience of studying in these departments, simply because they are ‘unprofitable.’ This University is not a profit-making institution and should not be run on that criteria, and the SRC will organise to save these departments and save these jobs.”

of private systems.

“The reality is that corporate and political interests ... will not drive this transition,” Pardoel said, recalling the firing of over 200 workers at a Queensland solar farm, as well as the widespread underpayment of migrant workers.

“We urgently need to build a mass movement that utilises the collective power of workers.”

Lancaster and Perkins then reiterated the demands for the climate strike — First Nations land management, no new coal and gas projects, publicly owned renewable energy, and a just transition to climate jobs.

Other speakers included USyd SRC President Swapnik Sanagavarapu, who praised attendees for taking “collective action,” NTEU USyd Branch Professor Associate President Kurt Iveson, as well as several other attendees who spoke when the floor was opened.

The SGM received significant support in the weeks prior. With almost 300 students attending, it reached well beyond the 200 undergraduate students required to reach quorum.

As the meeting concluded, attendees chanted “build solar, build wind, strike ‘till we win.”

US Studies Centre appoints former Trump Chief of Staff, ASIO head

Maxim Shanahan reports.

The United States Studies Centre (USSC) today announced that Mick Mulvaney, the former Chief of Staff in the Trump administration, will join the Centre as a Non-Resident Fellow. Duncan Lewis, the former Director-General of ASIO, has also been appointed as a Non-Resident Fellow.

Mulvaney was a Republican South Carolina legislator from 2007-2011, before being elected to the US House of Representatives in 2011. He served as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget under the Trump administration before being appointed as Chief of Staff to President Trump in December 2018. He was replaced in March 2020.

Duncan Lewis is a former Army Major General, Commander of the Special Air Service Regiment, Secretary of the Department of Defence, and Director-General of ASIO. After leaving ASIO in 2020, Lewis was appointed to the board of weapons manufacturer Thales Australia. USyd Chancellor Belinda Hutchison is Chairman of the Thales Australia board.

Some staff have raised concerns about Mulvaney’s anti-LGBT record. Dr Chris Pepin-Neff, a Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at the University of Sydney, told *Honi* that “Mulvaney’s anti-LGBT views should not be given an audience at USyd. Naming him as a Non-Resident Fellow is a slap in the face to the LGBT community of staff and students.”

As a South Carolina state representative, Mulvaney co-sponsored a successful bill which defined marriage as being only between a man and a woman. In his 2008 state Senate run, Mulvaney’s campaign featured a robocall which “gay-baited his opponent for her support of ‘homosexual unions and abortion rights.’” In 2015, he co-sponsored a Federal bill which sought to allow discrimination by individuals and businesses against same-sex couples.

A USSC spokesperson told *Honi* that Mulvaney “brings a unique perspective to our analysis” and that the “relevant areas for his involvement with the Centre” are “his expertise in finance and the highest levels of government.”

A University spokesperson was unable to speak on behalf of the USSC, but said that the University was “committed to building a stronger and more inclusive environment that supports our LGBTQI+ students, staff and community members.”

In 2019, *Honi* reported that the USSC had “entered into an arrangement with the US Department of State to conduct general political lobbying at the University of Sydney.” The USSC also receives a small portion of its funding from the US Government.

Catholic Society places ableist placard on Eastern Avenue

Claire Ollivain reports.

CW: Ableism.

Students have criticised the Sydney University Catholic Society for putting up an A-frame asking ‘Are disabled people a burden on society?’ on Eastern Avenue next to ‘yes’ and ‘no’ jars.

The A-frame was on display from around 10am Monday 26 April and removed two to three hours later after a passer-by made a complaint. Catholic Society members allegedly put up the placard to “spark a conversation about pro-life issues” and “didn’t think it could be seen in a negative light.”

The stalled on Eastern Avenue for their Life Week events, which included guest speakers presenting on the topics: ‘Euthanasia: A Threat to the Vulnerable?’, ‘Can you be pro-life and pro-woman at the same time?’, and ‘Serious Conversations about Gender.’

Disabilities Officer Margot Beavon-Collin told *Honi* that the A-frame was “callous and disgusting”.

“Disabled people are routinely used as props in other people’s campaigns. Regardless of the intentions behind the

Women’s Collective protests Catholic Society’s anti-abortion lecture

Christine Chen and Claire Ollivain report.

CW: Mentions of sexual assault, abortion and ableism.

On Wednesday 28 April, the University of Sydney Women’s Collective (WoCo) staged a protest outside a Catholic Society talk entitled ‘Can you be both Pro-Woman and Pro-Life?’

Originally slated to be held on Eastern Avenue, the talk was subsequently relocated last-minute to a lecture theatre in the Law Annex building in an attempt to circumvent WoCo protestors.

Outside, around half a dozen security guards lined the lecture theatre’s locked doors, barring protestors’ access to the event. Inside, guest speaker Monica Doumit — who has previously written in *The Catholic Weekly* in support of JK Rowling and Cardinal Pell, and called abortion and euthanasia campaigns “dishonest” and “dodgy” — spent the first thirty minutes of her talk discussing examples of women being coerced into having abortions.

“Abortion hinders the progress of women. Those who want true advancement and not just a veneer of it should actually be pro-life,” Doumit claimed.

As the Catholic Society talk continued, the crowd of protestors outside grew in size. SRC Social Justice Officer Eddie Stephenson spoke about the mass movements of working-class women around the world rising up against the Catholic Church in Ireland, Argentina, and Poland.

“We’re not going to be the submissive baby-makers the Catholics and the ruling

stunt, it was poorly thought out and ultimately harmful. There are so many disabled students on campus, and passing signs asking students to weigh in on the worth of your existence is incredibly confronting.”

“Distilling our lives down to a question of whether or not we are a burden is not simply dehumanising. It reflects the value-driven Capitalist ethos of a society that struggles to understand a person’s worth beyond what they produce for the boss.”

SRC Interfaith Officers Jayfel Tulabing and Antoine Nguyen Khanh said that they are “deeply disheartened and angered by the increase of pro-life and ableist propaganda starting to show up on campus.”

“We do not think this is conducive to a productive debate or argument and only diminishes the real-life experiences of disabled people and students, expressing nothing but bigotry, contempt [and] ignorance.”

Sydney University Catholic Society members refused to comment when questioned by *Honi*, but defended the A-frame in a Facebook post. They stated that the responses showed “students were

class see us as, we’re going to get out on the streets and we’re going to fight [against the government].”

In response to increasingly audible chants of “Let us in!”, “Our bodies, our choice!”, and “Not the church, not the state,



we will decide our fate!” from outside the theatre, Doumit launched into a diatribe describing protestors as “noisy and angry.”

Doumit invited members from the audience to ask questions at the conclusion of her speech. “Is it appropriate for women to have both a career and raise a child, or can she only do one?” one male audience member asked. Doumit responded that, “There is something to be said about having a man as the protector and provider—in a natural sense.”

In response to another question from a male audience member asking, “Would you support a law forcing a man to stay with a woman he impregnated ... in order to ensure a functional, traditional family for the child?” Doumit said, “It’s dangerous for the government to start dictating

what happens to a family,” despite also supporting the criminalisation of abortions in New South Wales.

On the other side of the lecture theatre’s closed doors, SRC Education Officer Madeleine Clark connected the issue of anti-abortion rhetoric to Scott Morrison’s mishandling of sexual assault allegations against parliamentarians: “It’s so fucking sick and disgusting. I’m so fucking angry that we have to continue to put up with this ... that we have to fight for our basic human dignity. Shame!”

“This is not a debate to be had... These are our bodies, these are our rights, and this is not up for discussion,” one protestor said.

SRC Interfaith Officer Jayfel Tulabing questioned why the Catholic Society could make venue requests at the last minute, while other societies and collectives have been made to wait weeks, as previously reported in *Honi*.

“While the Enviro Collective has been struggling and jumping through bureaucratic hoops to book a room for the SGM, the Catholic Society has the capacity to run week-long events, renting a full-sized tent to hold their services,” she said.

Catholic Society members, upon exiting the lecture escorted by security, were met by WoCo demonstrators who chanted “Shame!” and “Racist, sexist, anti-queer, bigots are not welcome here!” up the staircase of the Law Annex building and onto Eastern Avenue.

Photography by Aman Kapoor

Disabilities Collective holds snap speak-out

Khanh Tran reports.

CW: Mentions of ableism and rape.

The University of Sydney Disabilities Collective held a snap speak-out today outside Fisher Library in response to the A-frame erected yesterday on Eastern Avenue by the Sydney University Catholic Society and subsequent ableist rhetoric on social media.

Taking the stage outside Fisher Library, SRC Disabilities Officer Margot Beavon-Collin condemned the stunt as “disgusting” and delivered an impassioned speech lamenting the fact that “people who would have been on campus yesterday had to look at that sign and witness complete random strangers voting on the worth of their life.”

“Being talked down to by people insisting on using disabled people as objects and as political footballs for their own conflicted religious moral arguments is completely mind blowing,” she reflected.

“More and more disabled people, not just across this country but around the world are finding their voices. You dare come back to us and say to us that we don’t get it, that we are too naïve ... We will come down on you like a ton of disabled bricks.”

After speaking, Beavon-Collin delivered a statement from Sarah Korte, the other SRC Disabilities Officer, denouncing the Catholic Society’s apology in which the Society characterised the A-frame as a prompt for academic discussion:

“Giving a voice to ableism is supporting ableism, my value as a person is not up for debate. My body is not a prop, or a vehicle to be used to propel an agenda. It is not a crippled statue to be held beside a fetus to be carefully observed and compared.”

“Anyone who thinks that our value should be debated, regardless of intentions, should be condemned for blatant ableism.”

Robin Eames, the preceding SRC Disabilities Officer, highlighted the significant structural obstacles that hinder the disabled community’s access to support and equal opportunities:

“The rates of violence and neglect in disability sectors are so important that there’s a Royal Commission being conducted into them, and what we know already is that 90% of women with intellectual disabilities will be raped in their lifetimes,” they said.

“If the Catholic Society cared about reproductive justice and was engaged with us on these issues they would know [that] we do have shared concerns and even those of us who are pro-choice, which is most disabled activists.”

Beavon-Collin closed the speak-out by paying tribute to and inviting disabled students, allies and members of the USyd community to get involved in the Disabilities Collective & Caregivers Network:

“We don’t want your charity. We don’t want your pity. We want solidarity. We want to get to where we’re going together.”

St. Paul's proposes accepting women; residents "strongly against"

Max Shanahan reports.

The St. Paul's College council has proposed that the College accept female undergraduate students for the first time. *Honi Soit* understands that present St. Paul's undergraduate students are "strongly against" the proposal.

Reverend Ed Loane, the Warden of the College, told *Honi* that the proposal arose out of considerations of whether "becoming a fully co-resident community would ... best achieve the College's vision and strategic goals."

No date has been set for the introduction of female residents, with a period of "consultation" to be undertaken before a final decision is made.

He denied that the proposal was an attempt to ameliorate a sexist culture at St. Paul's, saying, "since the Broderick review, cultural renewal has been actively taking place ... with the support and warm cooperation of our student leaders."

One St. Paul's undergraduate student

told *Honi* that "the general consensus amongst the undergraduates is to keep the college all male for now. With Women's and other colleges just next door ... we can always hang out with mates from all over."

The University of Sydney Women's Collective, which has previously led calls to "abolish the colleges," told *Honi* that "St. Paul's is trying to 'reform' an institution which excuses sexual assault and bolsters rapists, by throwing some women into the mix. It will fail. Making St. Paul's co-ed will only mean more women are assaulted at college...The deep culture of disdain for women, of excusing sexual violence, of promoting and covering-up for rapists will not change."

The 2018 Broderick Report, which examined

the culture at USyd's residential colleges, found a history of sexist traditions at St. Paul's, described as "degrading and demeaning." The college promised to implement all of the recommendations of the report, but *Honi* has since reported on several hazing incidents.

In 2019, the College opened its 'Graduate House,' which caters to both male and female postgraduates.



Management backflips on forced Medical Sciences relocations

Samuel Garrett reports.

Honours students have successfully campaigned to continue researching in the Medical Foundation Building, weeks after being told they would be forcibly relocated. Professor Sarah Young, Head of the School of Medical Sciences, informed affected students in an email on Monday that the decision to allow students to remain was taken after having "considered all the feedback we have received."

The backflip comes after weeks of uncertainty for affected Honours students, who were informed on 13 April that they could no longer conduct research in the building "due to an ongoing police investigation." They will now be permitted to remain in the Medical Foundation Building, with any who wish to move out of the building to be "accommodated."

"This situation is complex and we have been consulting with a large number of stakeholders ... thank you for your

patience," wrote Professor Young in the email.

It is unclear why consultation with affected students was not undertaken before the initial decision was made, given its disruptive impact on students' projects, and the fortnight of uncertainty and stress which it has caused.

Students say earlier requests to remain in the building and for greater transparency regarding the initial relocation decision were repeatedly rebuffed in meetings with School leadership. It was only after students sent a letter to leadership outlining their "feedback" that the new decision was made.

SRC President Swapnik Sanagavarapu noted the cooperation between the SRC and National Tertiary Education Union in the campaign, telling *Honi*: "Management's quick reversal of their position as soon as any scrutiny was applied to them suggests

that the entire process of excluding students on the grounds of 'WHS risks' was a vexatious one."

"When students organise together, as these students did with the help of the SRC, they can demand their rights ... it shows the power that can be exercised when staff and students work together and advocate for their common interests."

"Management's bullying, cruelty and deception will never be tolerated nor meekly accepted by students and staff."

The reversal represents a successful campaign against a decision made by Faculty of Medicine and Health management. The Defend Medical Science Education and Save the Anderson Stuart Building campaigns have previously protested cuts to the School of Medical Sciences and the eviction of researchers from the Anderson Stuart Building.

Casual staff affected by widespread underpayment

Alice Trenoweth-Creswell reports.

On Monday, the University provided an all-staff update on its ongoing analysis of underpayment.

Last August, the University admitted to underpaying staff approximately \$8.8 million. PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC) were employed to comprehensively analyse staff underpayments from January 2014 onwards, to identify instances where staff may have been paid incorrectly.

The audit has confirmed that the majority of underpayments relate to the miscalculation of overtime and minimum engagement entitlements for casual and professional staff. Several academic and non-casual professional staff were also affected.

In an all-staff email, Vice-Chancellor Stephen Garton confirmed the quantum of payments will be determined by mid 2021. Staff will then be notified of the status of their claim and repayments will commence in Semester 2. The University will not seek to recover any overpayments made to staff.

"We regret that this error has occurred and will continue our work to identify and rectify any amounts which might be payable by the University as swiftly as possible, and communicate with impacted staff throughout the process," a University spokesperson told *Honi*. "Since the initial review was completed, we have already put in place a number of system and behavioural changes including improved exception reporting, improved timesheeting functionality, and further guidance to managers and staff on entitlements provided by the Enterprise Agreement to mitigate any potential ongoing issues."

The statement maintained the University's denial of "wage theft", attributing miscalculation to "payment errors". Earlier in March, the Senate Inquiry into unlawful underpayment highlighted several instances in which the University was made aware of systematic underpayment.

Jobs to go in \$3.2m cut to UTS FASS

Max Shanahan reports.

Jobs will be lost with the UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) seeking to cut salary levels for 2022 by \$3.2 million as a consequence of a "challenged" financial state and "decreased student demand" in FASS courses.

In an email to staff seen by *Honi*, FASS Dean Alan Davison said that FASS would "need to adjust its academic staff profile" and "stop some activities we are currently engaged in."

Furthermore, "some selected roles will need to be made redundant to meet the 2022 salary savings."

A UTS spokesperson declined to comment, telling *Honi* that "it's too early to give answers...prior to the University consulting with its staff."

UTS Education Officer Ellie Woodward told *Honi* they were "not surprised by these latest attacks on staff from a University management who have shown themselves

to be...corporate, and concerned only with profits."

Woodward further said that "the University had already cut almost 400 jobs, and now, dropping their previous thin veil of 'blended learning,' modernising' and 'restructuring,' are brutally cutting jobs from FASS, a faculty which has already been a target of attacks thus far."

"This is disgraceful and students will fight these attacks on staff and our education."

The news comes days after *Honi* reported that jobs in USyd's FASS were on the line as the University sought to drastically restructure the School of Languages, Art and Media, with the Departments of Studies in Religion and Theatre and Performance Studies facing the axe.



Tensions escalate at UTSSA; President calls security to Council

Claire Ollivain reports.

The situation at the UTS Students' Association (UTSSA) has intensified since *Honi* reported on sanctions imposed on the Education Action Group (EAG) last month.

Since then, President Aidan O'Rourke has extended further sanctions, including loss of swipe access, suspension of expenditure, room bookings, and access to Association spaces for the Women's, Ethnocultural, Enviro, and Queer Collectives as punishment for withholding attendance lists in protest of the By-Laws.

President calls security to meeting

At a UTSSA Council meeting on Wednesday 28 April, O'Rourke called security on two students who interrupted him to ask to hear his President's Report.

"He gave three verbal warnings to one person in the space of about five seconds. There was no violence, everyone remained in their seat ... The security said 'it's pretty obvious that there's no threat here,'" Education Officer Ellie Woodward said. "It was incredibly irresponsible. There were women, queer people, Indigenous people, and people of colour in the room when he called security."

EAG member Holly Hayne said "It's a hallmark of how much Aidan thinks he can get away with that he feels empowered to attempt to physically remove UTS students from what should be open, democratic spaces, simply for asking questions he'd prefer not to answer."

O'Rourke told *Honi* that "Security was asked to issue a formal request for a student to leave and to monitor and prevent further escalation of the meeting. Security was never asked to forcefully or physically remove students nor do I believe that this is appropriate...Every question was answered during the appropriate times of the meeting."

Collectives demand restoration of autonomy

The Council meeting came after Collectives presented a list of demands to O'Rourke and General Secretary Erin Dalton on 26 April, in the wake of more consequences imposed on Collectives in the past few weeks.

The comprehensive timeline of demands posted on the EAG's Facebook page proposed measures for the UTSSA to restore collective autonomy and resources. O'Rourke told *Honi* that he has made "progress with several demands by Collectives which have been accepted, particularly concerning consultation with the Collectives, a financial funding agreement with the University and Collective handover." However, student activists claim this is untrue.

2020 Queer Officer Melissa Sara said that "his consultation with the Collectives consisted of a meeting with collective OBs where he spoke over people and disregarded everything we said. We have made no progress with our demands. In regards to the funding agreement, the Students' Association has continued to use the looming threat of management not awarding us funding as justification for their bullshit bureaucracy."

