

THARUNKA

University of NSW's Independent Student Newspaper



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Ed's Letter

VOLUME 60, ISSUE 4
Week 6 - Week 7

At least once a year a mainstream media outlet will publish a story that perpetuates the college stereotype. They spread the idea that everyone who goes to college is a rich, white guy who drinks too much and treats women/freshers/people of colour/taxi drivers like second rate citizens.

I hate those stories. I hate those stereotypes. Most of all, I hate that colleges only make the news when some idiot stuffs up.

In Issue 3 of Tharunka, my own group of colleges came under fire. This time around, I hated the response of my peers, my fellow alumni and the current residents.

I loved every second I spent in the old Baxter building. I loved the people I was surrounded by. I loved the attitude.

My experience of college was idyllic. But as a middle class, white girl whose only real struggle is when she spends her rent money on beer instead, I don't ever take the position that my experience of college life discounts anyone else's.

The number of comments about the 'El Dorado' article I have heard, read on Facebook, or read as letters to this publication from students who go or have gone to college were both confronting and disappointing.

"You shouldn't go to college then!"

"It wasn't intended to cause offence so therefore we aren't to blame."

Pull your socks up, TKC. That is not the attitude or experience you want projected. Using ignorance to excuse racism or discrimination of any kind is something that happens everyday in Australia. And this is something our generation should be consciously combatting. We should stop excusing ourselves by expecting our brash and ill-informed words to be taken "as a joke".

To any student at TKC or any college for that matter, I expected a mature response. I expected you to apologise for your ignorance. I expected you to share stories of how inclusive and welcoming the college experience can be. How strong the sense of comradeship is. How it is a shame that one of your own didn't get the same awesome college experience we all deserve.

I expected my college to turn this negative press around, and to use this insight to create an even more inclusive and brilliant place for students to live. I expect everyone's potential college experience to be as positive as mine.

TKC, you have the potential to be something great and a real asset to UNSW. Don't waste it.

With love,

Freya, with Ammy and Jake

Dear Editors

I write in response to the article that appeared in the recent edition of Tharunka titled 'When culture became a costume at Goldstein College'.

As is noted in the article, the theme of Goldstein's O-Week was 'El-Dorado, the Quest for Gold', which was intended to highlight both the 'Gold' that is 'Goldstein' and to celebrate Goldstein's Golden Anniversary in 2014.

As has been made clear by the article, some students have concerns around insensitive cultural appropriation in the use of this theme.

Of course it was not the intention of the college or any of the students to cause any offence. However, this is no excuse. The college is committed to taking measures to ensure that all students are aware of the range of sensitivities, concerns, and needs of all other students.

Goldstein would never promote or condone any sort of deliberate harassment or vilification, especially where such conduct has a racist, sexist, homophobic or any other discriminatory undertone.

The Kensington Colleges, and the University run accommodation more broadly, always aim to be open and accepting places where students can grow and reach their full potential. And, in pursuing this, are always open to suggestions that can help us reach that goal.

Yours sincerely

Nick Dowd, Dean, Goldstein College

Having read Amber Grimble's article 'When Culture became a costume at Goldstein college' I certainly feel it necessary to make clear how misguided this article is.

The "several" (no more than two) students who complained regarding the cultural sensitivity of the theme clearly need to check themselves. An El dorado theme, whilst obviously carrying cultural connotations, in no way marginal-

ises those of any culture. Whilst I am not proposing that these students "toughen up" or "grow a thicker skin", I certainly think that they should discontinue their self-victimisation and contortion of both intention and reality.

If it is acceptable for event goers to contort and manipulate themes in order to take offence to it, then maybe the upcoming Arts Camp Theme "Arty in the USA" should be questioned? In the same convoluted vein, does such a theme not present a generalised, and hence marginalising, take on American culture?

It's also probably worth noting that their [sic] is a place in Mexico called El Dorado. You should visit sometime, you'll have a golden time.

Sincerely, Robert Gordon

Your 'Goldstein College' article was the most ill-informed piece of literature I've ever set my eyes on. Rachel Lobo is the worst collegian to have lived at The Kensington Colleges. First of all to take a theme that is 'El-Dorado' (As in the Children's movie about a lost city of gold) and try and find any offensive meaning behind it is an absolute joke. The aforementioned had no qualms in participating throughout the whole week and even had the audacity to turn up to the 'anything but clothes' party taking sips straight from her cheap bottle of wine. Also, to take offence to some other colleges dressing up as Indians is also a joke. If this is the way people are going to think than [sic] no theme is going to be acceptable. 'Oi, you can't have a sports themed party, because some people don't play sport and they will get offended'. Good mentality. Kicking goals Rachel.

Love Tarren Barry

(an ex-college student, and an Indian)

Response from Rachel Lobo:

Dear Tarren,

I'd strongly encourage you to read "Look Out New World, Here We Come", [Race, Racialization and Sexuality in... Animated Films...] by Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo which explores the pervasive racist and sexist themes within the movie you mentioned.

After raising a concern with a Residential Communities Director upon checking in, I followed through with their suggestion of bringing the issue up. So I did that, with an O-week leader, who happened to be one of the O-week convenors, who informed me [that great lengths had been taken to ensure racial stereotypes would not be perpetuated]. Within a few hours, the Dean and my floor's Resident Fellow were at my door. The Dean suggested any further issues be brought up directly to him. As at that

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Tharunka acknowledges the Bedegal and Gadigal people, the traditional custodians of the land on which the University stands.

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Letters

Submit your letters & comments to **THARUNKA**

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point, I had not received any written student complaints from within the college so was limited in my capacity as the current SRC Ethno-Cultural Officer to take any substantial action.

However after the Friday night party in our common room, which I did attend for 40 minutes, student complaints from within and outside of the college had come through either directly to me or were posted on social media. One thing about TKC is that it is located on campus. This might lead to one of the other 55,000 students receiving a UNSW education witnessing the behaviours of TKC residents.

Amber's article was written as a result of a non-college student posting their concerns on a social media outlet, thereby making the issue no longer limited to within the college. I was asked to comment on said Tharunka article. I decided to make a suggestion for cultural sensitivity training to be provided for Resident Fellows and House Committee members, which to the best of my knowledge is not currently provided. Most workplaces in Australia and more globally have this as compulsory for their workers and with the changing demographics of on-campus residential accommodation it would be good to have implemented from a duty of care viewpoint. It will be an area evaluated in UNSW's National Union of Students Ethno-cultural audit later this year. From my understanding, the article and my comment, did not indicate any intended malice on part of the O-week organisers.

If students raise a concern with the SRC, and this concern is reasonable, I would hope that we would do our best to address the concern without allowing personal factors to influence how we represent their interests. My responsibility to voice the concerns of students that fall under my portfolio is not relevant to where I may live.

An individual from a particular cultural group is not the spokesperson for everyone from that culture. If you're having trouble understanding why racially-themed parties are problematic, you might like to read 'When Parties Become Racialized: Deconstructing Racially Themed Parties' by Gina Ann Garcia.

Your sports analogy is not exactly coherent. It does not have the historical context of genocide, rape, colonialism and tangentially, the trans-atlantic slave trade. I can understand, particularly with the geographical distance between Australia and the South American continent, along with the limited representation in the media and in 'mainstream' history books of the lived experiences of People of Colour, why some students

may not know about these issues. There are quite a few sources that have covered this, including Stolen Continents by Ronald Wright, American Holocaust by David Stannard or the works of Olin Tezcatlipoca, Director of the Mexica Movement (an educational organisation for the indigenous rights of Mexican and Central American peoples).

Obviously I'm biased on this one, but I don't think my decision to participate in approximately 10 of the 30+ O-week activities, most of which did not involve wearing a shirt with a design used to represent a departed soul, is the primary issue here. There could be a chance your idea of a true collegian is flawed.

I wanted to thank you guys for the recent piece regarding Goldstein College and the blatant disrespect they have shown to the people of both Mexico and South America. After discussing it with friends and colleagues, I feel as though I am in the minority in my beliefs, though. Too many times have I heard the words "Seems a bit oversensitive doesn't it?", "I am Mexican and I found the old-school stereotypes pretty funny" and the ever present "Is this all they have to talk about?" However, I applaud your willingness to report on the mundane and uncover the painfully boring opinions that make UNSW what it is.

Tharunka provides a voice for people like me. People who have a voice that can't be heard. Whether it be because I am of an ethnic minority, I hold no position of authority, or the fact that I really am not bothered, this article spoke to me and reached out to me in a fashion that made me believe it was written specifically for my eyes. The repetitive nature of this almost poetic piece of literature was able to drill the same point home over and over and over again with only a slightly decreasing level of interest as it went on.

The fact that I was candidly exposed to one side of the story (with the odd neutral quote from the opposing side), allowed me to fully grasp the opinions that really mattered without being caught up in hearing about the probably pointless traditions of the college and hearing from any of the decision-makers behind the O-week theme.

I look forward to reading more on this topic and hearing what (hopefully drastic) changes are made around campus.

Jared Aylward

Re: No longer on the fence: The vaginal lobotomy

It was good to see Tharunka explore

FGM/C, however a more nuanced view would have been appreciated - for example UNICEF's 2013 report found that 'social acceptance' was the most cited factor in numerous communities, or that parents are often driven by the question 'What is best for my child?' Taking factors such as these into account would have made for a more balanced article.

The piece did spur me to learn more, (go Tharunka! :D) and I hope sharing these starting points below will contribute to more a sophisticated understanding of this urgent human rights issue.

UNICEF 2013 Report:
<http://goo.gl/wRrXjZ>

An FGM/C alternative:
<http://goo.gl/hPlpX4>

Chere De Koh

Regarding Lawrence Leung Article- "Serena Williams & Indian Wells"

The claims made in the article are factually inaccurate. "15,000 tennis fans reportedly harassed the Williams family during the championship match by repeatedly calling them n****s". This did not occur. If Mr Leung wants to make a point about race and tennis, please do not make up unsubstantiated facts. The crowd was unusually hostile with loud booing and if Serena Williams chooses not to play at Indian Wells then her decision should be respected. But the piece in the Tharunka is inaccurate concerning what actually happened.

A comment on something else. I've been at UNSW for over two years and I've noticed the quality of the Tharunka seems to vary quite a lot. I'm sure this is because of rushing to meet deadlines and the inexperience of student reporters and editors so there has been a number of articles that have been shoddy but also some of respectable quality. But this is the first time I can recall that I felt the Tharunka was out to do a 'hatchet job' and the target was Warrane College. The cover artwork is insulting and the article, with pointless digs such as "women, however are not allowed above the ground floor" gives the impression that Warrane students are misogynists.

It would be best if the editors at Tharunka question the impetus of why an article was written and given such a prominent position. If there is inter-college squabbling going on, then try to take more of an objective position rather than unfairly maligning an entire college and the vast majority of students who had nothing to do with an incident occurring last year. The cover and the article resemble 'tabloid trash' and one hopes standards are raised in future edi-

tions.

Luke Ph.