OBs 'intimidated' at meeting with Executive

At a meeting on 26 April with Eshna Gupta, Melissa Sara and Ellie Woodward, O'Rourke and Dalton requested a written apology from Woodward and a written promise from Collective members stating that they would comply with the UTSSA By-Laws, or else face proceedings in front of a newly-established Grievance Procedure Committee.

Woodward may face the loss of Council membership and a 12 month ban on participating in elections, and has been given a one month notice for the consideration of the suspension of

her honorarium.

This was as a consequence for withholding attendance lists and making negative statements about the UTSSA to *Honi Soit*, which O'Rourke allegedly argued was against the organisation's Code of Conduct.

Collective members said they felt "intimidated" at the meeting and were continually interrupted in a "misogynistic" manner. Woodward told *Honi* that "Melissa was spoken over an incredible amount, it was actually really shocking to see. When we addressed that we were completely ignored."

Honi understands that O'Rourke told student activists they're "lucky" he wasn't harsher towards the Education Officer and EAG.

2020 National Union of Students (NUS) Queer Officer Dashie Prasad provided a statement: "The UTSSA has come forward with some very authoritarian demands of its office-bearers and Collectives. A stance like this goes against the democratic election of these office-bearers ... To overturn their positions goes against the thousands of students who vote in the elections."

Prasad emphasised this has the potential to cause repercussions from the University itself.

UTSSA contracts law firm

O'Rourke has contracted law firm King & Wood Mallesons, paying them thousands of dollars in UTSSA money to draft new Grievance Procedures. Collective members told *Honi* they believe O'Rourke is seeking legal advice in order to change the By-Laws to "shut down activism". In a statement to *Honi*, O'Rourke said that the UTSSA has a "constitutional requirement" to establish the committee.

Honi has seen the UTSSA's 2020 annual financial audit report, approved at their latest Council meeting. Last year saw a drastic increase in spending on consulting fees to \$25,383 and a

drop in almost \$13,000 in Collective expenditure.

O'Rourke told *Honi* that "The current UTSSA Constitution was passed in November 2019 and fully enacted in November 2020. The change required independent consultants to assist in writing our By-Laws to be consistent with the Constitution and benchmark our election regulations against other student unions." With the contracting of King & Wood Mallesons, it is likely that consulting fees will again eclipse Collective expenditure this year.

Student activists feel 'frustrated'

Highlighting the impact that navigating sanctions in the UTSSA has had on activists, Woodward told *Honi*: "It's been incredibly frustrating to me and to members of the EAG that at a time when the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement is fast approaching and staff are being attacked, we have been purposefully held back in terms of our budget being suspended, us being banned from spaces, and it being very difficult to print and hold meetings in spaces."

The continued repression of the UTS EAG coincides with reports of a \$3.2 million cut to the UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, which Woodward has vowed to fight back against.

She spoke of the exhaustion of having to hold separate meetings for organising campaigns and for discussing how to deal with grievances in the UTSSA itself. "Meeting times have been held back by argument and discussion about this at a time we need to be spending organising, and that goes for all the collectives."

"We have been restricted but thanks to solidarity from other activists, we can continue organising."

Disclaimer: Claire Ollivain is a member of USyd Grassroots.

Activists march to protect Willow Grove on May Day

Oliver Pether reports.

A coalition of trade unionists, activist groups and students have used this year's May Day to protest against the dismantling of Willow Grove, an 19th century heritage building in Parramatta. Willow Grove is set to be relocated in favour of the construction of a second Powerhouse museum.

May Day, or International Workers Day, is a rally held annually to support workers and express solidarity to the labour movement. Though the event normally takes place in the city, this year it was held in Parramatta for the first time in its history. The move, proposed by the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), aimed to express support for a green ban on Willow Grove. A green ban is a form of strike action where members of a trade-union refuse to work on a project because of environmental or heritage concerns.

Student activists used the occasion to express support for the CFMEU's green ban and called on similar types of action to be used for other causes. Speeches were made by Tim Livingstone of the Australian Student Environment Network

(ASEN), Cooper Forsyth of the USyd Enviro Collective and Charlie Murphy of Pride in Protest (PiP). Livingstone spoke about the power of green bans to force governments into changing course, and how this collective strike action should be used to combat climate change.

The crowd of around 3000 protestors then marched from Prince Alfred Square to Willow Grove, and assembled in front of the building for speeches. Behind them, Willow Grove was hidden from view by a four-metre wall erected by the State Government, dubbed "The Great Wall of Gladys" by activist Suzette Meade. In response, protestors had written anti-government messages on the wall in chalk, such as "What Are You Hiding Gladys?" and "We Have a Powerhouse Museum. This is a Development Land Grab."

Prominent union figure and State Secretary of the construction division of the CFMEU Darren Greenfield paid homage to the late activist Jack Munday and vowed to protect Willow Grove till the end. Other speakers included representatives of the Maritime Union of Australia, the Electrical Trades Union, the Public Service

Association (PSA) and Indigenous youth organisation Gamilaraay Next Generation.

One of the final speeches was made by local activist Suzette Meade and Parramatta City councillor Donna Davis, two women at the forefront of the Save Willow Grove campaign. Meade expressed confidence in her campaign's ability to stop Willow Grove's removal, and declared: "The Government wants to destroy our history,

we're not going to let them do that."

Suzette Meade and the North Parramatta Residents Action Group have recently taken the State Government to the Land and Environment Court. They are arguing that the Government's planning processes failed to properly analyse alternate sites for the new museum. The Government has indicated it has no intention of backing down.



Photography by Aman Kapoor

USU Board Meeting: Clubs, Catholics, and Consent

Marlow Hurst walks us through the three C's.

The USU Board met for their monthly meeting yesterday in the ever-illustrious Cullen room.

Catholic Society response

The meeting began with open question time where USU President Irene Ma responded to a question regarding the Catholic Society's Life Week activities and their ableist poll on Eastern Avenue. Student media received a statement from the USU following the meeting.

The Clubs & Societies (C&S) team was first alerted to the event on the afternoon of Monday April 26. It was determined that the event had not been organised or approved by the USU or C&S.

"USU staff questioned the use of club collateral and branding across the event, explaining that it looked very much like it was in fact a Catholic Society event," said Andrew Mills in a

statement.

Individuals operating the stall explained to USU staff that the event had been organised by the USyd Chaplaincy through the University.

Following this, the USU wrote to the Catholic Society requesting an internal investigation into why the event used CathSoc signage and branding and was promoted on their social media channels. USU management has invited the Catholic Society executive to meet and discuss the issue further.

President Irene Ma stated that the C&S Committee has called for an urgent meeting to discuss the matter and decide how to proceed further.

Consent Week

After talks with the Women's Collective, the USU has decided that the proposed Consent Week will be held in Semester 2 Week 2, saying that Enviro Week and the upcoming elections occupy much of Semester 1's remaining calendar.

While in previous years it has been referred to as "Radical Sex and Consent Week", the USU has exclusively referred to the event as "Consent Week" in all their discussions. When contacted for comment, SRC Women's Officer Kimmy Dibben said that the Collective had noted this new language and had informed USU President Irene Ma that they will not participate if the name remains as is.

"We believe the conversation is as much about positive conversations around sex as it is about consent and sexual violence prevention," Dibben told *Honi*.

Dibben also refuted the reasoning for the delay to Semester 2. "The main reason for the push was venues not allowing us or even getting back to us," said Dibben, noting that the Collective

had asked the USU for assistance in securing Eastern Avenue but were rebuffed.

The name and date were not the only point of contention though, with Dibben saying that while past Radical Sex and Consent Weeks have received between \$2-3k in contributions from the USU, the Board only planned to allocate \$500 to the event.

When asked for comment, Ma denied that the USU refused the Collective assistance and reaffirmed that the event did not go ahead in Semester 1 because of a short turnaround.

"We agreed that when we were presented a solidified plan we would happily assist in facilitating it."

She went on to say that the \$500 funding figure was floated at their initial meeting and that as an unbudgeted event, it would be financed from Wellness Week's budget.

Manning...re-activated?

CEO Andrew Mills declared the 'Return to Manning' party a "great success", saying that with over 450 students attending the event throughout the evening and only a \$700 deficit, Manning has well and truly been activated. Given this success, the CEO expressed an interest in running further events throughout the year, with colleges and other clubs in talks about collaborations.

And now to Finance

Referring to the first quarter, CEO Andrew Mills said that the USU was tracking well, with the student union only running at a \$25,000 loss with revenues of \$182,000. Sponsorship, ACCESS rewards, and Host Co. remain underperforming, with all three divisions missing their forecasts.

On the brighter side, USU outlets, particularly food and beverage, are overperforming by 2-3 times their projected revenue.

On the topic of ACCESS rewards though, Mills expressed an interest in analysing the purchasing data of ACCESS rewards members to identify trends and outcomes. He then indicated that said data would be de-identified if this were to occur.

Semester Two Welcome Day (s)

Mills indicated that C&S feedback has led to the USU expanding Semester 2 welcome day by an extra day or two. Club executives expressed that such a short window of time would not be sufficient for promotion or recruitment.

Miscellaneous notes

Board Director Ben Hines was the only one to open his bottled Santa Vittoria. When questioned after the meeting, fellow director Prudence Wilkins-Wheat said that while she usually would drink hers, the water provided at yesterday's meeting was sparkling, not still.

Board Director Cady Brown had not one, but TWO laptops open. *Honi* is uncertain why she needed such raw computing power.

President Irene Ma indicated that her report contained a "story", but the board accepted the report as having been read. We'll have to wait till 2023 for the release!

The Board is seeing Queer Revue tonight, with Ma saying that she is "very excited".

The meeting went in camera at 1:29pm. *Honi* was not allowed to be in shot.

Campaign Promises: on a shuttle bus to nowhere

Marlow Hurst unpacks the broken promises.

USU Board elections are a lot like Christmas: they happen but once a year and a lot of promises are made. But instead of promising the student body a new bike and a rabbit named Flopsy, candidates promise the absolute world. Every year it's the same refrain:

"I'm gonna fix revues, I'm gonna fix clubs, there'll be Coke in the bubblers and Wentworth WILL be renovated!"

But these, like most electoral promises, don't always come true. Me and my crack team have combed through all 199 USU election promises from the 2019 and 2020 board campaigns, and the findings will shock you!

After consulting with a number of board directors, verifying fulfillment with an independent group, and using our own institutional knowledge, the results are in. Of the 199 promises made between 2019 and 2020 – 32% were fulfilled and 68% were not.

As figures go, they're not the best, but they include both ongoing

and its understandable that the Board hasn't been quite as productive as it might have been at a different time. Nevertheless, the student body can, and must, expect better from our USU Board. Receiving more than double the SSAF contributions that the SRC, the USU is the best funded student-run organization on campus. What's more, it's important that the value of an electoral promise is not forgotten. If only 32% of all the promises made between 2019 and now have been fulfilled, then what is the value of a promise? Not a whole lot. But the diagnosis for this problem can't be boiled down to lazy, spiteful, or malicious board directors. There's a whole range of issues that inform this electoral malaise, and that's what I'm here to find out!

What are they promising?

Using the magic of pie charts, I've outlined the major categories of promises. Sitting at the top, naturally, is Clubs & Societies. Following them are the environment, food, culture, international students, revues, and a whole raft of other policy areas. But not all promises are made equally. Throughout my analysis, I noted that the specific language of a promise was just as important as the promise itself. A common pledge between candidates was to revise club funding. This was a promise that all of them managed to fulfil, because while many would say that funding was revised for the worse, it was certainly revised. A similar situation existed with transparency, while many candidates promised to conduct a "transparency review," many didn't promise to actually implement the findings of that review. Then there are some perennially impossible promises that are trotted out every year. Without fail, the idea of a campus shuttle bus makes an appearance in many of the candidate's policy rosters, as it has done for many years. Be that from one end of the campus to the other, or from campus to campus, you best believe that a shuttle bus has played a starring role in the past decade of USU electoral politics. But that's an example of something both specific AND genuinely never happening. Candidates go broad AND impossible as well. Whether it be 'fixing' revues or 'fixing' clubs or 'fixing' the environment. Either way, candidates promise the moon and deliver...not quite the stars, but maybe the clouds?

Vagaries

A common theme throughout this analysis was the use of passive language to communicate policy promises. If a candidate says they will "advocate", "campaign", "promote", or

"support" a certain policy goal rather than using active verbs, candidates can hedge their bets. Instead of saying that they'll "Reduce the cost of food on campus", candidates can say that they'll "Push for the USU to investigate reducing the cost of food on campus."

In many ways, these linguistic gymnastics are understandable. Especially for ambitious or progressive policy platforms, that might be all a candidate could possibly ever do. What's more, the policy itself might not even be within the purview of the USU.

The purview of the USU

Many promises made, and broken by, candidates weren't even possible to begin with. Throughout my discussions with board directors, there's been a consistent theme: many of the pledges aren't even within the domain of the USU. PNR doesn't really have anything to do with the USU, yet everyone loves to promise to do something about it.

What's next?

The upcoming election is unique. With such a small pool of factional left candidates, the board could look very different in Semester 2. With that in mind, there are a number of policy promises outstanding that would do a lot to improve the USU.

1. Transparency: Transparency is one of the USU's greatest flaws, with perceptions of the student union as being mired by opacity and corporate quibbling. A transparency review was commissioned in August last year, the results of which have yet to be fully accepted. Candidates should make actionable promises regarding the transparency of the USU and follow them through. Some simple things that would make the USU more transparent are the regular uploading of board meeting minutes (we're still on December right now),



Benny Shen

the uploading of executive reports and motions to the website, the scheduling of a second round of questions before the board moves *in camera*, and a committed reduction to in-camera time.

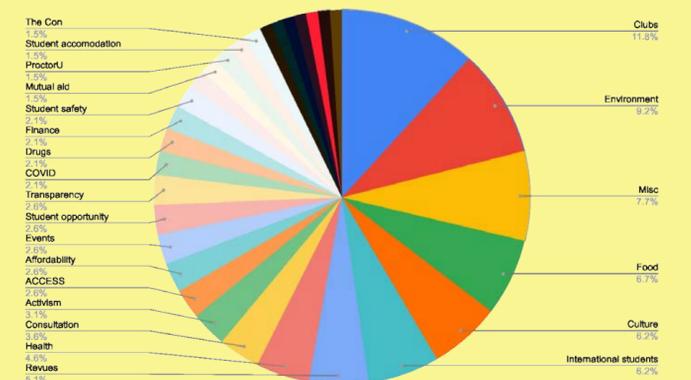
2. Material and actionable promises: One of *Honi's* favourite promises was Ruby Lotz's infamous \$6 garlic and cheese pizza. Not because we especially love garlic and cheese pizza, but because it's highly achievable, actionable from the perspective of a board director, and something people will notice. That's not to say board candidates with big picture promises shouldn't be considered, but it's important to promise something that you know can happen for sure.

3. Language: If you're gonna promise something, promise it using active language! If you can't do that, then it's probably not in the purview of the board or a board director. So ditch the waffle and promise something which you can "do", "make", or "increase".

And finally, can someone please get us a shuttle bus!

Disclaimer: the author of this article knows absolutely nothing about being a candidate.

Art by Olivia Allanson



USU Campaign promises by category (2019-2020)

Why the Left shouldn't run for the USU

Madeleine Clark is not on board.

Twice every year Eastern Avenue is littered with A-frames and people leafleting in coloured t-shirts. It's for two different elections – one for people to be elected to the Students' Representative Council and one for the University Sydney Union (USU).

Some people on the left will say that we should run in both. Those people would be wrong. Fundamentally, the USU is a corporation and the best thing left-wing people can do is boycott it.

To justify participating in the USU elections, left-wing tickets have to argue that 1) the USU is a union and 2) by being elected to its board they can push it to do left-wing things.

So to address these arguments:

The USU is not a union.

Unions are designed to protect workers' interests and fight against the bosses. Or, in the case of student unions like the SRC, they are designed to help students out,

getting funding to organise on campus and fight for students' rights.

Does the USU do this?

Absolutely not. The USU receives millions of our SSAF money (over \$5.1m to be precise), which is vastly more than the \$1.9m the SRC receives. Not to mention the revenue they get from ACCESS sign ups, charging the SRC and clubs for venue bookings and the profits of their many food outlets. They are a multi-million dollar institution and they make business decisions.

Last year, in the face of COVID and classes moving online, they closed down their outlets and forced through a pay cut of 40% for workers, despite being eligible for JobKeeper. Much like the University at large, recently it was announced that they have an operating surplus of \$55,000, proving their cuts to be completely unnecessary.

This is the behaviour of a for-profit corporation and not a union.

Some left-wing people respond to this by saying 'of course it is a corporation but surely by getting elected we will have the power to at least make some left-wing impact?' This is also untrue.

The elections to the USU are for its board, but the main decision-making body is corporate management. As a single board member you do not have power. The most you can do is vote against anti-worker motions and disclose classified information. For the left-wing candidates who have been elected in recent history making this bold move is deemed too risky. And with good reason – Tom Raue, the last Grassroots member who attempted to disclose classified information, was taken to court by the USU and slapped with \$50,000 of legal fees.

By being elected to this board all you are doing is providing the USU with left-wing cover. They need

credibility so that when they do something egregious they are not in the firing line and are instead protected by the people who should be the ones protesting against them.

The only principled thing to do is to boycott USU elections and turn our energies to real unions and activism.



Ruby Lotz

Op-ed: Enhancing learning outcomes through a shorter semester

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) **Pip Pattison** makes the case for a 12 week semester.

Last year, as a result of the pandemic, we trialled a 17-week academic calendar during Semester 2 (with 12 weeks of scheduled classes).

The trial was successful, despite the challenges created by COVID-19: both student satisfaction of units and student performance were positive and higher than the year before.

It showed our students are able to have an effective learning experience and achieve good academic outcomes over a 12-contact week semester. This is not surprising, given it is already the more common semester structure at other Australian universities.

We're now asking the Academic Board to consider making this change permanent from 2023 and to adopt additional changes that respond directly to extensive student and staff feedback on the proposal.

Feedback on improved orientation, welcome and preparation for units of study was very positive. This aligns with our ongoing efforts to improve students' experience of transition to

the University. We therefore propose to make this change irrespective of semester length, as we also work to make better use of online resources, offer interactive face-to-face learning experiences, provide better in-time academic support through the new Learning Hub, ensure more even workloads across the semester and avoid excessive assessment. These approaches best support the success of all students.

We don't expect any substantial impact on the volume of student work or course content, but what is on offer is more opportunity for intensive teaching between semesters for those who want it. The format also supports the distinctive experiential forms of learning we have here at Sydney – such as internships, placements and projects, multidisciplinary learning, and learning experiences involving travel and cross-university collaboration – as well as any other commitments students might have.