Response from Lawrence Leung:

I received a response to my "Serena Williams & Indian Wells" article contending that the Indian Wells crowd may have been hostile, but my claims of racism were "unsubstantiated".

While I acknowledge conflicting reports of the crowd's use of racial slurs, the claims are not unsubstantiated. As I noted, tournament officials declined to confirm or deny the allegations, instead claiming "maybe [they] heard what they heard". Media reports were inconclusive; a majority of articles were written well after the fact, and by reporters not in attendance (admittedly, that includes this article).

What is important is that the Williamses have commented on the incident. Venus has openly agreed with her father, Richard Williams, who said he heard "N****, stay away" and threats of being "skinned alive". Serena has penned a chapter of her autobiography on the incident where she explicitly states hearing multiple racial epithets.

While there will always be an uncertainty clouding the nature of the crowd's hostility, it is unfair to say claims of racism were "unsubstantiated". The Williamses have consistently and extensively condemned the racism they believe they encountered on that day. To say their accounts were of no substance is to strip the Williamses of their voice in the incident.

I recently read with interest an article in Tharunka concerning the "cultural appropriation" of other nations' dress and customs on campus ("When Culture Became a Costume at Goldstein College").

In an era of mass human rights abuses, global inequality, and looming world conflict, it's good to know some of us are focused on the important things. Like the imperialist implications of fancy dress, for instance. Now that the author has exposed this shameless parodying of other cultures, I'm sure the colonialist appropriation of national cuisine is next on the agenda. I eagerly await the boycotts of Guzman y Gomez (along with Max Brenner, of course).

I'm also looking forward to hearing about the author's crusade on behalf of the Irish and Italian peoples, after the clearly 'appropriated' St Paddy's and Toga parties. Why stop at Day of the Dead, when 'jungle theme' is considered racist?

Regards, Patrick Leal (M Arch)

NOODLE HOUSE YARNS

with
DAVID BAILEY-MCKAY

Seduction and overcompensation to many is only witnessed after 10:30 pm at the Roundhouse. In politics, seduction and overcompensation are merely tools in garnishing votes and influencing others. For years, I have seen people promise Big Red Ferraris to unsuspecting voters, only with the intention of delivering, at best, a Ford Focus. And this happens, not out of dishonesty or contempt for the unsuspecting voter, but because during elections, people will do anything to get over that magical line of 50 per cent plus one.

This desire to overcompensate one's political promises has come about for a number of reasons. The rivalry between politicians and political actors would be seen as the main contributor to this. In campaigning and running in contested elections, much is put on the line – egos, bragging rights, and increasingly, money, are all at stake. This sees people develop political identities that slowly turn to urban myths.

For example, a certain Victorian is rumoured to almost never speak both in public and in private. When they do, however, they supposedly only shout. Now, I have heard from multiple sources that this politician, however, only acts in this manner as it is now to be expected of them.

Why do this? It is because this mysticism is what builds a reputation and the illusion of power? I have met people who hold power based not on their control of the numbers or ability to head kick, but because they are perceived to have the numbers or head kick. When a reputation precedes you, there is no need to organise, as many will cower in fear and dare not organise.

However, like the commerce student who claims to own a Red Ferrari, this at times is illusion. Power in politics can only be shown on the day. Of those involved in the split, many were meant to have their reputations destroyed and rolled from all their positions. So far, they have only been rolled up the party machinery. In the end, those who claim to be big players are actually completing a glorified account degree, and the only thing that is 12 inches is their die-cast model of a Red Ferrari.



Date

Events

Thursday
April 10

**12-8pm, Dodgeball competition
The Roundhouse, Free entry**

"Dodge, dip, dive, duck and dodge," those are the five rules of Dodgeball and if you can adhere to them you should enter this competition with a group of friends (entry is FREE) with a chance to win up to \$500.

Thursday
April 10

**5pm-8:30pm, After Tiller film screening and Q&A
Ritchie Theater, Free entry**

After Tiller is a documentary that follows the four remaining doctors in the United States that give late-term abortions. Named after George Tiller, a doctor who performed abortions and was murdered in 2009, the film was described by a reviewer for the New York Times as "groundbreaking in giving voice not only to the doctors, but to those who always seem to get overlooked in the high-volume political debate about this topic: the women themselves." Organised by the Sydney Feminists group and WAAC (Women's Abortion Action Campaign), the screening will be followed by a Q&A session.

Short List

BITE SIZED CAMPUS NEWS

SDC Convenor removed

The Arc Student Development Committee (SDC) has voted by special resolution to remove its 2014 Convenor, Andrew Shim. The decision was ratified by the Arc Board at its March meeting.

The special resolution to remove Shim required a 75% majority of voting members at the SDC meeting. While Shim was initially elected to the Convenor position by the six elected SDC members in late 2013, at the meeting in which he was removed, three ex-officio members (the Arc Chair, and SRC and PGC Presidents) and two new SDC Sports Representatives were also allowed to vote on the special resolution.

Among the factors cited for Shim's dismissal were a lack of communication, complaints received from Arc clubs unable to contact the Convenor, and under-performance in the four months since his instatement as Convenor. Tharunka understands that of the five scheduled SDC meetings in 2014, two have been can-

celled at short notice, and another postponed.

It is unclear whether Shim will be continuing on as an ordinary member of the SDC.

Bye, Bye, Freddy (Freddy, Goodbye)

In the wake of Vice-Chancellor Fred Hilmer announcing his retirement at the end of 2014, after more than eight years steering the UNSW ship into icebergs, the University has announced an international headhunt for the next President and Vice-Chancellor of UNSW.

The frontrunner for the position is Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Iain Martin, who has held his current position since October 2012.

Applications for the position closed on March 31, and final interviews will be conducted in mid-May.

InterSOC forum breaks down bureaucracy

The newly formed InterSOC forum, an initiative by Entrepreneurial Society members Ashley Graf and Elliot Redelman, will seek to better coordinate clubs and societies by connecting club Presidents with each other online and at monthly events.

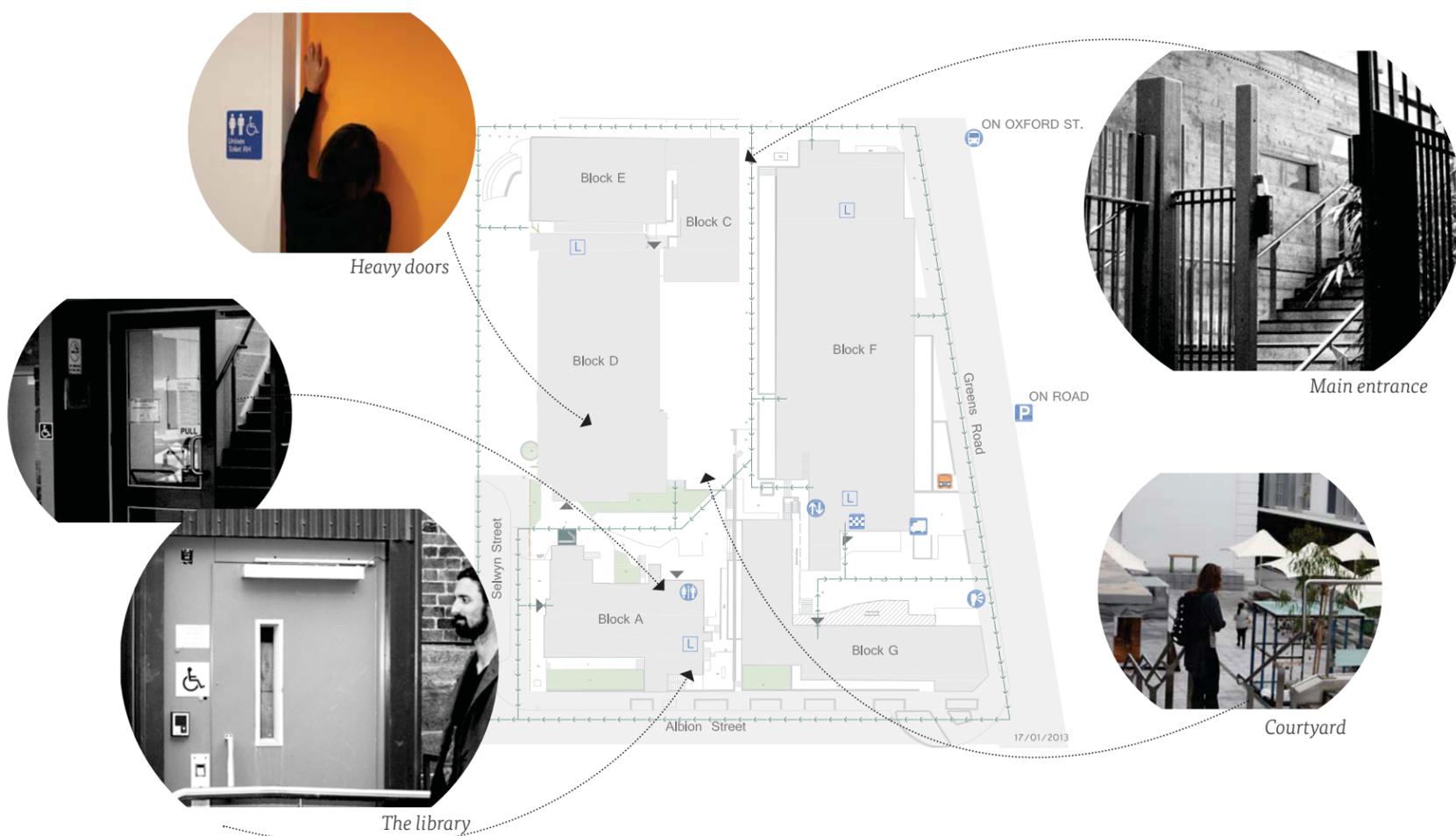
Co-creator Ashley Graf said, "This will assist in autonomous organising of multi-society events between related clubs". The forum will also assist clubs in learning how to obtain sponsorship and avoid event clashes with similar societies.

Insecurity with UNSW Security

UNSW Security's new safety campaign has seen the rollout of drink coasters containing helpful advice for students such as "safety in numbers" and "change direction if you think you are being followed and find a safe space".

No doubt UNSW students will be thrilled for the reminder over a quiet drink that the onus of escaping a would-be assaulter is on them.





Poor accessibility at COFA

Matthew Baker

A recent *Tharunka* investigation into accessibility for mobility-impaired students on the College of Fine Arts (COFA) Campus has found several outstanding problems that need to be addressed.

COFA students with mobility impairment are finding it difficult to get around the campus. Amy Mills, a COFA Councillor and Disability Officer – who also has mobility impairment due to Cystic Fibrosis, a liver transplant and diabetes – told *Tharunka*, “I do feel angry and disadvantaged [at the current situation at COFA].”

However, the problem is one that affects more than students with disabilities.

“It’s not just disabled students, it’s mature students, it’s expectant mothers... it’s students who have broken bones, and it’s even students carrying their weight’s worth of art supplies,” Ms Mills highlighted.