Flexibility for the professional

disciplines with unique start and finish dates for semesters will continue to be provided.

The proposal also commits to avoiding any substantial workload implications for staff.

For academic staff, the recommended semester model provides more time for activities that normally take place between semesters. It allows all staff to complete the array of academic and administrative requirements between the main semesters including finalising results and enrolments.

We're also proposing to offer up to three hours of relevant paid professional learning for any impacted casual academic staff members, supporting them to work towards Associate Fellowship with AdvanceHE.

I want to be clear. This proposal is not about cost cutting nor about a move to a trimester model. It's about providing a consistent and high-quality offer for all our students and

making the most of time on and off campus. There are no other major changes to the calendar on the table.

Academic Board will choose between two options: the proposed model with 12 weeks of scheduled classes; and the current model with 13 weeks of scheduled classes and some minor changes that respond directly to student feedback. These latter changes are effective orientation and an integrative final week, good teaching practices that are already incorporated into most units. We are also proposing greater flexibility for students to manage assignment and exam preparation.

Students will soon be invited to take part in a survey of their interest in intensive offerings, and I'm looking forward to receiving your feedback so we can ensure we're providing the best student experience possible.

Pip Pattison is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) at the University of Sydney.

Op-ed: The dangers of a 12 week semester

SRC President **Swapnik Sanagavarapu** makes the case against a slashed semester.

On Tuesday, the 4th of May, the Academic Board will vote on the Academic Calendar for 2022-2026. The Board will have to choose between either a 12 week semester, or a substantially altered 13 week semester, in which the 13th week has no new content or substantive teaching. There's nothing new about this proposal. It's been defeated twice before at the Academic Board (in 2017 and again in 2020), and universities

like ANU have only been recent adopters. But when it comes to 12 week semesters, one thing is clear: it's a bad idea.

It's hard to be a student in 2021. Students these days work long hours in casualised jobs to support themselves. Many students face structural barriers that prevent them from fully participating in university such as being Indigenous, being first in family, being working class or having a disability. Since the passage of the Job-ready Graduates Bill in 2020, students are also paying higher fees and can be summarily kicked off their Commonwealth Supported Place if they don't pass 50% of their units in a given year. To top off all of this, students just don't have much time or energy to dedicate exclusively to their study.

All of these problems are simply going to be made worse by a shorter semester. A shorter semester means that students have less time to dedicate to their studies. In many disciplines, it would be totally unsound to reduce the amount of content or assessment, which means that students will need to do the same amount of work in less time. This is going to greatly affect students' mental health, worsen their stress levels and increase the likelihood of them failing their units. The proposal argues that a 12 week semester would remove the "light introductory course

guidance weeks", but it is these weeks that are essential for students to get acquainted with their study. An extra week in the semester also helps students catch up with missed work, which is essential in particularly demanding courses and disciplines. With a shorter semester, students will also be paying more money for less time, an outcome that is especially problematic for full-fee paying international students.

12 week semesters are also bad news for academic staff. Staff are going to see more intense workloads if this proposal passes. More assessments and more content are going to be crammed into less time, which means more teaching, more marking and less time to prepare for classes. If staff want to reduce their workload, they're going to have to reduce the content they teach, or reduce the amount of assessment. In many courses, this is simply untenable. Similarly for casual staff, one less week of semester means one less week of teaching income and a similar increase in workload.

All of these concerns have been empirically verified. In a recent survey carried out by the SRC, 93% of undergraduate students preferred 13 week semesters to 12 week semesters. Similar results were reflected in a survey carried out by SUPRA. Students expressed that a reduction of the semester length would hurt them in a number of ways. Many students were

concerned about workload, increasing fees and greater stress.

The proposal for 12 week semesters offers few tangible benefits. The proposal claims to allow for greater intensive teaching in the summer and winter breaks. However, there is no reason why increasing the number of intensives cannot happen in the current semester structure. For every student who benefits from increased intensives, there are also many more who are totally ambivalent to them.

Increased intensives also make life much more difficult for professional staff. As previously argued by Grant Wheeler from the CPSU, some intensives start in January, forcing the Student Centre to expedite results processes from the preceding semester. This is a serious problem for international students, who may face visa problems if they cannot enrol in intensives on time and meet their mandatory study requirements. This increased stress is borne by staff in the Student Centre.

It's not worth sacrificing our semesters in the name of increased intensives. On the 4th of May, I'm going to vote in favour of maintaining a 13 week semester. I encourage all other members of the Academic Board to do the same.

Swapnik Sanagavarapu is the President of the University of Sydney's Student Representative Council.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Units: Who do they empower?

Sarah Jasem critiques how the university teaches us about Indigenous health.

Cultural safety, cultural competence, higher morbidity and mortality rates, lower life expectancy, closing the gap.

These are the words which buzz around the room of the NURS6033 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health unit, a mandatory final year nursing class.

Throughout my nursing degree, I have heard healthcare students continually express that issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health are often taught tokenistically – that although they are aware of what cultural competency is, defined by The University of Sydney as “the ability to participate ethically and effectively in personal and intercultural settings and... collaborate across cultural boundaries,” students feel confused and discouraged to implement it. They feel that they will fail before they have a chance to practice these concepts, due to an inadequate education that is stiffened and enshrined by the exclusive sandstone University environment.

The University is an institution which is failing to include First Nations people. Only 360 students in 2019, out of over 60,000, identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in 2019, and only

1.02% of the staff across 15 faculties. In fact, The University of Sydney's 2019 Annual Report showed a decrease of 8% in students who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders compared to the year before.

In all my classes, First Nations people have been discussed at length, but there has not been representation of even one student in the room to advocate for themselves. Amongst students within this exclusionary environment, despite the ‘best’ efforts of tutors, there is likely some guilt, shame, and possibly bewilderment as a result of this lack of genuine consultation.

Indigenous health topics at USyd are taught through a narrative of lack and disadvantage – our perceptions of First Nations people are shaped to highlight lower life expectancy, chronic illnesses, and exclusion under oppressive government policies. Meanwhile, First Nations' different ways of healthcare, meanings of wellness, mental health and health practices are brushed over. Students are thus only taught how to be culturally competent if First Nations people interact with the NSW healthcare system, a system which has and continues to neglect First Nations people, and told to be culturally

competent whilst not affording weight to First Nations cultures, and ways of practicing and maintaining health, wellness and mental health which is not dependent on the Australian healthcare system. The result is an uncomfortable settling of dust that no one is equipped to wipe off. In the case of university health subjects, the emphasis on First Nations peoples' illness, and how healthcare professionals are only taught to “be culturally competent” within the hospital environment, relegates First Nations people not only to the sick role with a lack of agency, but as only valid through interaction with dominant institutions which have been, and continue to be, insensitive to First Nations cultures. The unit seems to be a tacked-on afterthought rather than something which is truly incorporated into every aspect of ways of understanding health. Students have also criticised the First Nations healthcare subjects as generalistic and uninformed, with some students even criticising staff for using prejudicial language, and perpetuating colonial narratives and racism, such as by insinuating that the Aboriginal Medical Service is based off the public health model, rather than pre dating it.

Whilst it should not fall upon any person to have to represent an entire population with a diversity of ways of being, knowing, and practicing cultures, the lack of First Nations people in the room is reminiscent of ‘Closing the Gap’ government policies, which have also denied leadership to Indigenous communities. This denial of participation in decisions meant to foster autonomy has contrastingly created policies whose objectives are only equitable for First Nations people found to be participating within socio-cultural standards set by white Australian, ‘default’ culture.

Indigenous health subjects at University unfortunately remain insular and are held to no accountability other than the complaints of a few non-First Nations students. Even this article is struggling to go beyond the breadths of there being something unsettling, deeply and institutionally skewed. It begs the question of who these units are meant to empower, and whether they serve any purpose other than a badge of lip service by the institutions who run it.

Thank you, Violet

Anonymous gives a dedication to an old friend.

CW: Mentions of suicide and queerphobia

It was a bustling night in Pattaya. The scent of coconut flesh and grill smoke clouded the twilight that was unfurling inside. Arriving at a glittering theatre dressed in bright, neon fuchsia, our tour attendant invited everyone inside to see the drag show.

The invitation set off an insidious response in my seven-year-old self. On the pavement outside, I protested and screamed hateful things about the drag queens. The conspiracy in my head was that they were being forced to perform against their will for the sake of Pattaya's mafia underbelly. I thought I would go to hell just by being in their presence.

Eventually, I relented and went to see the show. Far from demonic flames and brimstone, the drag queens were nothing of the preposterous sinners I had imagined.

Fifteen years later, that same boy came out. Cries of concern and disgust followed as my parents prayed, in the literal sense, the gay away.

“If you come out to your grandma, she'll pass away,” my dad warned.

Such remarks turned out to be nothing more than unwarranted hysteria – a few years later, my grandma asked: “I don't see you having a girlfriend, are you gay?”

“Yes,” I calmly replied.

“I've known for a long time but didn't want your dad to get stressed!” she exclaimed. Hysteria has a curious way of entangling us, confounding allies, the undecided, and myself alike.

The ensuing years were characterised by a permanent paling of anti-queer anxiety. I relished the day I could go overseas and be surrounded by queer-affirming friends, to go to a school where

creatives & theatre dominated all else (think La Cage aux Folles & Marxist interpretations of Les Misérables).

I would eventually study a Theology degree at Wallace University,* inspired by my own faith and philosophical curiosities. There, I became involved in several student organisations, including an LGBTQ+ Forum. where I met Violet,** one of the convenors.

Violet is quite possibly one of the most passionate queer advocates I know, drawing from her own experiences as a trans woman. Her quiet rectitude and

with timeworn cat statues. Memories and thoughts tangled in contradictions flashed through.

I sent a series of parting texts to my friends and flatmates, including Violet. It was them that lifted me away from the precipice to safety. After a police escort and hospital discharge, a message from Violet came through:

“I'll try and cancel my shift tomorrow and I see if I can come see you.”

Waking up at 6am the next morning, I rushed downstairs and there Violet was, standing just outside my flat with a box of



caring personality is capable of inspiring all in her stead.

It was also during these years that I experienced a mental downward spiral, precipitated by constant microaggressions from weekly Skype family catch-ups alongside slipping grades.

Then, it culminated. A series of heated arguments ensued a few days after my birthday. Feeling overwhelmed, I left for the city centre and stared down the granite columns of a bridge, adorned

homemade chocolate cupcakes. A wave of warmth took over as I hugged her. It must have been a solid minute. For hours upon hours, she gave consolation, lent an ear to my confusion, and above all, unconditional love.

Violet was an extraordinary hero in those fleeting fateful days. The advice, unconditional understanding, and soulful empathy she offered has touched me ever since. She too, has had her own battles.

Returning home, I slowly got my

parents to accept my queer identity, one long conversation after another. Though I may not be able to fulfill their white-picket fenced dreams of a biological grandchild, it is important that acknowledge queer families – and lives – are not inferior to their straight counterparts.

Over time, my parents have become some of my strongest supporters. Perhaps they were simply concerned that I would be unhappy. But while angst and precarity may be parcels of postmodern queer life, they are separate from queer happiness.

Why then, am I telling this story?

It is because, as overstated this may be, hope does exist. No matter how arduous the circumstances, reach out, speak to someone, a trusted friend. Get involved in queer circles and find a home in your community.

It is also because I wish to share Violet's courage. Not merely as a person but as a trans hero. Without her, I may not be here to write this piece. Our queer family is indivisible from trans progress. No matter what, trans rights must never be abstracted and reduced to inhumane, armchair philosophical musings. It is our duty to lift the spirits of trans youth, as the earliest trans pioneers have done to us.

I am incredibly grateful for spaces such as QuAC (Queer Action Collective) and SHADES at this campus. I am always inspired by the rousing speeches against figures such as Mark Latham.

Not least, because their activism gave me that impetus to tell this story.

Not least, because these voices, through the past decade, motivated that little, frightened boy in Pattaya out of his closet.

*, ** = Names and identities have been changed to protect the anonymity of the author.



Milkshakes won't end rape: Government consent education fails survivors once again

Kimberley Dibben and Keira Fairley demand better sex and consent education.

Last week, after two years of planning and preparation, the Liberal government released The Good Society website with 350 videos and many written resources for school teachers to provide sex and consent education to school children from kindergarten to Year 12. These resources are the fruition of the two-year-long, \$3.7 million Respect Matters campaign. To say they are disappointing is an understatement. The University of Sydney Women's Collective demands better sex and consent education than the shambles released by the Liberal government this week.

Several main videos have fallen under public scrutiny, including three which aimed to cover the topics of consent, STI prevention, and sexual violence. Notably, no explicit mention of these terms was to be heard. Instead, these videos were heavily censored, using confusing examples and silly euphemisms that failed to clearly explain the topics at hand and trivialised sexual violence. Consent was 'explained' through milkshakes, and sexual assault was compared to tacos. Trivialising and censoring these conversations only further stigmatises sexual violence and survivors.

We are informed and experienced activists in the anti-sexual violence campaign. If we ourselves struggle to decode these videos on sharks, milkshakes, and tacos, then how are these messages supposed to reach the school children they are aimed at?

Consent is not complicated, but simple. These videos specifically are aimed at late teenagers who are largely already having sex. Despite this, explicit mentions of sex are sidelined and skirted around until the final module of the Year 10-12 content, in which it is only covered in two of the eight topics. Teenagers don't need confusing

messages or misinformation on sex, as exemplified in these videos. Rather, they need proper, thorough sex and consent education from experienced educators. Clouding conversations on sex and consent does not teach respectful relationships nor prevent sexual violence. The rape crisis that universities, workplaces, and — as we have seen over these past few weeks — Parliament face will not be curbed without direct, holistic conversations in schools that treat young people like real people.

As it stands, each module within the Year 10-12 program opens with a condescending voice over-explaining topics in an overly simplified and trivialised manner, talking down to teenagers who already have a vast array of lived experience in sex and relationships. This does little to expand on the current experience of exceptionally limited sex education within NSW public schools, which places a detrimentally low emphasis on sex itself. The government seems not to trust teenagers enough to incorporate sex and consent education clearly and concisely in their lives. These videos harmfully assume not only that teenagers don't engage in sex, but that they don't know, or aren't themselves, survivors.

The depictions of relationships within this material are deeply anchored within cisnormativity and heteronormativity, and actively abstain from any representation of gender nonconformity or queerness, even within their designated module on gender. This comes as no surprise, but of great concern within the present context of Mark Latham's Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill which attacks and silences transgender children and educators within schools. The Good Society is part of the newest attempt to erase and

other trans and queer youth.

When WoCo spoke with Georgia Carr, one of USyd's own previous Sexual Harassment Officers, who is currently studying her PhD in sex education. Carr said that expert-led information on sex and consent already exists:

"The problem with getting comprehensive sex education into every school isn't a lack of teaching materials, it's that our teachers need time, training and trust: They need time to make sure they're up to date on any changes (e.g. changes to consent laws, or the introduction of The Australian Curriculum in recent years) and time to familiarise themselves with new material. They need training so that they feel knowledgeable and confident about their topic. And they need trust because they fear community and media backlash - we only have to look back to 2016 and the political firestorm around Safe Schools to see why one teachers might be afraid to talk about issues of sex and sexuality in schools."

Where the money spent on The Good Society should have gone is towards supporting teachers. Teachers in this country are overworked, underpaid, and constantly criticised. Like Georgia says, the moral panic of the Safe Schools program and the Religious Discrimination Bill proves how heavily scrutinised teachers are, and shows that right-wing ideology is valued and upheld over children's safety and learning in schools. It is passionate teachers that are supported, well-resourced, and given autonomy that ensure effective sex education; not drawn out metaphors about milkshakes.

The stifling of research-backed, holistic sex education from experienced educators reminds us of our own university management which defunded USyd's own Radical Sex and Consent Week, and are now dragging their feet

as WoCo tries to bring this essential education back. This is the same university which has been proven time and time again to have a rape epidemic by reports such as The Red Zone Report. Another survey being conducted right now is again researching its severity. Sex education is the most effective way to prevent sexual violence; so why won't USyd nor the Liberal government take it seriously?

Founder of End Rape On Campus Australia Sharna Bremner has openly criticised The Good Society website and videos for once again failing to support survivors:

"This government has form in this area. After the Australian Human Rights Commission's report into sexual violence at universities in 2017, they launched a review that relied on unis self-reporting what they were doing in response to the report, but they backed away from an expert-led taskforce that would have actually ensured unis were taking concrete action to make campuses safer.

The last few months seems to have been a wake up call for some people about how the Federal Government views sexual violence, but they walked away from student survivors two and half years ago. It shouldn't be surprising to anyone that they'd completely miss the mark when it comes to educating young people about consent and relationships."

Whilst two of the videos of concern have been taken down, the rest of The Good Society program needs major re-working. Experienced people in sex education and sexual violence prevention have been excluded and it absolutely shows. Nothing less than expert-informed, research-backed sex and consent education will help stop the rampant sexual violence that our universities and workplaces face.

Being diagnosed with endometriosis

Ellie Stephenson reflects on her gendered experiences of healthcare.

At the beginning of 2021, I am prescribed an IUD to manage my diabolical period pain. I opt to get it inserted at my GP, with minimal pain relief. I am brave, I decide. I'm stoic. I've endured enough pain and enough contraception that I have nothing to worry about.

It turns out this is a mistake — they don't even get the Mirena box open, because as soon as they touch my cervix, I am teary. No amount of discipline or stoicism can break through the blind pain which crumches me up and knocks the air out of me. I can't even stop my thigh from shaking.

I get a referral to an OB-GYN. "We have better equipment", he tells me, "but let me know if the pain is too much". It is too much. Once again my legs shake helplessly on the stirrups and my abdomen is wracked with contractions. The IUD remains in its box. I sniffle, feeling pathetic.

The OB-GYN sits me down. "Ellie," he says solemnly, "I think you have endometriosis. Your cervix is at an angle and your uterus is retroverted. I think it's because the endometriosis has created scar tissue, which has pushed the cervix around. Are your periods bad?"

I sob, all nine years of menstrual torture running through my head: the first cramps hitting in the summer between years six and seven, the missed days of school and work, the brain fog, the ineffectual Panadol and Nurofens, the series of unhelpful hormonal contraceptives.

I get home and I sob more. Partly because of the excruciating pain of having my cervix prodded. Partly because of the indignity of sitting, legs open and shaking, with the slimy speculum inside me. But mostly because I have endured 9 years of chronic pain now and all it took to work out what was wrong was a specialist taking a look at my cervix. I'm furious.

The fury grows as I read the pamphlets on endometriosis the doctor has given me. The symptoms line up: the period pain, of course, but also the nausea, the faintness, the diarrhoea, the aches in my lower back and upper thighs, the stabbing pain in my ovaries when I ovulate.

When I asked my doctor about endometriosis, aged 15 or so, she told me not to worry — it was just primary dysmenorrhea, regular old period pain. Apparently, menstruation had just

arrived to me as a cursed package deal with a whole lot of suffering thrown in.

I book a laparoscopy. The surgery involves probing around your abdomen via a keyhole incision in the navel. If they find endometriosis, they excise it.

The night before the laparoscopy, I am subdued. The idea of surgery is scary, but the question that I really can't get out of my head is: what if they don't find endometriosis? What if I've paid thousands of dollars for a surgery which doesn't find anything? What if I've been exaggerating my pain the whole time?

I know, rationally, that these questions are nonsense. A laparoscopy is a diagnostic procedure, I remind myself, and endometriosis rarely shows up on ultrasounds. A laparoscopy is the only real way to be sure. But all the same, years of being told that the pain is normal have got to me; I can't help feeling like maybe I am just overreacting, like maybe it's all in my head.

I have to arrive at the hospital at 5:30am. I change into the hospital gown and do a pregnancy test. They wheel me into the operating theatre. The anaesthetist checks my name, date of birth, and whether I have any allergies. My consciousness lapses, and I wake up several hours later to the news that I was a massive pain to intubate, and that I have endometriosis. I feel relieved, sleepy, and in pain.

In the fortnight it is taking me to recover from the surgery, in between opioid-addled dreams, I mull over the experience.

My prevailing emotion is shock. The whole process is so surreal. To go from years of unexplained chronic pain, to a diagnosis, to treatment in a matter of weeks is absurd. I grapple with what it will be like once the surgical scars heal. I'm scared: Now that less of my brain will be wasted on coping with pain, I worry I'll be disappointed in myself, that I won't be that much more functional or productive. To have spent so much time withstanding pain, and now to suffer less, is uncanny.

I am also intensely conscious of my privilege in having had a laparoscopy at all. Accessing specialists, getting tests and consultations, paying for the anaesthetist and the hospital and the surgeon are all immensely expensive. There is really no way I could have afforded it without help from my

The part of my experience which does not sit easily with popular narratives about 'women's health' is that the gender of my doctors was totally irrelevant to the quality of the treatment I received.



Art by Ellie Stephenson

parents and if I had been living out of home. Even beyond the upfront cost, spending two weeks off from university and work is a sizable expense in time, study and lost income.

The expense of the surgery is complicated by my lingering sense of its frivolity. Although it has now been proved undoubtedly necessary, nearly a decade of doctors downplaying my pain has its impacts.

As I think through my experiences with doctors, The overwhelming observation is the unseriousness with which my doctors approached my pain. Despite its significant effects on my life, they had no interest in determining its source: their treatments were either wholly ineffective or required me to skip my periods indefinitely. At no point was the pain treated like a serious, chronic issue which was negatively affecting my quality of life. This is regrettable because the pain was nowhere near normal — in the months before the laparoscopy, I was nearly always in some form of pain, a twinging near my ovaries or a cramping in my lower back simply a fixture of my body.

The part of my experience which does not sit easily with popular narratives about 'women's health' is that the gender of my doctors was totally irrelevant to the quality of the treatment I received. An assortment of women GPs ignored my symptoms and it was a male OB-GYN who finally diagnosed me. Despite what representation politics would have me believe, having a doctor who looked like me or had the same organs as me was immaterial. I can't help but be pessimistic about the prospects of tokenism (at worst) or representation (at best) for improving medical care for non cis men.

In my pessimism, I remember all of the appointments where I would prepare questions in my head beforehand, telling myself I would get answers at last. When the time came to actually ask the questions, the doctors would simply brush them off. They'd tell me I didn't have anything to worry about and we simply needed to try another medication. When I asked apologetically whether it might be worth at least getting an ultrasound, I felt like a nuisance. A crazy, hypochondriac nuisance. When things went wrong, like when my Implanon stopped working, I'd wait months before returning to the doctor, preferring to wait and hope instead of bothering them again.

It's clear to me that the barriers to proper healthcare are systematic ones. Most obviously, the lack of investment in research and the unwillingness to seriously address chronic pain mean that primary health carers lack the requisite knowledge to help their patients. Underpinning this, the power imbalances between doctors and patients make it difficult for people with pain, illness and disabilities to be acknowledged. This is largely not an individual fault (although individual doctors must do better) but shapes the way that patients are viewed and whether we are listened to.

The feeling that you are overreacting, the fear that you are a hypochondriac, the sense that you're being annoying by persisting in seeking care: these are the symptoms of a medical system which tells us we cannot trust our bodies and we must simply tolerate debilitating pain. At the nexus of an underfunded and inaccessible health system, ingrained ableism, and flimsy investment in women's health, getting reproductive healthcare is a struggle.

Op-ed: More transparency needed around Uni's audit into 'foreign interference'

Dr David Brophy is a Senior Lecturer in Modern Chinese History.

There's a tension in the idea of the modern university, between the essentially borderless nature of knowledge production, and the rival claim that universities should serve the "national interest". This is a view that requires universities to conform to the policy priorities — including foreign policy priorities — of politicians. Taken to its logical conclusion, it requires universities to have friends and enemies.

There's been a tug of war going on here since the Middle Ages, and universities have been losing it of late.

Having long been encouraged to internationalise and seek alternative sources of funding to make up for government cuts, universities have become deeply engaged with China in the last two decades. They're now bearing the brunt of a political climate that casts suspicion on such ties.

There has been grumbling from the sector about this: not all administrators are happy with the encroachment of Australia's security agencies into university affairs. Nevertheless, they are falling into line to demonstrate their willing compliance with the new discourse of foreign interference "risks".

This was highlighted recently in reports that the University of Sydney hired private consultant John Garnaut to conduct an 'audit' of the University's engagement with China.

While a journalist, Garnaut was responsible for such sensational stories as "Chinese Spies at Sydney University" in 2014. As prime ministerial advisor in 2017 he influenced Malcolm Turnbull's turn towards confrontation with China, the centrepiece of which was a suite of new security laws. He is now a senior fellow at the Australian Strategic Policy

Institute (ASPI), the think-tank most responsible for hyping threats from the PRC.

In commissioning this audit (of unknown cost), it seems that the University may have singled out certain of its staff for special scrutiny: either those of PRC background, or those who collaborate with the PRC. We're entitled to ask: which was it, and why?

The University also needs to clarify what this audit was looking for. For some time, ASPI has been pushing exaggerated narratives of PRC interference via recruitment programs such as the '1000 Talents' plan. In 2020, Sharri Markson picked up on these ASPI reports to splash the names and faces of Australian academics across the pages of *The Australian*, citing the director of the FBI to brand the program 'economic espionage'.

The University presumably abhors such public targeting of scholars, but it is a predictable outcome of today's scare campaign towards China. If the University's approach to 'foreign interference' is to be dictated by foreign policy partisanship that positions the PRC as an enemy, it puts its Chinese staff at risk of future such attacks.

As the brewing new Cold War with China reshapes the university environment, there's a lesson we can take from the first one. As much as McCarthyism is associated with the paranoia of one politician, most of the damage to lives and reputations in that period was done by universities preemptively capitulating and policing themselves to show loyalty to the policy imperatives of the day. We're not there yet, but there are trends in the current climate pointing in this direction, and they need to be resisted.

Unlearning perfectionism

Charlene Jee comes to terms with perfectionism.

Let me confess something: I am always terrified of not being able to live up to myself. I spent a long time gathering the courage to write this. A blank page is pristine, not to be marred by my half-baked thoughts and pretentious ramblings. Perfectionism is a double-edged sword. On one hand, when I do produce work, it's usually meticulous. On the other hand, I more often condemn myself to the ultimate failure: not trying. What is existence without excellence? Embarrassment, my mind supplies. I must apologise for myself before I've even begun, as if being bad at something is a moral deficiency.

Our education system enforces a hierarchy of intelligence which falsely conflates test results with individual worth. With a natural ability to excel academically throughout high school, I developed a sense of self-worth predicated on overachievement. After earning several accolades during the awards night in Year 7, my dad had warned me, "Don't burn out from peaking too early." Once you've reached the top, there's nowhere to go but down. Through Year 11 and 12, I was especially driven by the fear of dropping in ranks, not because I had any particular aspirations for a degree

but because my identity had become so inseparable from the illusion of being the "best". Anxiety would simmer in my gut as I lay in bed at night, dreading the day we got our exam results back. When I did maintain my rank, I was always awash not with happiness, but with overwhelming relief. A relief that was fleeting in contrast to the chronic pain of failure and disappointment when a single mark lost had cost me my rank.

On the contrary, those who struggle with standardised testing come out of school with a distorted mentality that they will never amount to anything, diminished to numerical valuations of their worth. This is not surprising for a system that has undergone little reformation since its inception during the Industrial Revolution, an era that prioritised productivity and uniformity over creativity. The reality is that intelligence manifests in many different forms, whether logical, artistic, kinaesthetic, emotional, or social. One isn't inherently better than the other.

Yet the road to unlearning toxic mentalities is long. The deep-seated need to be consistently perfect seeps into other aspects of my life, especially in my creative pursuits. My free time is interspersed with hobbies I

enthusiastically launch into only to abandon when I don't demonstrate immediate aptitude. Otherwise, I waste away long stretches of inertia wallowing in my disappointment. Mediocrity is inherent in the beginning, I tell myself. Progress is never linear. But the chasm between me and those who have mastered their craft seems impossibly wide. If I'm not a prodigy, what's the point?

We must learn to dissociate our self-worth from our work. One terrible painting does not make you terrible at painting. We should not condemn mediocrity. That is not to say we should strive towards it, but rather accept it as an inevitable by-product of the learning process. So what if I create something average? That doesn't mean I am doomed to be average. So what if I'm doomed to be average? That doesn't mean I don't have worth to contribute to the world. Capitalism has ingrained in us the idea that we mustn't waste our time pursuing hobbies unless we are good enough to monetise them. The truth is that the primal instinct to create is what makes us so beautifully human.

So, go draw that lopsided picture. Go write that nonsensical story. Go sing

that song off-key. Go dance on two left feet. Go stumble through the wrong notes on the piano. Despite the ever-present possibility of failure, within you lies its most potent adversary: the infinite capacity to overcome.



Noise after 9:00pm

Mia Lockett considers the trouble of noise complaints.

Is something happening to Sydneysiders? We usually like to think of ourselves as a pretty relaxed bunch. But these days, the mere nudging of a speaker's 'on' button after sunset seems to be enough to have neighbours frothing at the mouth and the police on their way to knock down your door.

I have heard many a story about the hysteria that attempts at a decent Saturday night have been met with.

"My Surry Hills neighbour climbed on our fence to reach up and pull the fuse box at 9pm on a Saturday night, to shut down our party, and then staunched my housemate," one person told me.

Another, who lives in Redfern, did everything right when they wanted to host a party for the first time in a year. They warned neighbours beforehand and kept noise as low as possible. Cue cops shutting the night down early, a noise abatement notice, and a potential \$50,000 fine for future infringement.

"The cops came around the back alley and yelled at my housemates to leave, only to be sheepish when they found out they lived there. Apparently they got over 10 anonymous complaints about the party, which I find impossible to believe."

Another inner-Sydney party-thrower was sent a sharply-worded letter warning of harsh consequences, were they ever to make any noise past 6pm (!) on a Saturday again.

What's going on? What is it about noise after dark that makes

Sydneysiders so aggressive?

Sydney seems to have come up with an answer to this already. Practically a stock character at this point is the humourless soul who snaps up the inner city terrace and proceeds to drop noise complaint after noise complaint on the sixty year old pub next door (bonus points if said pub is the Sydney Opera House). With many of Sydney's loudest, trendiest suburbs now among its more expensive, the stereotype goes that the white-collar, Dinosaur Designs-clad types who can afford the pretty terraces have no patience for the revelry of the share house next door—not when they've spent the day chipping away at the mortgage.

Aside from 'gentrification', another term that's quick to roll off people's tongues these days is 'nanny state'—apparently, New South Wales' new name under the Liberal state government. Our state leaders' own tyrannical attacks on fun after dark don't need belabouring, but could all of these the knee-jerk reactions to noise have been validated—and bolstered—by their actions?

Or is all this noise about noise a symptom of something deeper?

Are Sydneysiders so quick to scale fences because of the fences themselves?

For decades, the "Australian dream" has endured: ownership of a detached three-bedroom house on a quarter acre block, girt by grass. Our big backyards, and the fences that score them up, have long formed a steadfast boundary that the hiss of a

barbie—let alone party-noise—would need a good wind to pass over. In contrast, many of the world's party capitals—Berlin, Paris, New York—have high population densities, and aren't exactly known for suburban sprawl. Maybe Australians, with all our distance, just don't particularly like hearing our neighbours?

Maybe not. For a nation of fence-lovers, we seem pretty interested in what our neighbours are up to. Since the 80s and 90s, shows like *Today Tonight* and *A Current Affair* have been national celebrations of gleeful, self-righteous voyeurism. Over dinner, Australians have tutted over a "nightmare" tenant here, a water restriction—flouter there. People who deserve punishment. Something has got our curtains twitching, our sweaty fingers reaching for the phone. Maybe it's more than just the want of a quiet night? A feeling of accomplishment... of righteousness...

As all of this was mere conjecture; I decided to visit the other side of the fence, and ask some prolific noise-complainers what really motivated them.

Emma*, an employment services industry professional from Marrickville, values her peace and quiet after a long, stressful day. When she hears the first rumblings of a weeknight party threatening to ruin her recharge time, her first port of call is the police.

"The ultimate thing is when you're pissed off, you've had a shitty week at work, the police arrive and

you can see and hear everything, the music shuts off, and you're like 'fuck yes: goal accomplished'. And you feel this sense of achievement. Very righteous, yeah."

I also spoke to Baz*, a Newtown resident who interrupts parties when they impact his family's sleep and study time. Unlike Emma, Baz is confrontational first—not afraid to scale the fence and yell.

"I'd wait until someone was coming out for a cigarette," he said, "and then I'd target them directly, and turn on the swear words: 'turn the fucking noise off now!'. That usually shuts it down immediately."

The aggression, Baz told me, is only when strictly necessary—he dislikes playing bad cop, and will generally wait a generous half hour after council noise restrictions kick in before taking action.

I asked Baz if he had ever considered tampering with the fuse box.

"No! Wow—I'm gonna do that!"

With our city changing, the days you can tamper with a fuse box might be drawing to a close. Clusters of apartments now fill our skylines, chipping into the quarter-acre blocks of our dreams. Like the unwanted burble of a party down the street, these new population centres are high-density, young, and noisy by nature. The sound of Sydney may only be getting louder.

*Names have been changed.

Why I don't sell what I sew

Nandini Dhir considers cutting the commerce out of craft.

Sewing clothes is a hobby I picked up during quarantine. After watching a couple of YouTube videos I found use for a few old pairs of jeans and a bleached doona cover. While I've hand-sewn little felt cakes, fruits and animals since I was around 10, and picked up machine sewing with tote bags and pencil cases throughout high school, I'd never sewn clothes until mid-last year.

For anyone who creates things, being told someone will pay you for your work is one of the best compliments you can get. Until it gets asked for the third time - I'm sorry, but I don't like selling what I sew.

My mum is the person who got me into sewing when I was younger as I'd play around with her fabric scraps and some cheap thread. "It's very convenient, you can alter, you can fix things when somethings not right, instead of just throwing it away. Like I give you dad's old jeans and you make it into a skirt," she tells me.

I struggle to contain my excitement in pinning an idea on Pinterest and then finding some fabric in my hoard of materials

to actually make it. This is why I love sharing my process online; from drawing a design with my amateur drawing skills, drafting a pattern with my measurements that are probably completely off, to then constructing the pieces and sewing the final garment. With all the comments of support from my friends and sharing of ideas from the sewing mums I follow back on Instagram, I'm often asked why I won't sell my pieces, or make an exception for a friend.

I rarely sew the same garment twice because there's no real creative gain from it; even if I really love the design, I'll always make a slightly different version. I fear that if I'm selling these pieces and making the same thing over and over again, sewing will turn into a source of income, not a source of fun and creativity. I don't want to turn my hobby into work at the risk of losing the joy I find in it.

My mum, who used to sew for work before she came to Australia almost 30 years ago, agrees with me, "To sell is not worth the time ... You make it when you feel like you want to do it, not because someone ordered it."

However, one of my brothers says, "I think you should do commissions, I feel like you haven't yet experienced the feeling of making something and someone buying it, loving it and wearing it - there's a special joy in that."

In a more practical sense, sewing is a sponge and time is water. On average, one garment will take me around five to ten hours, and at a rate of \$20 an hour I'd need to charge over \$200 a piece. While some may say that they'd happily pay \$200, if I just spent day and night working on a piece, making sure it fits my body and my style preferences, it becomes really special to me, and often signifies a new skill I've learnt in the process. Like the first time I sewed an invisible zipper, or made a top with puffy sleeves. The garment becomes a part of my sewing journey, and so I want to keep it for myself.



Art by Janina Osinsao

The false dignity of free debate

Grace Roodenrys reflects on a discursive strategy that she finds all too familiar.

I learn that 'Christian' is a more fraught term with which to identify than my Catholic education would've had me believe. This is not because I associate religious beliefs with intellectual softness, nor because our secular University has forced me to take any measure of shame in the question of faith, but rather because people who identify as Christian often voice sentiments from which I would prefer, as a matter of basic decency, to distance myself. Best to lay these ambivalences down early, I figure: once I was Catholic, now I'm probably not, still I feel a measure of protectiveness over tenets of belief that are continually misappropriated by the very people who claim allegiance to them. But this article is not about faith, and it is also not about god. As at most times Christianity comes under scrutiny today, god rarely enters the frame. This is an apt point to begin with, and a crucial distinction to preserve.

CathSoc's A-frame on Eastern Avenue last week had an unmistakably Catholic flavour. After years in Sydney's Catholic education system I recognised it immediately: the same discursive trick I saw performed in a hundred religion classes, the same I'm-just-here-for-open-discourse stance that allowed several teachers to declare anti-queer positions over the years while copping out of responsibility for what this really signified, which was that, in one way or another,

some people's right to live freely and securely was not all that valuable to them. Of course, CathSoc's A-frame was in many ways a separate thing to this entirely; I don't intend to conflate homophobia with ableism, nor suggest that posing a question is quite the same thing as expressing a view. But what felt familiar to me was the set-up of the act, its use of a rhetorical mechanism that is fast becoming a favourite of that subtler, more sensibly centred strain of religious conservatism which the Catholic church in Australia has come to embody so well.