There are several specific problems facing students with mobility impairment on the COFA Campus, *Tharunka* has been told. Many relate to the design of the campus, which, despite recent developments, remains unfriendly to the mobility impaired.

Such problems include no access to the library because of a broken lift; no ramp at the main entrance to campus (partly due to a one-year delay in the construction of a cafe); lack of direct ac-

cess to several buildings; and doors in some of the buildings – such as D block – are too heavy to be opened by mobility-impaired students (particularly those in wheelchairs).

“If even the main entrance doesn’t welcome me, how can I be expected to enjoy my time at university?” Ms Mills told *Tharunka*.

Dr Scott East, recently appointed as director of student experience at COFA, agrees that more needs to be done.

“I think most people would acknowledge there is more that needs to be done to improve the physical accessibility of our campus,” Dr East told *Tharunka*. “Universities operate within a legislative framework, which requires no disadvantage for students living with disabilities compared with the greater student population,” said Dr East.

Notwithstanding these problems, very few formal complaints have been received by the Student Equity and Disabilities Unit (SEADU).

Dr Ann Jardin, Director of SEADU, noted that she had received only two complaints in relation to access issues at COFA in 2013. The first of those related to refitting and changing the route of a charter bus to COFA for a mobility-impaired student, which has since been resolved.

A second issue raised was in relation to the doors at COFA, which are very heavy in some areas and problematic for mobility-impaired students. As Dr

Jardin told *Tharunka*, SEADU staff did a walk around COFA Campus with Facilities Management (FM) in the first half of 2013 to make FM aware of student concerns.

When asked if FM had made any proposals to remedy the situation since that walk around, Dr Jardin told *Tharunka*, “Facilities Management do not always communicate them [proposals] back to us.”

Ms Mills said that responsibility for these issues “lie with everyone: students, staff and Facilities [Management]. It is the staff’s responsibility to ensure that equality is upheld at COFA and that no student ever feels like they are disadvantaged because of their circumstances”.

Delays in remedying the situation can also negatively impact on the studies of students with mobility impairment, and can even put them off continuing their education.

When asked if students feel that the current situation would put students with mobility impairment off enrolling at COFA, Ms Mills agreed, telling *Tharunka*, “If anything, I think that it would dissuade future students from choosing to study at COFA.”

A key problem affecting the studies of mobility-impaired students at COFA is the situation with the library.

“At present, there is no access to the library at COFA for students who are mobility impaired; every student should have access to the same resources,” said

Ms Mills.

Despite recognition of current problems at COFA, rectifying the situation is often incremental at best.

“There are very real challenges involved in providing a physically accessible site in the midst of on-going building works,” Dr East told *Tharunka*.

With regard to changes in accessibility at the main entrance of COFA, Dr East said, “The upgrade is part of the City of Sydney’s Oxford Street Cultural Quarter Action Plan and is the gateway through which students and visitors will soon be able to pass from the liveliest cultural precinct in Sydney to the city’s leading art and design school.”

Recent meetings between COFA councillors and Dr East looked at ways to improve the campus for all students, including those with mobility impairment.

According to Ms Mills, the first step in this arduous process towards rectifying this situation is through informing the student body, so pressure can be put on other relevant bodies within the university.

“Students haven’t been informed about what’s going on at COFA, and I think there needs to be better transparency. Let’s let the students have a say about this discrimination at COFA,” Ms Mills told *Tharunka*.

Facilities Management were contacted for this story. Unfortunately, no comment was received.



Party before the protest

Matthew Bugden
@matthewjbaker07

The “March in March” rallies held around Australia, perhaps more than emphasising the various grievances the left have with the Abbott government’s policies, called into question the effectiveness of mass protest as a political weapon.

It was not the outpour of genuine, often heartfelt sentiment from protesters, but the tongue-in-cheek response of Prime Minister Tony Abbott when asked for his views on the campaign that defined the day. Rather than criticise leftists and their politics, Mr Abbott donned a sly smile and pretended the interviewer was referring to the St Patrick’s Day Celebrations that were held on the same weekend.

The quip, so easily shrugged off, is actually a sophisticated political move for two reasons: First, it shows that conservatives are beginning to realise their silence is more effective than criticism, and second, and by far the more confronting of the two developments, that Tony Abbott has demonstrated his ability to use irony against the left.

Abbott’s response was reminiscent of the almost complete lack of coverage the March in March got from the media. The event, which saw over 50,000 people take to the streets, received scant media attention, and much majority of coverage it did get, bemoaned the public indecency of the protesters.

“These were not mass protests of the size and style of the Vietnam era. They weren’t as large and certainly not as violent and disorderly as civil rights protests

in Queensland in the 1970s and ’80s. But they were large enough to be worthy of more basic news coverage than they received,” writes John Birmingham of the Brisbane Times.

But it was not just conservatives that weakened the left. Federal Opposition Leader Bill Shorten’s acknowledged that the March in March protesters were exercising a democratic right, though without lending any moral support to their cause, underscores the deep mutual estrangement of the Labor establishment from its traditional voter base.

This was also true of moderates more generally. Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) columnist Jacqueline Maley, in her recent article, “March in March: Two sides of the story we didn’t run”, highlights the self-defeating elitism of the radical left and their antagonism of moderate liberal media outlets capable of getting the message out there. In a cerebral dig at left-wing zealots, Maley writes, “It is strange that people who despise the MSM [mainstream media] so much are so angry at being ignored by it.”

She claims that the lack of coverage was due to the movement’s lack of clearly defined goals, a criticism that was frequently made of the Occupy movement. She emphasises that the likely reason SMH did not pick up the story was because they had no coherent message, with complaints ranging “from asylum-seeker policy to gay marriage to fair trade”. Indeed, the present political system seems far too pluralistic for any sort of convergence to occur. It would seem that the common element to these protests is really anti-liberal-democratic – a sense that the normal channels of democracy have failed the Australian

people and the structure of politics no longer can accommodate them.

But for all the buck-passing the radical left engage in when asking why they have become so marginalised by the “mainstream” political discourse, at the end of the day, the role of modern protest is simply to raise awareness. Despite some unrealistic placards calling for referenda or votes of public confidence on Abbott’s policies, this should be a top priority. It follows that a snubbing from major media outlets, even from the Murdoch Press, is a serious problem.

Negative views of the radical left are commonplace in Australian public life, a fact underscored by Maley’s reply article. She responded to accusations from co-ordinators that Fairfax was part of a corporate media conspiracy to “black-out” any serious coverage of the protest, which canvassed serious anti-business views such as opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the recent government-funded loan to the tune of \$110 million for an offshore joint venture between BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto.

In defending herself and her publication, Maley demonstrated the moderate’s repulsion for heated left-wing activism. She brackets the March in March with last year’s Anti-Gillard protests, and writes, “The left does itself no favours if it resorts to insult, vitriol, and mad muttering in dark corners of the internet,” regardless of the validity of its claims.

Operating within a political culture that pities and ridicules the stoic, crusty left-wing protester, the SRC is looking at alternative ways to engage studies and attract them to their cause. On March 26, it experimented with a “festival”-style pre-protest party, with food and a DJ, to

help the “Abbott: Hands off our Education” rally.

The National Union of Students initiative opposes the \$2.3 billion in proposed cuts to education spending under the Abbott government.

The new revamped style of protest is the brainchild of SRC Education Officer Billy Bruffey, who acknowledges the misgivings many students have about left-wing activism. He says that the current culture of student apathy is regrettable since the cuts have a direct impact on students, and are not just abstract discussion. But he still sees potential in UNSW, saying, “We’re just as big as USYD, and equally if not more politically progressive.”

Bruffey says the SRC modelled the “pre-protest party” on Chilean protest movements that emphasise community and festivities – they hope that this will counteract the perceived drudgery of student activism.

SRC President Joel Wilson welcomed the event for galvanising the student body.

“There is a groundswell happening at UNSW. We are getting activists who are actually passionate about their education and about making sure student services, clubs and societies, and people at UNSW are adequately represented and get a proper education,” says Wilson.

Bruffey added, “This has been building for a couple months now, and even though we’ve been rained out and didn’t get as many numbers as we hoped for, today really represents a good start for the education collective and activism on this campus.”

Students with disabilities draw the short straw

Nick Timms

Overworked and under qualified staff, course software that isn't compatible with assistive learning technologies, and a lack of student note takers are among a growing list of concerns about the services for students with disabilities at UNSW.

Members of the students with disabilities community and the SRC's Students with Disabilities Officer, Alexandra Little, have voiced many concerns regarding the conditions for disabled students at UNSW. The overworked and allegedly under experienced disability staff at SEADU (Student Equity and Disability Unit), are chief among these concerns.

"They keep hiring staff who have no tertiary qualifications in disability, nor relevant industry experience," Ms Little says.

According to Ms Little, one of the main staff members who has been working in SEADU since last year, does not have the necessary qualifications for the role.

"He came from Student Central, and he has no background in disability. To his credit, he has been trying really hard to get on top of things, which is no mean feat, especially when you consider that he has no experience," she says.

"Dr Ann Jardine who is the director of SEADU has no qualifications in disability either. Her area of expertise is equity. When I asked about the qualifications of her staff, Dr Jardine did not deny that they had no appropriate tertiary qualifications. She instead emphasised the fact that these staff undertake professional development. This can never take the place of a degree and industry experience".

According to Caitlin*, one of the students who receives services from SEADU, there are no staff members equipped to deal with students with mental health issues.

"I don't think there's anybody there with understanding of mental health conditions, and I don't think there's anybody there who might understand the implications of medications that stu-

dents might be on," she says.

"This age group, between 18 and 24 is where you're going to get the onset of certain mental illnesses, so if you actually haven't got a clue of how to help somebody like that, it's not going to be easy for you to give them the accommodations that they need."

She also says that due to the lack of proper support, some students choose to contact staff members from their schools.

"I saw informally a member of staff from my school, and they said that they were so distressed with what they couldn't get from SEADU," she says.

"They were actually managing the students themselves, which was good on one side because at least students were getting some sort of service, but for me that really goes against confidentiality. Students would need to disclose what their conditions were to staff members, which flies in the face of what SEADU is about."

One of Caitlin's friends, who was also receiving support from SEADU, found his studies too difficult to continue with.

"One student has actually left the campus and gone back home, because he just couldn't get the support that he needed," Caitlin says.

Ann Jardine, the Director of SEADU, says that the experience of her staff members is up to standard. While they come from different areas of expertise, they all receive mental health training on the job.

"The skill mix of staff coming into the service can be many and varied. The three staff members we have at this moment are appropriate for the roles they are undertaking," she says.

Ms Little disagrees.

"The SEADU Administration Officer has seen over two dozen students in the capacity of a disability advisor (sic.) This is akin to going to a medical centre and being seen by the receptionist! A student that she has seen told me that they required another appointment with a disability advisor later on in that week to put in place the adjustments that the administration officer was unable to implement because she doesn't have the

necessary skillset."