What I am referring to is a kind of framing device, a method of staging a conversation that uses the banner of open debate to lend it a dignity that it doesn't always deserve. Let me demonstrate this with reference to the classroom homosexuality debate, a spectacle marked in my memory for the way it began as a civil discourse which quickly gave staff and students occasion to share homophobic convictions as openly as if they were thoughtful intellectual points. While my Catholic-educated parents have confirmed that the pathologization of queerness is far from a new addition to the unofficial Catholic curriculum, they have also pointed out that its expression has changed: where once such prejudices were preached directly, today they take the passive but no less sinister form of a supposedly critical discussion. You have your view, says the speaker in this context, and I

have mine; in this forum we are tolerant, dispassionate. The thing about discourse that is framed in this way is that anything is rendered passable: protected by the cloak of open conversation, one can question the utility of song in Christian prayer and the queer community's right to basic dignities as if both were equally legitimate subjects of debate. But perhaps the most novel move of this technique is the way it protects its speaker from criticism, setting up the discourse so that those incensed by the question itself are easy to pin as threats to the cool civility of intelligent debate. Given that the people so incensed will frequently be queer, disabled or female - groups associated, in other words, with a hypersensitive imaginary left - the fruits of this rhetorical protection are often especially low-hanging.

Of course, CathSoc's A-Frame had nothing to do with sexuality. I am not trying to impute a homophobic undertone where there obviously isn't one, but rather to draw a line between what we saw last week and other kinds of harmful Christian rhetoric visible today. That CathSoc thought to ask whether people with disabilities are a burden, and that others sought to defend this choice (why are you apologising? reads one comment beneath their subsequent apology, don't let outrage push you into an apology that isn't due), reflects the danger of a discursive technique that uses the frames of free speech and critical conversation

to legitimise questions which should not be asked in the first place. And this doesn't mean that the question is aesthetically offensive, but rather that the very act of posing it, of putting out wooden sticks for passersby to cast a response, contributes to the ongoing exclusion of people with disabilities from a conversation in which their own bodies are the objects under debate. This is the biggest irony of the democratic language in which this discourse comes couched: more often than not, its structures reinscribe the otherness of a group it presupposes will not be present (are disabled people a burden? Should gay people marry?), thus refusing them entry to the conversation before it has even begun.

Judging from the kickback CathSoc has received, many people saw through a device that I am tired of seeing used to dignify the same monolithic discourse that has defined Christian conservatism for centuries. But others' efforts to defend the A-Frame reflect the logic of a rhetorical technique whose invocation of a conservatism that is under assault by an overemotional, uncritical left is becoming all too familiar. As a secular citizen, I see the need for us to understand how this device operates so we are competent to name it when it occurs. And as an ambivalent Catholic, I long for a church that is honest with itself, that can admit when it is using the veil of free speech to evade accountability.

Dial M for Muffin

Marlow Hurst puts the screws on Courtyard Cafe.

May 16th, 2019. I flicked my collar up to shield against the pelting rain: umbrella in hand, bag clutched to my chest. I hurried down Science Road, desperately seeking refuge from the deluge. It was then that I saw it: Courtyard Cafe. The warm glow of the Holme Building beckoned me in and the sound of chatter and clinks thrust me over the threshold. Walking up to the register, I spied a muffin in the pastry cabinet.

“Why not?” I thought to myself, because after all, why ... not.

I pointed to the muffin behind the glass screen and spoke those fatal words — the words that would define my life at this hallowed university.

“Can you heat that up for me?”

And against all odds, they couldn't.

Diving muff-in

Courtyard Cafe, also known as ‘Courty’ or ‘The Yard,’ is a cafe/restaurant located in the Holme Building. Known for their garlic and cheese pizza, this university wateringhole has long enjoyed an era of little to no scrutiny or oversight. That era ends today.

Prior to this investigation, very few facts were known for certain about Courtyard's heating abilities. When a customer asks to have their item warmed up, the staff give one of two replies.

“We can't do that” or “We don't have a microwave.”

But can that be believed? Can Courtyard staff, who for all we know might simply be agents of this anti-warm-muffin agenda, really be trusted?

No, it wasn't enough for me and it shouldn't be enough for the student body. I knew that if I wanted answers, I had to go all the way to the top. I had to go to the University of Sydney Union (USU).

Jess Reed, the Director of Commercial Operations at the USU, replied to Honi's email inquiry to Courtyard Cafe at 18:08 on the 16th of April, 2021. Where her muffin loyalties lie is unknown to me, but she was my best chance of getting answers.

“Courtyard does not have any microwaves at all,” her email read.

“As one of our busiest and most complex restaurants, it has no physical space in its front of house or kitchen space to hold a microwave.”

I sat down with architecture student Kimmi Tonkin to investigate this claim.

Marlow Hurst: So, in your opinion do you think Courtyard Cafe has enough space for a microwave in its front of house?

Kimmi Tonkin: Almost certainly. A pair of microwaves can actually take up less than 2sqm including standing space, and just from personal observation Courtyard has more than enough room. They have the space,

and that's not even considering the perceived space that their premises could have in abundance.

MH: Could you expand on this idea of perceived space?

KT: Sure. Say if Courtyard was to hang some mirrors, or paint their walls white, while the physical space of Courtyard would remain the same, the perceived space would be greatly increased.

MH: And you're saying Courtyard could put their microwave in that additional perceived space?

KT: Yes, yes I am.

So with the USU already spinning a web of lies to shield its flagship cafe from the penetrating gaze of journalistic scrutiny, what else could they be hiding?

The Director of Commercial Operations went on to make a number of other claims regarding Courtyard's practices.

“When capacity allows in the morning, customers are welcome to have their muffin warmed through our pizza oven.”

A crack team of undercover *Honi* investigators sought to verify this claim only two weeks ago. At exactly 10:03 am on April 21st, special agents Alice and Shania were dispatched to Courtyard Cafe with one aim in mind: get a muffin, and get it warm.

The line was empty. The time was morning. Yet still, Courtyard refused their request. Maybe we were unlucky. Maybe we missed our window of opportunity. There's a lot of maybes with this case. All I know for sure is that something smells fishy (and it isn't their tuna pasta).

One final claim that the USU made in their response to my questioning wasn't about Courtyard, but about the other USU outlets on campus.

“During our busier periods, customers can purchase and warm up muffins at many USU outlets, including Footbridge, Laneway, Carslaw Kitchen, and Fisher.”

Honi sought to verify these claims as well. Of the outlets listed, all except Carslaw Kitchen had a microwave. After inquiring with staff, we were informed that Carslaw did not have a microwave and were not in a position to warm muffins up. While Fisher Coffee Cart did have a microwave, they declined to warm up a muffin purchased at Courtyard.

At this point, you may be wondering why this is all so important. “It's just a muffin,” my friends have told me.

But they're wrong. It's not just a muffin. A muffin is more than just fuel for the body, it's a cultural touchstone. Everyone can relate to the muffin, and as such, everyone can relate to the disappointment of a cold, hard, tacky muffin.

But sometimes, feeling isn't enough. To take this investigation to new heights of credibility, I needed to talk to someone who could conceive

of these glutenous, sweet treats as more than just a pastry. I needed to get ... scientific.

The science of muffins

To better understand muffins, not just as a cultural artifact, but as a scientific construct, I sat down with Associate Professor Thomas Roberts, an academic of food chemistry and biotechnology in the University of Sydney's School of Life and Environmental Sciences.

According to A/Prof. Roberts, muffins are ideal for the microwave.

“A muffin is a good example of a baked good that can be improved by microwaving briefly after it's been sitting around for a couple of hours or more.”

Professor Roberts said this is true for two main reasons: 1) muffins are largely homogenous and 2) they have enough water content to remain moist.

“It's not the same for pies,” he warned, explaining that the “liquid filling and solid (dry) crust make for a suboptimal microwave experience (scorching filling and luke-warm crust): a problem that muffins do not fall victim to.”

This begs the question then: why not just have muffins fresh out of the oven?

Professor Roberts addresses this as well. While the term ‘retrogradation’ may be unfamiliar to many, it's something of a rockstar in the world of starch-based food science.

“The best quality of the baked good is not immediately after you take it out of the (conventional) oven,” A/Prof. Roberts explained. This is because the gelatinised starches need to realign themselves during cooling — the flavour of the product can change with heating — another phenomenon that makes food chemistry so compelling.

So if muffins aren't best right out of the oven, and Courtyard doesn't have the means nor the inclination to warm them up for their loyal customers: what exactly is happening here?

Connecting the choc chips

The simplest explanation for all this is the one I've been provided with time and time again: they just don't have a microwave. But that's too easy. You know what they say: there's no such thing as a free lunch and that's doubly true for Courtyard. But if there is some grand conspiracy festering beneath the surface, what is it? Why do they hate warm muffins so very much?

I've considered ancient aliens, modern aliens, the reserve bank, the actual banks, the moon landing, the Loch Ness monster,

Princess Diana, JFK, Harold Holt, and about fifty other fun yet not horribly racist conspiracy theories, yet none of them seem to fit.

So, dear readers, I need your help! Remain vigilant, remain alert. Investigate, snoop, and pry. And when you're done, send your theories to editors@honisoit.com.

But that's not the only way you can contribute to this ongoing investigation. Go to this link (<http://chnq.it/HHwHnGtB>) and sign the petition! Every signature gets us a step closer to muffin warmth.

Some final words fellow truth seekers. Trust no one. Believe no one. The only thing you can ever truly be sure of in life is a warm muffin, and the world is short on those these days.

May your blueberries be plentiful and your choc chips be goeoy.

Art by Seda Coskun



How to launch a campus coup

Samuel Garrett loves democracy.

So, you want to be SRC President. Maybe you crave the power. The validation. The minimum wage stipend. Trouble is, you know you could never win the election. Perhaps you've already lost one. Fortunately for you, the SRC Constitution could be surprisingly conducive to a campus autocrat, if handled with care. With a little finesse, a little amorality, and a little help from some high-placed friends, things might just go your way.

Here's your handy guide to launching a hostile takeover of the Student Representative Council in 10 easy-to-follow steps. Individual results may vary.

You will need:

- 500 supporters
- Good relations with the University Senate
- Nerves of steel
- Disdain for the democratic process
- No moral compass
- A power complex

Step 1: Gather your forces

Every budding dictator needs a power base — even the most absolutist autocrats didn't get there alone. Fortunately, you don't need the almost 3,000 votes of the winner of the last contested presidential election, or even the 2,500 of the loser. A mere 500 supporters will prove something of a magic number when it comes to dismissing key figures in your path to absolute power. Even for a B-tier NOC such as yourself, this shouldn't be too high a hurdle to clear. Enlist them quietly, with promises of spoils and a new dawn of Freedom once you walk the SRC's (single) corridor of power.

Step 2: Invent your excuse

Every coup needs a pretext. It's important for maintaining a facade of legitimacy and a justification for control. Come up with some kind of grievance, any old thing will do. Ideally, it would be something incontrovertibly unconstitutional, which past councils, presidents and *Honi Soit* editors alike have overlooked for years. Something blatant, yet sufficiently inconsequential for anyone to care. After all, if it was a legitimate issue, this wouldn't be a brazen power grab now, would it?

Your key to victory lies in Part 6, s.4 (d) of the SRC Regulations: “The President shall present the editors of *Honi Soit* with a written report prior to the publication of each issue. The report shall be printed on a facing page within the first nine pages [of] *Honi Soit*, and shall be a minimum of ten point typesetting.” The President's Report has not been published within the first nine pages of *Honi Soit* for over a decade. Even within this very week's edition, you will find it on page 24.

With such an egregious breach of regulations to hand, you can set about astroturfing. Send letters to *Honi*, publish some USyd Rants. Complain much but resolve little. You must create

the impression of a genuine movement as a guise for the sudden emergence of your 500 disciplined loyalists. Avoid at all costs the premature resolution of your chosen grievance — you'll need it to be in play when you make your move.

Step 3: Depose the President

Time to get this show on the road now that your justification is well publicised and your supporters are ready to strike. Under s.4 (e) of the SRC Constitution, the President can be summarily dismissed upon the receipt of a petition signed by 500 members of the student body, and a vote at a duly convened General Meeting of the Student Body. With a significant and organised faction of 500 at your back, success should be assured. Timing will be critical here. Dismiss the President in Semester 2, and the Council can simply appoint an Acting President as their replacement under s.4 (f). But act in Semester 1, and a byelection must instead occur. You needn't make plans to participate — unbeknownst to the others, this byelection will never take place. You are simply playing for time.

Step 4: Activate your foreign backers

Like many coups, yours is to be dependent on a meddling foreign power. You require an ally outside the world of domestic Stupol — one whose interests are so fundamentally opposed to the SRC that they will back you to the bitter end. The University Senate is an ideal co-conspirator. They will be your CIA, the external operator who will recognise your supremacy and enable your despotism in exchange for a pliant SRC that stops interfering with their plans. Conveniently, s.18 (b) of the Constitution provides the Senate with just the reserve powers you need for your very own John Kerr moment.

With the SRC now in chaos and the Presidency vacant, place a call to your friend the Vice-Chancellor. Demand an investigation into your President's Report 'grievance'. S.18 (b) subsumes the Constitution under Senate Resolution 284/06, which empowers the VC to investigate “governance irregularities” at the SRC. Given that a General Meeting of the Student Body saw fit to dismiss a President over your Part 6, s.4 (d) complaint, the VC should oblige without hesitation. Once the investigation inevitably reveals endemic neglect of Part 6, s.4 (d), the VC will be empowered to appoint an “administrator ... with power to do all things necessary” with regard to SRC affairs.

Step 5: Install yourself as President

With the Administrator secretly in your pocket, put yourself forward as the perfect outsider to take the troubled reins of power and bring Order to campus. “Conducting the upcoming presidential byelection will surely result in the election of yet another Part 6, s.4 (d)-ignoring politician,”



you will explain to the Administrator. Over a decade of neglect is evidence enough of that. Besides, you will have on hand a convenient petition calling for your instatement, signed by 500 members of the student body (your 500 cronies, naturally) to demonstrate a clear mandate to address the rampant mismanagement which has, for years, unconstitutionally demoted the President's report to the back pages of *Honi Soit*. The populace never responds well to an ambitious coup mastermind. But a reluctant leader with a popular mandate? Well ... that's just the will of the people now, isn't it?

Step 6: Shut down Honi Soit

Every dictator worth their jackboots knows that control of information is everything. Muzzling the free press on campus is critical. *Honi*'s irreverent reporting is much too dangerous to be left unchecked, and the ten editors will never take your undemocratic putsch quietly. You need people more used to working under a corporate structure. Have the Administrator compel the SRC to provide the *Honi* Facebook password, take the website offline and draft in former editors of some more pliant off-campus publications to run the show.

Step 7: Cripple the Council

Now for the legislature. Your options here are fairly wide and can be exercised to fit the situation. Under s.3 (h)(i) of the Constitution, you can direct your band of 500 to dismiss individual representatives that cause you trouble, in the same manner as you deposed the President. Or, if you prefer a more top-down approach, the Administrator under Senate Resolution 284/06 (now your right-hand man) can dismiss “all or any office bearers” at will. Wielding this Sword of Damocles ought to bring those who would seek to dethrone you in line.

Even better, any decision a recalcitrant Council attempts to make against you can be stalled by your 500 loyalists. Under s.15 (a) of the Constitution, a referendum on any Council decision can be forced by a petition signed by 450 students, and “shall delay the operation of the decision of the Council until it has

been voted upon.” By abusing such referenda, you will be able to transform the once-mighty Council into a lame duck, and significantly slow its operation even if the eventual result of each referendum does not ultimately swing your way.

Step 8: Announce yourself to your new subjects

Next up, hearts and minds. Make an address to students, to be carried on Facebook Live by a reorganised *Honi Soit* that is now firmly under your heel. Reassure the populace. Condemn the instability and neglect of the past. Promise new democratic elections in 18 months once voter rolls are ‘audited’, the ‘will of the students’ can be guaranteed, and those who treacherously ignored Part 6, s.4 (d) of the regulations are sidelined. Feel free to promise that you won't stand for reelection — you can always change your mind once ‘the people’, as reported in your new *Honi*, call on you to stay.

Step 9: Deal with any dissent

From here on, things are pretty smooth sailing. With the Senate at your back, campus at your feet, and campus security as your iron fist, there is little that can stop you. Swipe card access for any dissenters can be revoked, troublemakers removed from SRC premises and even academic misconduct proceedings raised if you play your cards right with your new friends over at F23. Your 500 core supporters are always on call if more dismissals are required, but be warned — you've given them a taste of power, and they might just bite the hand that feeds if you are not wary.

Step 10: Sit back, relax, and watch your back

The rest is child's play. Purge the voter rolls, rig electoral regulations, even rewrite the Constitution if you wish. You're in charge now, go wild! You're the new SRC — Supreme Ruler of Council — and nothing can stand in your way. That is, until the next coup. Perhaps you should've thought of that before. Thus always to tyrants.

Otter-ly delightful

Ariana Haghighi finds joy in the life of the humble otter.

Did you know that otters hold hands so they don't drift apart?", one of my friends tells me.

I sigh. Yes, the otters have become a symbol of mutualistic affection, their cartoon bodies plastered onto cheesy Valentine's cards with an accompanying 'I otter-ly adore you!'. But they are more than a paragon of love. This creature is feisty, resourceful, playful, but most of all, multi-dimensional.

Trick and treat

Otters exhibit enigmatic behaviour all year round, leaving researchers puzzled in their wake. Mesmerising and playful, the creature has been frequently observed juggling small pebbles whilst afloat. They launch the rocks high into the air and catch them with grace, rolling them across their furry bellies and necks. According to researchers at the University of Exeter, otters are inherently social creatures with a penchant for mimicry—thus one juggler inspires a whole circus. Recently, theories have emerged aiming to explain this carnival act, including the hypothesis that the performance correlates with anticipating dinner! A popular theory suggests they may be innately drawn to juggling to distract themselves from hunger pangs, or to demonstrate their excitement. Rock juggling may also be a brain stimulating activity, increasing in frequency as they age, to remain sharp and alert. Like us, otters are closely attached to objects, as David Attenborough claims each otter has their favourite rock with which they tussle and play. Some keep their

beloved rock under a loose fold of skin in their armpit area for their entire lifetime, refusing to part with it.