There are concerns that SEADU employees are overworked, as there are only three Disability Advisors for the almost 1000 students with disabilities at UNSW. ANU has four permanent full-time disability advisors who all have tertiary qualifications in disability. Macquarie University has four full-time disability advisors and they are all qualified psychologists.

"One of my bosses, she would be going between the office I worked in, and an office downstairs regularly over the day. Sometimes she wouldn't be able to turn up in the office because she had to take someone's position, and be on call, like in charge of the phones and stuff," Hank,* a SEADU employee, says.

"The actual managers and higher up supervisors, they seemed like they had a lot on their plate."

Another issue of concern that Ms Little has raised is Moodle not being compatible with assistive learning technologies for visually impaired students.

"There is a program called JAWS that reads out all of the different buttons and links on the computer screen," she says.

"Moodle wasn't accessible in this way. This was never an issue with Blackboard".

Ms Little also says that the new lecture recording software, Echo 360, was incompatible with these assistive learning technologies.

"When we put in systems, we have to build what we call integration interfaces, and it does occasionally take time to find the bugs," Wai Fong Chua, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Students) says.

"When you introduce new technology, you always end up having a bug fix."

According to Ms Jardine, the problems have been fixed in the system.

"SEADU's been working with Learning and Teaching, and IT, and all the major problems have been fixed, and the students have been notified of that," she says.

"There are some minor problems, I understand, that they're still working on, and we've asked students to come to us if they have been having particular problems."

Ms Little acknowledges that while the problem has been fixed, "it has taken nine months for this problem to be resolved, which is just too long."

Last year, the students who SEADU hires to write lecture notes for students with disabilities began receiving \$10 vouchers as payment instead of the usual rate of \$27 an hour. This has raised concerns that there won't be an adequate supply of notes to many students that require the service.

Miles Davitt was a note taker in his first year at UNSW in 2012, but decided against it after the change in payment.

"I got an email for the position, but when I saw that they were only offering \$10 book vouchers, I decided that it wasn't worth my time," he says.

"The need for note taking becomes superseded as there is more and more material online, and far more material being accessible through technologies, such as Echo," Ms Jardine says.

"Students are finding they don't actually need to rely on notes by others, and that's actually enabling those students to be independent learners by themselves, and take charge of their own learning if you like."

Overall, Caitlin believes the services provided by SEADU need improvement.

"Sometimes students will be really well, but then they'll plummet again. They need a reference point. Sometimes students just need reassurance about something, and sometimes it can be quite simple response that would allay their anxieties," she says.

"Now they have to phone up, leave their name, try and get an appointment, and it just adds to their anxiety."

Ms Chua, however, remains confident that UNSW is able to provide adequate help for its disabled students.

"At the end of the day, if there are issues, then students come to us with issues and we try and manage them," Ms Chua says.

"If there are issues with the quality of service, that's our responsibility."

*Names changed

New academic withdrawal procedure raises concerns

Crystal Moran @manlycarrots

Last issue, Tharunka reported changes to the procedures for late withdrawal from courses. The changes, due to come into effect in semester 2 2014 or semester 1 2015, will record withdrawals on transcripts, replacing the current procedure of erasing courses entirely. While much of the discourse has been about bringing UNSW's withdrawal procedures on par with the other Group of Eight universities, Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Chua says the new policy is a tool to help identify and assist students at risk.

"There is quite a lot of interest in the University for early intervention and trying to understand and manage students who may be having difficulties. We don't have any data on withdrawals, and currently because none come through, it's hard for us to actually flag a student until it's way too late," Professor Chua said.

Referring to the biannual 'assessment review groups' within each faculty which monitor student performance, Professor Chua said, "If we start to say 'okay, why are there a couple of academic withdrawals?' - because we will now be recording

them - the faculty review committee will look at the students' performances, and contact the student and see if they can assist them in any way."

Enquiries by Tharunka reveal that under the old procedure, academic withdrawals are recorded by Student Central for accounting and administrative purposes, and that faculties are sent courtesy copies of the outcomes of withdrawal applications by Student and Academic Services. It is therefore unclear why this information is not currently being used for the purposes described, or why it is necessary to record withdrawals to achieve these aims.

For Professor Chua, the other motivations for the policy are providing flexibility for students who don't meet the current guidelines for academic withdrawal, as well as creating a complete and accurate record of a student's time at university.

"I'd like to put the power back into the hands of the students. This policy is a way of saying 'you can manage your life and we will be there to assist'. We are giving students the ability to withdraw

right until the last day of the semester. I think this [new policy] assists folks who aren't managing for all sorts of reasons and gives them discretion over their studies."

"[The changes] will say to employers, 'you started a course - which is a matter of fact - you had to withdraw, and that withdrawal was permitted. And that is an accurate record of what happened.'"

UNSW's student leaders have expressed concern that these changes will effectively 'out' students with disabilities to potential employers.

SRC Students with Disabilities Officer Alexandra Little said, "In practice, the new system will mean that potential employers will be able to identify a student with a disability or medical condition just by looking at their transcript. It is completely inappropriate for students to be disadvantaged because of circumstances entirely beyond their control."

SRC Welfare Officer Brendan Byron had similar thoughts, saying "If you're withdrawing without academic penalty, you should be able to withdraw without penalty. Having a mark on your tran-

script is a penalty."

"It's interesting to see who this is supposed to help. They aren't helping disadvantaged students, who are trying to complete university degree in unstable circumstances."

The Pro-Vice Chancellor confirmed that a review will be conducted twelve months from commencement of the new policy, and that feedback will be sought from student leaders and faculties.

"My sense of having a trial is to actually ascertain 'is there an issue, and if so, how large the issue would be, and how may we begin to address it?' That's why I said to the Board, let's see if the faculties feel this is a way for them to manage students at risk in a better way. That is a very important measure of success".