Play

These spirited beings do not simply come to play in the animal kingdom, but when they do, their playtime is one to behold. Researchers watch with amazement as otters create exhilarating water amusement parks, transforming waterfalls into water slides, turning somersaults and splashing in the sea. Sliding may actually serve a survival function; they accelerate down mud paths as a form of transport, and also reinforce territory with fecal 'spraint' production during vigorous activity. They clearly receive some adrenaline rush, as wild otters were once viewed sliding 16 times in under a minute! As they are social, their communal playtime can be remarkably structured and governed by rules. Otters have been observed playing 'tag' in groups and chasing each others' tails, as well as undergoing bouts of non-aggressive wrestling, often as frequently as 20 times an hour. They are also notably vocal with others, and have been witnessed chuckling, chirping, squeaking and snorting, all in the name of lively otter banter. Indiscriminate in their embrace, otters will hold hands and play with strangers, bonding over a shared predilection for amusement.

Resourceful

Whilst otters cannot purchase tools from a hardware store, their resourcefulness and tact supersedes that of cavemen, as they find novel ways to break apart hard shells encasing their food. They have been

observed viciously smashing their prey against sharp rocks, or repurposing their favourite toy as a hammer. In their game of life, play intertwines with their pursuit of nutrition. As Polecha, who studies the river otter, illustrates, "They are investigators. They turn over rocks and swim under log piles", while spiritedly hunting for food. These creatures sometimes display a cunning nature, evident when they squat and settle in beaver dams, forcing an exodus of this fellow marine mammal, rather than constructing their own habitats.



Rubbing their face

Researchers have endeavoured to decipher otters' obsession with skincare, as they incessantly massage their own faces. This behaviour is purposeful, as sea otters tidy and neaten their fur, which is the densest in all the animal kingdom. Ensuring their fur's cleanliness is crucial to maintaining its waterproofing

qualities, so they vigorously rub and rub, to the delight of onlookers.

Loyal and protective

As well as holding hands to avoid drifting apart from their friends, otters are one of the most protective creatures over their pups. As young pups' eyes remain closed for a short time after birth, the mother cleverly wraps them in seaweed and love, fastening her vulnerable offspring to her chest, and gliding gently along the water's surface. If she needs to forage, she tightly ties her pup with kelp to ensure they do not drift astray.

The otter's spirited and infectious *joie de vivre* should delight us, uplift us and, most importantly, inspire us. I can only imagine humanity would improve if we tamed a favourite rock, opted for water slides as public transport, tied our loved ones in kelp, and approached life as a game.

Art by Isla Mowbray

Immersive unintuitive game design

Minh Nguyen presses X to fire.

Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater (MGS3) is a 2004 stealth action video game directed by Hideo Kojima and published by Konami. If you know anything about *Metal Gear* or Hideo Kojima then you'd know that Hideo Kojima is a crazy person and that he makes crazy design choices. At least, they may seem crazy.

In *Call of Duty*, the most normal video game of all, the right trigger is mapped to fire and this is the obvious choice. It makes sense: a gun has a trigger and the controller has a trigger so why not map the controller's trigger button to fire. In *MGS3*, the X button instead of the right trigger is mapped to shoot. Although in theory it sounds like a horrible idea (mainly because you can't aim the camera with the analogue stick and shoot at the same time), in practice, it immerses the player into the world of the game while mirroring the story's anti-war thesis. Whenever you fire your gun in *MGS3*, you're forced to stand still and shoot as Snake, the player character, would.

Because you can't simply run and gun like how you would in most other first and third person shooters, you're encouraged to use the game's stealth mechanics and act like Snake.

This less intuitive means of violence borrows the narrative's anti-war thesis and imbues it into the game play. In *MGS3*, violence is not executed easily or instantly, rather, the game's control scheme demands thought and consideration from its player. Forcing the player to stop and think, *MGS3* encourages its core stealth gameplay while mirroring its story. Whereas *Call of Duty* might go out of its way to make its violent gameplay as intuitive as possible, *MGS3* does the opposite.

This isn't limited to the *Metal Gear Solid* franchise though, another good example of unintuitive game design adding to immersion can be found in the Japanese role-playing series, *Dragon Quest*. While the series has iterated over the years, one design choice that has never been changed is its saving system: a player can only

save their game in one of its churches.

This lends consequence to towns and makes each one a memorable step in the player's journey. Instead of simply serving as a hub for shops and quests, each town becomes a distinct landmark and serves an important mechanical purpose.

This reflects the developer's original intentions: to turn *Dungeons and Dragons* into a video game and by proxy, gamify *Lord of the Rings*. Just as the fellowship would consider each landmark they travel to important, by giving the towns further mechanical purpose they gain importance in the players mind's as well, immersing them in the story and the character.

Dragon Quest is not alone in meaningfully restricting some of its mechanics to certain locations though. Another title that does this is CD Projekt Red's *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. In *The Witcher 3* a player is only allowed to use fast travel when there are signposts nearby. These restrictions force the player into experiencing the

open world and finding creative and explorative means of traversing it: encouraging the player to engage with the world of the game. *The Witcher 3*, from both a narrative and mechanical perspective, is as much about its world as it is about its characters and story. By restricting fast travel, the developers enable an even greater depth of role-playing.

When playing video games we sometimes forget that we're interacting with the game in our heads just as much as we're interacting with the game's literal systems and mechanics. It's important to understand that like shot composition and mise en scene in a film, a video game's mechanics and controls carry meaning. So as consumers and developers we should give just as much thought to what a game's mechanics and controls mean as we do to how intuitive they are. By doing this, not only will we produce better games but we will also treat games as pieces of art instead of just pop culture

Life is a highway (and I'm on my L's)

Danny Cabubas discovers what really Matters.

We all have our niches, things that we love just a little bit too much to be normal and retain far too much knowledge of to be healthy. As a child, I watched many films and TV shows that blew my mind and enraptured my soul; but out of all of them, there is one film in particular that has become an integral part of my personal branding and holds a very special place in my heart.

That film is the 2006 Disney Pixar sensation *Cars*.

Now I know what you're thinking, why *Cars* of all movies? I'll admit, there are far better Pixar films out there; but alas, the heart wants what it wants. And when I say that it was my niche, I mean it. If you know me personally, you'll recognise that my social media handle is a discrete-not-discrete *Cars* reference and has been for the past 5 years. Furthermore, I chose to put 'Kachow' on the back of my year 12 graduation jersey. Do I regret it? Not at all. Why not? Because *Cars* is – in my most esteemed opinion – one of the most important children's films of our generation. Now, it's definitely taken its share of flack over the years. That's hard to escape when you're deviating from Pixar's cinematic formula and existing almost exclusively as a cash grab for a money-hungry corporation looking to bank in on toy sales. But as much as I laugh at the memes online, I will defend this film with my life.

What makes me say this? Well, where do I start?

The animation is gorgeous of course, Pixar never lets down in that regard. Visually and sonically, *Cars* is great. But that's only a small part of the appeal. What I truly love is the story, meaning the characters and themes. *Cars* has a myriad of life-lessons hidden in its undercarriage and I, in my spare time, have done my fair share of analysis on it. Our hero, of course, is Lightning McQueen (voiced by Owen Wilson), a hotshot rookie race-car making his way up the ladder to racing stardom in the Piston Cup tournament. He's cocky, reckless, and stubborn; the perfect candidate to undergo some good ole' fashioned character development. The charming residents of small town Radiator Springs; including the loveable-in-small-doses Mater, the earnest Sally, and the velvety-smooth voiced Doc Hudson make for a wonderful extended cast and the perfect catalysts for growth. The writing overall is very well-done and makes for an extremely satisfying character arc and conclusion.

But taking a step away from the boring English major analysis, let's look at the emotional aspects of *Cars*, the stuff that gets me right in the feels. In particular, there's something really romantic about the setting of Radiator Springs and what it represents within the film. In a world where fame and

riches are worshipped as the ultimate goal, Radiator Springs represents the dream of finding a place to belong and a close-knit family of people you can belong *with*. From the fantastic mentor-mentee relationship we see between Lightning and Doc Hudson, we learn that we don't always have to go it alone and that it's okay to admit you need help, no matter how good you think you are.

In an especially heartstring-pulling scene, we see the history of Radiator Springs, from its hey-day to its eventual fall into obscurity as a mega highway is built and diverts traffic from the humble town. All this happens as James Taylor's *Our Town* plays, just to break your heart even more. Amongst other things, *Cars* also preaches the importance of taking a break from the highlife, living life in the slow-lane, and overall just appreciating the little things that you already have.

Having first watched this film as a child, I couldn't really understand all the important messages it told. I was simply enthralled by the funny cars and a teeny tiny (read: massive) crush on Lightning McQueen. However, looking back now as an adult, I can see the merits in its morals. Watching it makes me long to get stuck in a small country-town just so I can experience similar epiphanies of self-discovery and belonging.

At the ripe old age of 20, I'd say

that *Cars* is more important to me now than ever. Just like Lightning, I'm right at that stage where I'm still figuring out who I am and what I want to be. Do I continue my studies and get my degree majoring in English and Film? Do I (and sorry to my Mum and Dad for even suggesting it) drop out and pursue the dramatic arts career of my dreams? The future is scary and I haven't the faintest idea of what I'm going to do.

As the title says, life is a highway and I'm on my L's (both figuratively and literally); but hopefully one day I'll find my own Radiator Springs.



Art by Em Thomas

Where in the world is the Redfern cat?

Marlow Hurst and Vivienne Guo pursue a perfect pal.

It's a breezy Wednesday morning and Abercrombie Street, a central thoroughfare for students at the University of Sydney, is aglow with light. There is a particularly bright patch of sun shining onto an overgrown bush peeking out from under somebody's fence. You plop yourself atop the bush, basking in the warmth of the day. Opening one eye, you glance at the water bowl that has been set up for you in front of one of the local cafes, making sure that it is still there. For an old cat, you've established quite a celebrated rapport with the local human community. It's a nice day and you've decided to venture out of the backyard, your usual haunt, and spend some time among the hustle and bustle of Redfern. You drift off, your mind foggy with thoughts of sunshine and sleep.

If you're a student at the University of Sydney and your journey to uni involves walking down Abercrombie Street, chances are you've encountered a certain ginger gentleman. Tiger, who can be found seeking pats along the busy Redfern street or on Instagram at @tiger_abcrombie_streetcat, is a 19-year-old ginger cat who has endeared himself to many a Redferngoer over the years, becoming a

landmark in the commute of those who flock to our dear university every day of the week.

Moving from the sleepy town of Bundeena to the hustle and bustle of the inner west was something of a culture shock for Tiger, but he's an adaptable fellow. It hasn't always been caviar and champagne for the ginger darling though. Bouts of sickness have plagued our feline friend over the years, with death stalking him at every turn. One Instagram comment from early 2020 read:

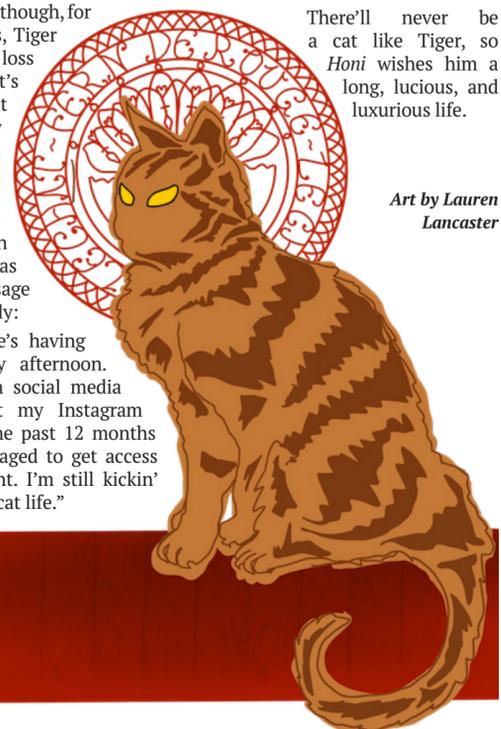
"I'm sorry to report that Tiger may be on his last legs. He's at the vet now because he has been bleeding from the mouth. He's a very old cat, around 17 years, and it might be his time. He's coming back to Abercrombie this afternoon and will most probably spend the night at Huda's place. If you do see him on the street, make sure to get one final pat on this lovely old fellow."

Cats always land on their feet, and that's no different for dear Tiger. 19 years gets many a USyd first- and second-year down, but Tiger isn't like other boys.

Tiger himself isn't the only thing to suffer a death scare though, for the last 12 months, Tiger fans were left at a loss with the famed cat's Instagram account going inexplicably dormant for about a year. The very good boy resurfaced recently, as golden and chilled out as ever, with a message for his chosen family:

"Hope everyone's having a purrfect Sunday afternoon. My useless human social media manager had lost my Instagram login details for the past 12 months and only just managed to get access back to my account. I'm still kickin' and living my best cat life."

There'll never be a cat like Tiger, so Honi wishes him a long, luscious, and luxurious life.



Art by Lauren Lancaster

Who saves the world?: Expectations for Female Superheroes

Veronica Lenard critically analyses female superheroes.

There's a certain suspension of disbelief that we reserve for superheroes. We accept that they can fly, read minds, shape-shift, use magic, have super strength or bend the very fabric of our reality. We accept that an interplanetary battle seems just as possible as them fighting their local villain. Nonetheless, if there is a risk that a hero may go beyond our limits of accepted fictional realities, it is often mitigated by grounding the story in a set time period.

Wonder Woman is set in 1918. *Agent Carter* is set in the 1940s. *WandaVision* travels from the 1950s to the present. *Wonder Woman 1984* is set in, well, 1984. *Captain Marvel* is set mostly in the 1990s. Even, the upcoming *Black Widow* prequel movie is set in her own past as she reckons with her life before becoming an Avenger.

This could just be a coincidence, or it could reflect a shift in expectations as to what is expected of female-led superhero productions. Timelines are important for superheroes as backstories chart their path from origin, to current predicament and into the future, allowing audiences to connect characters and stories across franchises like the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) or the DC Extended Universe. Male-led superhero films

that have been set in the past tend to use this as a method by which to develop the backstory of the character before ending up in the present where they face contemporary issues, whilst many heroes in female-led productions have not reached the present, or at least not yet. Whilst there are a variety of possible reasons for this kind of decision, the time period of the film, nevertheless, controls the kind of stories that can be told.

By moving through a number of decades between the 1950s and the contemporary present, *WandaVision* as a series, as with *Wanda* as a hero, manages to escape many of the limitations of female heroes of the past. Whilst *Wanda's* initial use of her powers in earlier episodes seems reminiscent of the kinds of magic in sitcoms like *I Dream of Jeannie* and *Bewitched*, the development of *Wanda's* power culminates in her battle with Agatha and her identification as the Scarlet Witch. The change in her costuming throughout the series, particularly evident in the change from the Scarlet Witch Halloween costume to the Scarlet Witch suit in the finale, expresses this process of transformation as she is styled to match the decade of the episode, which ultimately demonstrates the

expectations and understandings of the time period. It seems that even superpowers can't save you from normative gender roles.

As much as *WandaVision* seeks to allow *Wanda* to grow, her hero experience is still shaped by the norms of domesticity, intertwined with the sitcom form and their story arc which essentially begins and ends in the home. Domesticity in superhero films is not inherently bad. The inclusion of the domestic experience in male-led superhero films created occasions like the "I love you 3000" moment between Iron Man and his daughter, and Hawkeye spending time with his family on the farm in *Avengers: Endgame*. In many of these stories, the male heroes are permitted to have both domestic ties and their powers, often moving from one sphere to another as needed. In female-led stories, many of the plots centre on the heroes needing to choose between their home life or their life as a superhero. For *Wanda*, she is forced to make a choice between using her powers to stay with her family, or essentially lose her family to stop her powers from harming others. For *Wonder Woman*, she can't save the world without losing Steve. For *Captain Marvel*, she must choose between reuniting with her friend and her past

or saving the world.

Even the limited time that female superheroes spend in the present doesn't free female superheroes from these expectations. At one point in the series, agents Jimmy Woo, Darcy Lewis, and Monica Rambeau discuss the development of *Wanda's* powers. However, the assessment becomes a comparison to the powers of *Captain Marvel*. Elsewhere in the MCU, the somewhat infamous all female moment at the end of *Avengers: Endgame* felt abrupt and offered little nuance in its presentation of these female heroes, leaving audiences unsatisfied. *Captain Marvel* was met with considerable backlash and trolling pre-release that led to Rotten Tomatoes changing their review policies. The release of *Wonder Woman* had many again equating its potential success with the possibility to validate the creation of more diverse superhero films. Thus, although the overall positive reception of *WandaVision* suggests a positive change, there is still considerable opportunity for more nuanced and complex female-led superhero films and stories. As both *Marvel* and *DC* have more future female-led superhero stories planned in the near future, we will see if 2021 is the time for the female superhero to finally get her chance.

There are no others like us: Reviewing Netflix's *Shadow and Bone*

Shania O'Brien and Vivienne Guo wish they were Grisha.

Every child dreams of magic. You look for it in ordinary things, in wind whistling through open windows, sunlight breaking through clouds, or the invisible beat of blood in veins.

Netflix's *Shadow and Bone* was so much more than we expected it to be. The show combines characters from the *Shadow and Bone* trilogy and the *Six of Crows* duology, which chronologically takes place after the events of the third book, *Ruin and Rising*.

The series follows Alina Starkov (played by Jessie Mei Li), an orphan cartographer for the First Army living in the fictional country of Ravka. The Grisha, magical beings who can manipulate the Small Science, elements that make up our world, are simultaneously revered and despised. The Grisha form the Second Army of Ravka, a central line of defence beating back its enemies, but they are also hunted and burned at the stake or sold to slave labour in other countries. Ravka is torn in half by the Shadow Fold, a swath of darkness filled with winged, flesh-eating creatures called the volcra that separates the east and west sides of the country.

When Alina's childhood friend, Malven Oretsev (played by Archie Renaux), is charged with crossing the

Fold into West Ravka, she finds a way on it herself because she could not stand to let him go without her. Yet, on a sand skiff in the middle of the Fold, Alina discovers that she may be the most powerful Grisha the world has ever known: a Sun Summoner. Before Alina, a Sun Summoner was nothing but a whisper around a campfire. It was widely believed that a 'Sun Saint' would come along to destroy the Fold and unite East and West Ravka after five hundred years of separation, though most people resigned it to a bedtime story built on the shoulders of waning faith.

All of that being said, there were a fair few aspects of the show that can be uncomfortable to watch. In the books, Alina and Mal are both white and do not experience any discrimination because of their race. The show deviates from the Anglo-normative depiction of Ravkan characters, depicting Alina as being half-Shu, with Mal also being mixed-race.

Our first problem lies with the vagueness surrounding Shu Han, and Ravka's geopolitical relations with the other countries of Kerch, Fjerda, the Wandering Isle, and Novyi Zem. While those familiar with the books from which the TV show is adapted have a

greater insight into the relationships between these nations, the show gives little indication of tangible conflict or why it exists. Shu Han, a fictional nation that shows Chinese influences, is alienated and shrouded in vague references and mysticism. The only indication given to the audience of what one would assume is a deeply bitter war between Ravka and Shu Han are passing racist comments and targeted racism towards Alina.

The show's half-hearted dabble in discussions of racism is not limited to Alina. Inej Ghafa (played by Amita Suman), a knife-wielding spy of Suli descent, is subjected to racist commentary at Alina's official unveiling as the Sun Saint. A white lady ascending the spiral staircase, where Inej is suspended on aerial silks as she masquerades as an acrobat, makes the comment: "I didn't know the Zemeni had such talent." Interestingly, Jesper Fahey (played by Kit Young), who actually is Zemeni, faces no such racism throughout the season.

Why is it only the women who are subjected to bigotry? While one would obviously not wish racist encounters on a character, it is worth criticising the show's limited engagement with discussions of racial hate. While the show dips into discussions of xenophobia, it never seems to fully crystallise a fuller picture of a world at war. The fact that Alina was specifically made mixed-race for the show in order to project an image of diversity is very surface-level at the best. One can't help but wonder if this is simply the product of lazy storytelling, but at the same time, the first season of *Shadow and Bone* is so largely self-contained that one might overlook it for the time being. We wait with bated breath.

However, the one thing we never expected to do was change our opinion of Mal. In the books, Mal is — to put it plainly — awful. He is selfish, and he doesn't seem to care about Alina until she is ripped from his shadow and enters a different world, becoming the sole hope of Ravka in a new age. The show gave Mal's character so much depth, exploring the intimate connection between Alina and Mal. While the books are focalised through Alina's experiences, the show shed light on Mal's journey back to Alina, as he fought tooth and claw through the Ravkan wilderness and Fjerdan permafrost.

Mal's journey is starkly juxtaposed by the story arc of General Kirigan (played by Ben Barnes), known to fans of the books as the Darkling, whose relationship with Alina is built on lies and manipulation. Kirigan's relationship with Alina is textbook abusive from the beginning. Alina is

brought to him, terrified and confused, immediately after she emerges from the Fold having just discovered that she is Grisha, and a powerful one at that. While he takes her in and promises that they will change the world, he also alienates her from Mal, the only family she has ever known. The only people who are allowed to get close to Alina are people who answer to him. "There are no others like us," he tells her at one point. "And there never will be." It becomes clear that while Kirigan seems to possess complex feelings for Alina, he ultimately views her as nothing more than a weapon to wield.

Shadow and Bone does more to humanise Kirigan than the books attempted to, controversially revealing his true name — Aleksander — merely four episodes in. There is value in analysing the humanity of villains and acknowledging the moral greyness in which they operate. The character of Kirigan is a case study in the way that violence creates violence; we are shown a scene at the height of Grisha hunts, centuries in the past, where Kirigan is forced to watch his lover murdered by witch hunters. We see every step of his descent into darkness, culminating in his unleashing of *merzost* (the forbidden magic of creation) and creation of the Fold.

Not every relationship depicted in the show is unhealthy. One of the most exciting dynamics to grace the small screen was the juxtaposition of Kaz Brekker's (played by Freddy Carter) scepticism with Inej's faith, which is tied deeply to her sense of self. She names her blades after the Saints that she prays to, and is one of Alina's first followers. Kaz could not be more different — ever the sceptic, he looks for every reason to doubt and believes that nothing but greed motivates men. As Inej prepares to leave the Crows, knowing that she can never go back to the Menagerie that she was sold to as a child, Kaz tells her why he does not believe in the divine: "No saints have ever watched over me, Inej. Not like you have." Their relationship tells a tale of faith and doubt, the way that they intertwine and exist together like two sides of a coin.

While a second season hasn't been officially confirmed yet, showrunners have publicly spoken about plans for the future of the series — which doesn't seem unlikely considering it has been atop Netflix's chart since its release. Despite our criticisms, *Shadow and Bone* was a joy to watch the first (and second, third, fourth) time, and we can only hope for the chance to delve deeper into the Grishaverse in coming seasons.

Art by Shania O'Brien

On consent and popular culture

Chiara Bragato explores how popular media propagates rape culture.

Everyone loves a fairy tale romance. Movies and TV shows often represent love through dramatic gestures and swoon-worthy moments. But they also depict unhealthy relationships that lack boundaries, and reinforce rape culture. By normalising these patterns of behaviour, popular culture perpetuates rape culture, and blurs the understanding of consent. It contributes to the lack of understanding amongst young people about what constitutes emotional abuse and rape, and normalises toxic relationships.

Primarily aimed at teens, TV shows and movies like *Gossip Girl*, *500 Days of Summer*, and *Pretty Little Liars*, significantly shape people's understanding of relationships and appropriate boundaries. Younger viewers are less likely to have had discussions surrounding safe sex, consent, and healthy relationships, so they learn from what they see on-screen. Whilst schools around Australia require sex-ed from Year 6 onward, discussions of consent, rape, and relationships are far less common. These texts don't just normalise inappropriate behaviour,

they often glorify it. *The Notebook*, often claimed to be one of the most romantic movies ever made, is a clear example of this. Noah and Allie are depicted as a couple in love, however the relationship isn't as perfect as it seems: Noah forces Allie to go on a date by threatening suicide, she knowingly cheats on her fiancé, and they fight constantly (passion isn't everything, people). Whilst people attempt to emulate these relationships, they fail to acknowledge the unhealthy behaviours they adopt in the process. The theme of passion and pursuit is also repeated throughout rom-coms. The refusal to accept the word 'no' is often seen as sweet — the guy is so in love he has to keep pursuing her. But in real life healthy relationships are built on acknowledging boundaries and accepting when the other person is uncomfortable. How can we expect people to learn these lessons when Hollywood tries so hard to sell toxic relationships?

Despite the growing recognition that these classic pop culture artefacts are 'problematic,' they're still adored. *Grease* not only encourages young girls to completely

change themselves in order to gain a guy's attention, but also includes lines like 'Did she put up a fight?' Danny repeatedly forces himself onto Sandy and yet they still get together. *Sixteen Candles* had the 'perfect' guy that many-a-high-school girl would crush on. Yet Jake carelessly hands his drunk, unconscious girlfriend to another guy and tells him to 'have fun.'

The lack of pushback, not only from characters within the shows, but from the general public reinforces the idea that these behaviours are acceptable. Recent discussions in Australia have increasingly addressed the need for more developed education on consent. But when the government releases ridiculous videos about milkshakes, which one are people more likely to understand?

Older movies aren't the only ones reinforcing poor behaviour. *Pretty Little Liars* consistently had more than 2 million viewers an episode and yet the main romance of the show was between a student and her teacher relationship. Furthermore, *Gossip Girl* continued the pattern of 'passionate' partners, cheating

spouses, even trading your girlfriend for a hotel like a piece of property. *Mean Girls* had teenagers fighting each other for a boy, betraying their friends in the process.

The role of popular culture in shaping and reflecting cultural attitudes is undeniable. Given that media is endlessly consumed, the pervasiveness of these messages is concerning. By depicting toxic behaviours as acceptable, it not only normalises them throughout society, but makes change difficult. Targeting messages like these at younger audiences is a dangerous way of shaping their behaviour and influencing their beliefs.

A recent shift towards recognising and calling out these ideas is important. Content like *Moxie* and *Promising Young Woman*, all represent a swiftness in pop culture towards representing rape culture as unacceptable. Nevertheless, more needs to be done to reinforce healthy relationships, the respect for others, and the understanding of the word 'no.' It's time to recognise that 'picture perfect' romances aren't reality.





a dog's persuasion

A poem by Will Solomon



Art by Ellie Stephenson

What I remember best about it
Was the way the red clay
Clung to her fur like leaves
Stuck to windows by the rain.

You brought that basket there,
I held the old girl
In her pain,
And we gave her
The care she needed.
Took her somewhere
The air she was breathing
Wouldn't have her sneezing -
Wouldn't have her snout all full of soot.

In case her hair was tangled
in the sticks as she
Licked around for lizards
That she'd never caught,
(That if she'd ever caught,
She wouldn't know what to do)
We made sure to
Bring her favourite brush,
The one with bristles
Thick as a broom.

We brought a bottle
Of that Bordeaux stuff.
Yes, that's the one -
How it always made us blush -
And we had it with the Camembert,
And with the pomegranates
And the cream.

I remember we were dressed
For warmer weather.
I was in linens
And you, your moccasins
welt in nubuck leather.
We took the old two door,
the coupe you adored,
And drove down the nine mile way
To where our little Nile met the bay.
We were going for our Spring stay
In the cabin we'd built
On the provision of a dream.

As soon as we arrived,
We went swimming in the stream.
We stripped ourselves
Down to our selves and
Disappeared amongst the reeds.
We were giddied like we'd
Had some sort of "Irish Mede"
And slumped ourselves
Into a Pre-Raphaelite fantasy.

The fog was clearing,
The dog was snoring,
And the morning was nearing
As our hair lapped
At our lips amidst
A kind of shimmering
congregation of sun rises
In innumerable illuminations
Reflected here and there.

Then that wonderous dilation
Of time caught each of us
In the eye as we realised
The sky was offering lamentations
To a low, unsteady sigh:
Sleeping in the amber light,
The old girl had died.

She'd taken flight as we'd cried,
Flown up and onward
Into the night,
Or into the light.

Which ever is
A dog's persuasion.

On Writers' Festivals

Juliette Marchant reflects on the beautiful absurdity of writers' festivals.

The writer is a creature that comes in many forms.

The intensive writer can often be found hunched over a laptop, a cold mug of tea sitting beside them in a semi-forgotten state. The experiential writer embeds themselves in the action of society, carefully balancing a notepad on their knee and deftly typing notes into their mobile phone – all the while on a moving train. Not to be forgotten, the maniacal writer can most often be seen emerging from a sea of Red Bull cans in a frenzy, inveterately scribbling their ideas on oversized sticky-notes.

These descriptions are, of course, all exaggerated clichés. Nonetheless, what they share is an awareness of the solitary nature of writing.

In many ways, writing is a sort of delusional narcissism – a process of creating imaginary interlocutors that you wholeheartedly believe care about what you're doing. Moreover, where talking to oneself in isolation

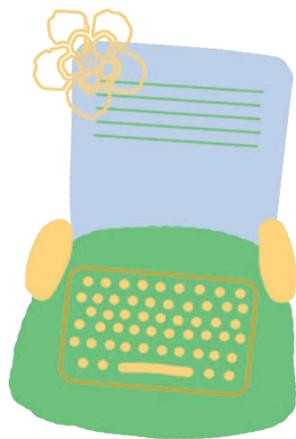
would see some categorised as mad, for the writer, this is just trade. In her appearance at the Sydney Writers' Festival 2021, Rachel Cusk explored this idea in depth, considering that the reason that she chose to write was so that she wouldn't have to speak, but festivals and the like force her into a world of discomfort and anxiety. As such, it can be established that writing doesn't set one up to be the most social butterfly, oftentimes, it does the complete converse...

However, writers' festivals are ultimately about connection – be that between writers and readers, writers and other writers (national and international), or even between other members of the writing world; publishers, publicists and the like. This essence was captured in the 2021 Sydney Writers' Festival theme 'Within Reach', which through its focus on local talent, aspired to platform writers in our own communities that are so often overlooked.

But even where the intentions are well-meaning, the reality is not always satisfying. As readers, our relationship with writers is endlessly complex. When I was volunteering at the Sydney Writers' Festival this year, a woman approached me in the book signing pavilion, looking for one of the writers whose books she had just purchased to sign the text. After informing her that that writer had finished signing quite some time ago, the patron retorted "well, can I return the book then?" This question left me rattled and pondering whether writers' festivals miss the point. Is it time to embrace Barthe's premise that "the author is dead"? Does the text lose value by being so fervently attached to the human form of its writer?

In his closing address at the 2021 Sydney Writers' Festival, David Malouf regaled: "The writer lets go of the book and sends it out into the world, to find its own company... It is readers now who will keep the book alive." If

this is true, then what is the point of a writers' festival? Is it not enough to allow the book to speak for itself?



Art by Vivienne Guo

Review: Queer Revue

Ariana Haghighi spends a day at the circus.

The circus has always been a place of wonder. Since its inception, the travelling companies of acrobats, musicians, tightrope walkers, jugglers, and all other varieties of performers have delighted and surprised audiences, creating moments of clutched chests followed by brilliant sighs of relief. Queer Revue achieved all of that and more.

The sketches had remarkable range, touching on the exhaustive constraints of 'Okta Verify,' wherein a student was forced to dance and solve riddles, as well as broaching serious issues, such as Mark Latham's anti-trans bill in a 'Trans Agenda' skit. Moments of poignancy and even sadness when briefly reflecting on the discrimination

faced by the community were interspersed with light-heartedness to lift the mood, such as the demand for 'Spongebob themed T-shirts,' and 'transing the rest of the Umbrella Academy.' The revue had its moments of dark humour though, such as the exuberant exclamation that a girl who had identified as all the letters in 'LGBT' would receive 'lifelong trauma' – but with the vibrant set, costumes and histrionic acting, the audience were not left unsettled for long. Popular sketches also played on stereotypes, such as English teacher solidarity and WLW relationships moving at lightning speeds – but from an autonomous cast, this did not feel tacky or trite, and such tropes were revived and refreshed in surprising

circumstances.

Other highlights included a convincing Ben Shapiro asserting 'gender is what's in your pants,' only for an actor to silently, and powerfully, reveal baked beans from their trousers. The second act contained many stronger sketches, and the show reached its peak in the fast-paced finale, wherein Peter McKenzie-Hutton skilfully folded a paper crane behind his back. Infectiously jovial choreography was used tactfully to increase audience engagement and hype up said moment, compounded by blaring Britney Spears and colourful lights.

The conviction of the actors in assuming well-known characters

was dedicated and faultless. If the show occasionally faltered, it was incredibly self-aware – such as an ad hoc tap dancing scene broken up for the intermission, or the proclamation, 'this show has already been too horny!'

Although the running theme of the circus could have been more pronounced, it clearly tied the 110 minute show together. When using the motif of circus misfits to evoke a narrative of self and community acceptance, the writing dodged clichés, instead creating short moments of tenderness and eliciting the audience's awe. It imparted a lasting reminder of the importance of diversity, support and community, more important than ever after the isolating climate of 2020.

Review: Sydney Comedy Festival Gala

Tom Wark loves a laugh.

Monday nights aren't always known for being the easiest environments to live up to a crowd at a comedy gig. But when the act steering the ship was a swearsy, cabaret-singing self-aware purple puppet called Randy Feltface, we were in safe hands from the start.

The Sydney Comedy Festival Gala was held in the State Theatre on Monday the 19th of April to kick-off the start of the festival and show Sydneysiders that mass indoor gatherings are back with a bang.

You could argue that a venue as ornate and steeped in history as the State Theatre shouldn't have its mystique shattered so often by the use of "fuck," at least seven times as Randy joked in his opening monologue, but there is no greater juxtaposition of old-world theatre and the appetite for live

comedy than swearing at people in the "Royal Mezzanine Lounge."

Galas can sometimes be tricky for an audience to build a rhythm as the comedians are forced to find their best five minutes and then leave you wanting more. However, on this night the acts were tight and punchy and allowed the audience to really enjoy the five minutes without being too disappointed that we were quickly being moved on.

Inevitably, not every act was a complete hit. *Schappelle*, *Schappelle* performed a number from their musical, showing at the now-desolate Manning Bar, that while high on volume and repetition, was noticeably low on laughs.

A highlight of the night though came from a source more familiar

to our parents than most students. Jimeoin closed the show with songs that left the crowd rolling in the aisles. A song where the only words are "Balls deep" in a thick Irish accent sounds juvenile, and possibly is, but the set-up was so immaculate that old and young alike couldn't help but lose control.

While COVID and its impact did loom large over a lot of the material throughout the night, very few acts chose to use political responses to the pandemic as fodder for their material. One exception was UK comedian Carl Donnelly who drank at the UK's favourite comedic well, Boris Johnson. That's not to say his material wasn't enjoyed. Trust Australians to get a great kick out of listening to how Britain had to "officially cancel Christmas."

But the undoubted star of the night

was Randy, who kept popping up like your worst, but funniest, friend to say things that would get anybody who wasn't a purple puppet punched in the head. From comparing the spleen to nightclub bouncers ("you don't really need it, nobody likes it, but if you don't have it someone's getting their dick out on the dancefloor") to his constant torment of his helpers Ben and Tom, Randy was always there to remind you of why live comedy is still the greatest form of entertainment.

Being able to say that physical comedy at its best is performed by a waist-up purple puppet confined to the limits of his two metre by two metre box, is one of those observations that you can only make at a live gig. And I for one am glad that this is how the festival chose to herald the return of big-name live comedy in Sydney.

Review: The Winter Soldier

Marlow Hurst stans Chris Evans.

If *Captain America: The First Avenger* is an earnest and accessible take on the superhero genre, then its sequel *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* is its serious older brother. Following Steve after the events of *The Avengers*, *The Winter Soldier* takes itself a little bit more seriously. This movie is always a delight to watch, taking on the genre of the Cold War thriller without making it too grim. Addressing themes of surveillance, corruption, terrorism, and international security, *The Winter Soldier* doesn't shy away from the reality of a super-soldier working within the modern security apparatus. With Hydra serving as a nice throughline from *The First Avenger*, the world differs greatly from the one Steve grew up in: threats are no longer overt, but covert.

Carrying on the legacy of its predecessor, this film gets casting absolutely spot on. Chris Evans (Steve Rogers) remains charming and boyish even while dealing with a total and complete identity crisis. Sebastian Stan (Bucky Barnes/The Winter Soldier) is tormented and desperate,

playing his limited moments of active screen time to great effect. Anthony Mackie (Sam Wilson) is such a delight to see on screen. His performance is reassuring and exceeding all at once (his introduction to the Marvel world was such a winning move). Scarlett Johanson is incredibly suave, with every word of dialogue having a distinct fluidity to it. You can tell that Samuel L. Jackson absolutely loves his role. Every word is interspersed with a foreboding warning or an ominous reference to a day long past – he was there at the start of the MCU, and god if he won't see it through to the end. Robert Redford (Alexander Pierce) absolutely came out of nowhere when I first watched this film. But I guess it just goes to show how weighty Marvel has become. Either way, Redford is stalwart and beguiling prior to his unmasking and just the right level of smarmy afterwards. And finally, a shoutout to Cobie Smulders (Maria Hill). She may not be blessed with superpowers of her own, but boy does she facilitate those who do. Maria Hill is just such a fun little tag along, bringing certain scenes

some much needed grounding. Like most Marvel movies, the characters and performances don't miss a beat. They're everything they need to be and in exactly the right amounts.

This is often hailed as one of the best films of the franchise. But what I love best about *The Winter Soldier* is that it manages to be both topical and loveable. There are so many moments which remind you that Steve Rogers is so much more than a soldier: he's just a guy trying to do what he thinks is best. When Sam adds *Troubleman* to Steve's little to do list, we get a glimpse into what he values: thai food, Star Wars, the Berlin Wall. Steve was never meant to be a soldier and he never will be one. In the words of Dr. Erskine, what makes Steve special isn't his strength, what makes him special is that he is nothing short of a good man. It's his eternal capacity for kindness that pushes this movie forward. While most Marvel movies don't have many emotional beats, when they do, they do them right. When Steve lets Bucky punch him again and again, it's not

because he can't stop him, it's because he won't. Steve isn't capable of seeing the world as a series of threats to analyse and eliminate. Unlike Project Insight, Captain America sees the world not as it is, but as it should be. Few action movies platform kindness as a valuable trait in its protagonist, but *The First Avenger* and now *The Winter Soldier* prove that the MCU's most seemingly standard hero really isn't standard at all: Steve Rogers is a character of contradiction, yet a man of simple virtues.



President

Swapnik Sanagavarapu

The past week has been a busy and tiring one, but marked by the rare occurrence of good news. As usual, I've been working hard to defend the rights of students on campus.

This upcoming Tuesday, the 4th of May, the Academic Board will finally vote on the Academic Calendar at the University of Sydney. To put it in more familiar terms, the Academic Board is finally going to vote on whether or not we move to 12 week semesters. I'm sure by now you've heard my perspective on the change. It's a bad proposal that's going to hurt staff and students. In a recent survey conducted by the SRC, 93% of undergraduate students agreed with my position. A similar

proportion of postgraduate students are also opposed to the change. We've held rallies, we've held speak-outs and we've held forums - all of which have demonstrated just how opposed students are to a shorter semester. The onus is now on the Academic Board to vote according to the wishes of students. I urge you all to contact your Academic Board representatives and tell them to vote against 12 week semesters.

We also heard the news this week that the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has proposed a huge restructuring of the School of Literature, Arts and Media (SLAM). These restructures are going to

disband the entire school and wipe the Departments of Studies and Religion, and Theatre and Performing Studies out of existence. Almost 100 jobs are going to be lost, and years of scholarship and institutional knowledge will be tossed in the bin. Management is cutting these departments because they are supposedly unprofitable. We're gonna organise and stop these cuts, save these jobs and save SLAM. To find out more information, join the Education Action Group on Facebook.

Finally for the good news. The SRC was able to deliver a huge win for the medical science students who were cruelly and arbitrarily excluded from the Medical Foundation Building, and

removed from their honours projects. I fought hard over the past fortnight - working with these students and the NTEU, as well as lobbying many decision makers around University. Last Monday, we finally heard that management in the School of Medical Sciences had finally conceded and allowed these students to return to their projects and return to the Medical Foundation Building. Solidarity with these students and their supervisors - I'm so pleased to have been able to help them achieve this result.

Until next time,
Swapnik.

Vice Presidents

Roisin Murphy and Maria Ge did not submit a report.

General Secretary

Priya Gupta and Anne Zhao

Hello everyone!
We hope you had a good mid-sem break and are settling back in easily.

The past week has been a big one for the SRC and it's collectives; the Enviro Collective successfully hosted the first Student General Meeting in over a decade at USyd, where almost 300 students unanimously voted to support the May 21st Climate Strike and called upon the university to waive

any penalty for staff and students for missing class. The Disabilities Collective and Women's Collective held speak-outs against the blatant ableist, transphobic and anti-abortion rhetoric of the Catholic Society during their so-called 'Life Week', and the Education Action Group held a rally against the shortening of Semester lengths in the lead-up to the vote on the proposal at the University's

Academic Board meeting on 4th May. There will be a simultaneous rally outside the Administration Building (F25) during the time of this vote, so make sure to show up and voice your opposition. If you want to be involved in any of these collectives, search them up on Facebook or check out the SRC Website to get their details.

Personally, we have been working on the SRC Acquittal and Audit for our

activities and spending in 2020, which we will release at this coming council meeting. Feel free to check it out! We have also been attending a variety of committee meetings, and are doing our part to ensure a vote against the 12-week semester proposal.

Until next time!
Priya and Anne

Welfare Officers

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

Hello everybody! This is our last report for 3.5 months :(so make sure you've liked the 'USyd Welfare Action Group' Facebook page to hear about what's happening!

May Day

On May Day we supported the CFMEU's green ban on the development of Willow Grove Parramatta. The student contingent brought the demands of Green Jobs, Climate Justice and Indigenous Sovereignty.

Housing campaigns

On 12 May we will bring a student contingent to the 'Defend Public Housing' rally at Martin Place. Our

demands are: don't sell off any public housing in NSW, return JobSeeker and other welfare payments to the original rate, and affordable housing for all students. Join our working bee on 5 May. We have formulated a list of demands for our student housing campaign and are in the process of contacting other groups who may want to be part of it or contribute demands.

Street kitchen

About 10 members of the Welfare Action Group attended and cooked for the CUDL street kitchen on April 25 and it was a success.

Education activism

Welfare officers attended the NO

TO 12 WEEK SEMESTERS forum and rally. It's important for students to understand that the 12 week semester proposal is a symptom of the corporatisation of the university, stretching us for profit and cutting staff pay. For these reasons we strongly oppose the proposal.

Other activism

We attended both CARR's and QUAC's protest and speakout against transphobic bills in state and federal parliament. These bills are political attacks from the right, attempting to devastate young people's ability to speak about and develop their identity, with harmful consequences.

We attended the Enviro collective's Student General Meeting (SGM) to build to the May 21 climate strike. Look out for GMAR and WoCo's 'Sorry Day' rally on May 26 - stolen generations continue despite the hollow gestures of the Labor party. I helped to organise the Students for Palestine forum on the Nakba and Palestinian resistance to occupation. The forum is building for the Palestine Action Group Nakba Day rally on May 15th. Another important upcoming rally is the Tamil Genocide Day rally on May 16th which I have been helping to build on campus. It is the first time this protest is happening in Sydney so I encourage everyone to attend.

Indigenous Officers

Matilda Langford did not submit a report.

International Officers

Zeyu He, Yuezhou (Grace) Liu, Hildy Zhang, and Angela Li did not submit a report.

Ask Abe

SRC caseworker help Q&A

EXAM Timetable & Special Consideration



Dear Abe,
It's bad enough that I can't be in Australia for classes, and everything has been online, but now I have to do my exam in the middle of the night. Am I able to ask them to give me a different exam time?

Born in the USA

Dear Born in the USA,
If you live in a different time zone to Sydney, and your exam is between 10pm and 7am your time, you can ask for a special arrangement. You must apply within 14 days of receiving your timetable, so go to the link: sydney.edu.au/students/special-consideration.html. You will need to provide them with a Student Declaration that says where you live and what time your exam would be for you.

Abe



Your EXAM TIMETABLE will be released on Mon 10th May

If you have a clash or if you need a special arrangement (e.g. a different time zone) contact the exams office as soon as possible.
see: sydney.edu.au/students/exams

Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney
Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01), University of Sydney NSW 2006
PO Box 794 Broadway NSW 2007

p: 02 9660 5222
e: help@src.usyd.edu.au
w: src.usyd.net.au

f: [usydsrc](https://www.facebook.com/usydsrc)
t: [@src_usyd](https://twitter.com/src_usyd)
i: [@src_sydneyuni](https://www.instagram.com/src_sydneyuni)



Did you know you can get FREE Dine & Discover vouchers valued at \$100? See:

service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/dine-discover-nsw



Centrelink: Qualifying as 'Independent' for Youth Allowance



Many of us like to think of ourselves as being independent in some way or another; perhaps you see yourself as being an independent thinker and enjoy having the right to your own opinions and beliefs and actions.

For Centrelink, being "Independent" essentially means that your capacity to qualify to Youth Allowance is based only on your income (and rent assistance), not your parents' income.

There are several various ways you can be considered as Independent by Centrelink and these are described below

INDEPENDENT: Age

You are automatically considered Independent for Youth Allowance purposes from the day you turn 22.

INDEPENDENT: Special Circumstances

If you are a refugee, an orphan, are in state care or have been in state care you are deemed to be Independent. This is also the case if you have a dependent child, or your parents cannot exercise their care taking responsibilities over you.

INDEPENDENT: Working

If you have worked an average of 30 hours a week over 18 months in the last 2 years, you can demonstrate Independence for YA and ABSTUDY. Remote & regional students may apply for 'Independence' on the basis of employment through income or hours worked. For more information on this go to the SRC's leaflet: src.usyd.net.au/src-help/centrelink/independence.

INDEPENDENT: Relationship

If you and your partner are a 'Youth Allowance Couple' you are considered 'Independent'. You can also qualify as 'Independent' if you have been in such a relationship in the past.

You are part of a 'Youth Allowance Couple' if you are:

- legally married and living together; or
- in a same-sex relationship registered at a state or territory level; or
- in a same-sex or opposite-sex de-facto relationship, including living together, for a continuous period of at least 12 months.

Your partner's income and assets can affect your Centrelink payment. See the SRC's leaflet: src.usyd.net.au/src-help/centrelink/relationships.

INDEPENDENT: Unreasonable to Live at Home (UTLAH)

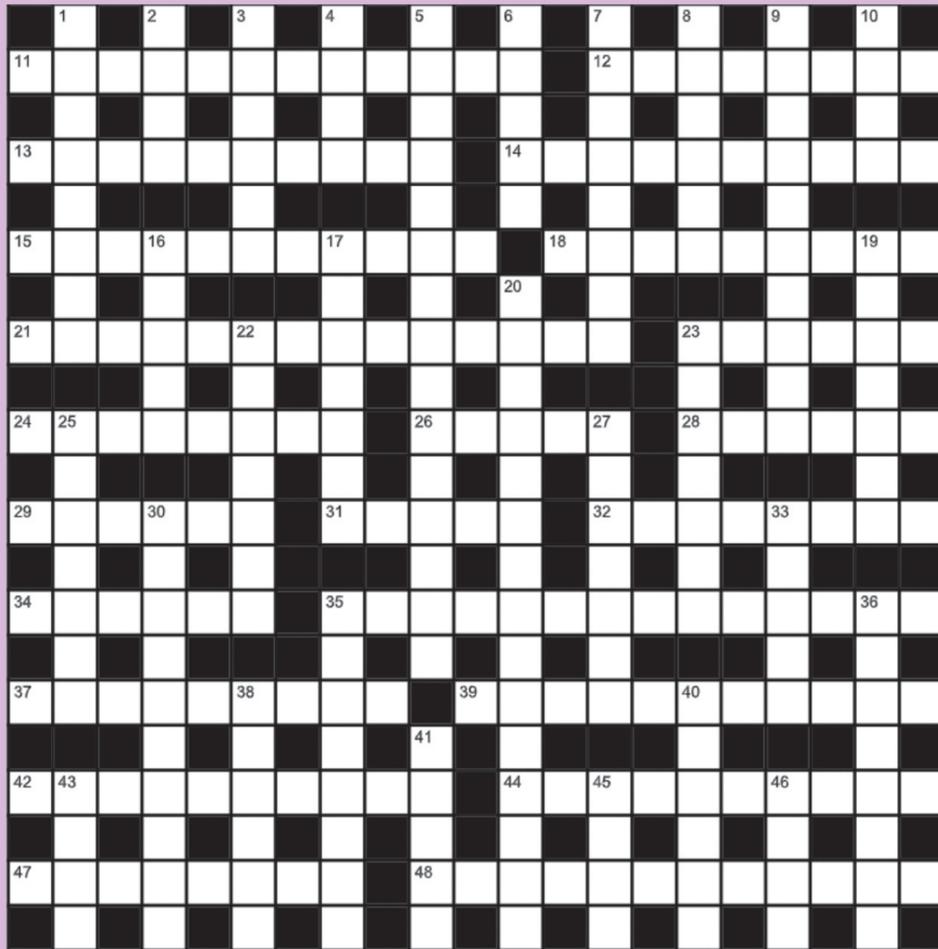
If you have already moved out of your parent(s) home and can demonstrate it is 'unreasonable' for you to live with your parent(s), Centrelink will consider you 'Independent'. Generally, Centrelink will consider it unreasonable if you, or someone in your home, is subjected to physical, emotional or sexual violence. There are a few other circumstances that may be considered. For more information go to: src.usyd.net.au/src-help/centrelink/independence.

You will need three supporting documents: One by you, one by a parent (not always possible) and one by a third party who is aware of your family life (e.g., counsellor, doctor, police officer, teacher, religious leader, adult relative, or as a last resort, friend). Centrelink will probably ask to contact your parent(s), but you can instruct them not to if you believe contact could put you in danger.

For help with any information about Centrelink call 9660 5222 to make an appointment, or email your question to help@src.usyd.edu.au.

Omega Crossword

Clues denoted with a question mark are cryptic.



Across

- 11 Side dish made of puréed root vegetables (6,6)
- 12 Witness (8)
- 13 Metalworker (10)
- 14 African island, bad movie (10)
- 15 Clever people who get computers to do tricky stuff (11)
- 18 Not in the CBD (3-2-4)
- 21 Protestant religious institution (8,6)
- 23 ? It is in this genre (6)
- 24 An Iberian Jew (8)
- 26 Block of precious metal (5)
- 28 Lorde song (6)
- 29 Jewish father and fatherland (6)
- 31 Swamp beast (5)
- 32 Receptacles for cigarette debris (8)
- 34 Uni building in Picture A (3,3)
- 35 Uni feature in Picture B (8,6)
- 37 Mysterious (9)
- 39 Unintended consequences (especially of medicine) (4,7)

Down

- 1 Witch's pot (8)
- 2 ? Stylish as one from Araby, they say (4)
- 3 Ukrainian port (6)
- 4 This very paper (4)
- 5 Santa Claus (6,9)
- 6 Uni building holding Courtyard café (5)
- 7 Enthusiastic search for Au (4,4)
- 8 Uni building near Parramatta Rd Footbridge (3,3)
- 9 Higgledy-piggledy (5-5)
- 10 Greek cheese (4)
- 16 Pink parrot (5)
- 17 Uni building in Picture C (7)

- 19 Uni building in Picture D (7)
- 20 Those who smuggle illicit substances (4,11)
- 22 Uni building famed for its gloryhole, on 25 Down (7)
- 23 Builder's headwear (4,3)
- 25 Uni's main pedestrian thoroughfare, ... Avenue (7)
- 27 Jaffle (7)
- 30 Metaphors, fables (10)
- 33 ? Clean inside mandarin segments (5)
- 35 ? Alec has a drink (8)
- 36 Polar opposites, highs and lows (8)
- 38 ? What a general keeps up his sleeves (6)
- 40 Uni building in Picture E (6)
- 41 Uni building over near the colleges (5)
- 43 ? \$1 car (4)
- 45 Cloak (4)
- 46 One hundredth of a dollar (4)

Quiz!

All answers begin with the letter J.

1. What town was built in 1982 to house workers at the Ranger Uranium Mine in the Northern Territory?
2. What medical term refers to the yellowing of the skin?
3. Which Italian Football Club is based in Torino and wears black and white stripes?
4. What is the largest planet in our solar system?
5. Who is the Princess of Agrabah in Disney's Aladdin?
6. Which actor has appeared in such diverse productions as Macbeth, Cabaret, As Time Goes By, GoldenEye, and Cats?

Lateral Thinking

Puzzles by Sarah Purvis. Try to come up with a creative explanation for these riddles!

1. A man is driving slightly above the speed limit when he sees a police car on the side of the road. Instead of slowing down to avoid a ticket, he speeds up until he is greatly over the speed limit and drives off. The police officer sees this. The police car is in perfect working order and he was stationed to catch speeders, but he sits in his car and does not do anything. What's going on?
2. In 1773, during James Cook's second voyage, the people of Tahiti became interested in one of Cook's possessions. They were first impressed by the sound it made, and later when they learned its purpose, they called it a little sun. What was it?

Picture A



Picture B



Picture C



Picture D



Picture E



Want answers to these puzzles? Search "Puzzle Solutions" on honisoit.com

THE BOOT

Studies in Religion to be replaced with Catholic Society approved major

Miss Ionary Position reports.

In a "major restructure," the University of Sydney has announced that Studies in Religion will be replaced by a new major designed by the Catholic Society.

"Here at the University, we value this higher-order skill called critical thinking," a spokesperson told The Boot. "We're confident the Catholic Society will pose thought-provoking questions to reinvigorate students' learning experience."

The new major will include subjects

such as "Fetal Feminism" and "Children's Anatomy."

When asked for comment, the Dean of Arts — now Artsbishop Annamarie Jagose after being baptised in Victoria Park Pond — said she was excited to see her students "find God deep inside them."

"Keep an eye out for Theology Thursdays, fish and chips catered lunches and political football games!"



Vertigo editors held hostage over poem critical of University

Phallic Architecture reports.

Chaos ensued after UTS Students' Association Arch Dictator Aidan O'Rourke held Vertigo editors hostage on the roof of UTS Tower.

Editors say they were held for 48 hours "without food, water or fonts" after they published their first news in decades.

The news piece in question, entitled "\$3.2m cuts to Arts may impact Gen-Z fashion," was hidden inside a poem that took days to decode before O'Rourke confirmed that it indeed contained criticisms of the University.

Sources confirm they saw an "extremely white" flash of

light, presumed to be O'Rourke, darting up and down the tower on Wednesday crying and depositing every edition of Vertigo in a large-scale incinerator.

O'Rourke told The Boot that due to Section 600(d) of the Constitution, which was moved at a private meeting just two hours ago, he is "constitutionally obliged" to "hold students hostage."

The editors were released after they signed a contract with O'Rourke to publish pictures of their Vice-Chancellor enjoying a vegan Bluebird Brekkie in the next edition of Vertigo.

In this issue...

Student shocked for the 9th time this week that there are cars on Camperdown campus / p 61

Student says no to SAlt petitioner only to run back to explain that it's not the petition itself, they just don't want their phone number in the system ... ya know? / p 38

USyd hosts its own Oscars: Oscar Chaffey takes home grand prize / p 48

Reviewer asks to re-view Revue review / p. 25

ASIO says they think a conservative Honi ticket is imminent / p 88

Victoria Park renamed to Victoria Park, but this time after Victoria from Victorious / p 0

Casual staff demanding fair wages found to be in the pocket of Big Survival / p %&

Kerryn Phelps drops out of mayoral race to run for USU board / p 999

Tina Lee promises to payback the funds she embezzled from one society by embezzling from another / p 666

destination

HONI SOIT WRITING COMPETITION 2021

**ENTRIES
OPEN NOW**