While throughout Professor Chua's dialogue with Tharunka, the changes were referred to as a "trial", a representative from the Pro-Vice Chancellor's office later said in a statement, "Professor Chua would like to point out that the Board has not described this as a trial. The procedure has been endorsed and it will be reviewed".

Why it's still worth giving a Gonski

Michaela Vaughan

@mvaughan101

When the federal government was voted in mid-last year, many students and schools remained hopeful that the *Review of Funding for Schooling* (aka the "Gonski") agreements made under Labor were going to be implemented.

Before the election, Liberal Education Minister Christopher Pyne promised that "you can vote Liberal or Labor and you'll get exactly the same amount of funding for your school". Much was at stake in such a statement - NSW, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT had all signed six years of fully funded Gonski agreements.

Unfortunately, only just a few weeks later, the Abbott government back-flipped on its election promise, citing the Gonski agreements as "inequitable and utterly incomprehensible". As such, the federal government has only committed to a third of the money required to execute the Gonski agreements, thus neglecting the urgent needs of students

as identified in the report. The Abbott government's apparent resistance to Gonski recommendations manifested in the removal the Gonski Review from the Education Department's website late last year. The report was only later restored in January as a result of a freedom of information application by Fairfax Media.

The Gonski Review was commissioned by Julia Gillard in April 2010, the Education minister at the time, in a push to fundamentally reform schooling in Australia. This review was the most comprehensive undertaking of school funding in close to 40 years. It sought to determine the funding required to achieve an equitable education system so that, regardless of a student's background, location or choice in school, there would be no disadvantage. Former panelist of the Gonski Review Dr Ken Boston stated in a press conference that "Gonski will create a genuine meritocracy". As it currently stands, the gap between the achievement of top and bottom performing students in Year 9 is up to five years.

Tharunka caught up with David Gonski, who headed the Review and has

remained decidedly distant from commentary since the release of the report. "A good reviewer remains independent of politics," stated Gonski. "I believe it was a good review and that the strength of the report speaks for itself. Anecdotally, the public response to the report has been very positive. It is up to the state and federal governments now to decide whether or not the funding is worth it."

In early March, "I Give a Gonski" supporters, lead by the Australian Education Union (AEU), commenced a road trip around the country to remind teachers, parents, principals and local communities precisely what is at stake if the Gonski agreements are not fully funded. This road trip also was a timely reminder to the federal government of the widespread community support for Gonski funding before the announcement of the May budget.

Angelo Gavrielatos, AEU Federal President, informed Tharunka, "Gonski is about giving every child a great education, but unless the Coalition agrees to fund it properly, kids are going to miss out. We wanted to let people know the

2014 budget is a critical point where the Coalition government must indicate what its future plans are."

On Friday, March 21, submissions closed to the Senate inquiry by the Select Committee on School Funding. The AEU reported that close to 3,000 submissions from schools and individuals were sent through the "I Give a Gonski" website. Some schools also made submissions directly to the Senate. This Select Committee will investigate and report on the development and implementation of national school funding arrangements and school reform. The reporting date is 14 May 2014, and presents another opportunity to reinforce the need for and the support of Gonski funding to the Coalition.

Gavrielatos urged, "We have the best opportunity in decades to do something about the way we resource our schools and educate our children. It isn't a time to sit back and hope it happens - it is a time for everybody who cares about education to let the politicians know this has to happen."



The Chaser's Andrew Hansen, on being a theatre wanker

Freya King

When *Tharunka* spoke to The Chaser's Andrew Hansen, he assured us that he was brooding in a dark room somewhere, sipping on iced tea. Most of you would recognise Hansen as the guy that played piano and sang satirical songs on the various "Chaser" shows, which is good because that means you might think he is funny and go to his show.

Hansen has teamed up with fellow Chaser alumnus, Chris Taylor, to put on their second live sketch show as a pair, *'One Man Show'*.

"I wouldn't pay money to see it," says Hansen, in his typically self-deprecating fashion.

The Chaser are renowned for their satirical take on Australia's political landscape, but this is a show that isn't aimed at hacks - Hansen promises there isn't actually that much substance to the show.

"My personal preference is [that] I just want to be amusing, I don't even aim to be funny," says Hansen. "I don't much care about making a point, when I worked with the other guys some of them were very keen about making a point. I am not that fussed about it, I think this show is a chance for Chris and I to stretch those British absurdist muscles a little more than we do in The Chaser."

This show channels Monty Python and silliness for the sake of silliness a lot more than the usual Chaser gags.

"It's kind of old school, [like] all those British style sketch comedies, so with a whole lot of songs and we dress up as all kinds of characters. We explore things that we find amusing, things that annoy us. The show is about annoying Facebook updates and the way that people get outraged and offended online for no good reason," says Hansen.

Being offended for no good reason is something that Hansen ironically takes particular offence to. He himself is particularly good at being angry. Conveniently,

the show features an expression of that anger - highlighted through song, naturally.

"[For this] show I have actually written an entire song about this whole phenomenon [taking offence to trivial things] and it interests me a lot. It bugs me and kind of annoys me, so it's a kind of an anger filled and furious song. It's probably the angriest song I have ever written. It's a song about anger, the fact people get so angry about things they haven't actually seen and don't know anything about, but they are happy to express their offense about it," says Hansen.

The process of creating this show was a particularly boring one, and you definitely won't catch Taylor or Hansen waxing lyrical about their creative process.

"It's very boring and difficult. For me, it's just frowning, absolutely stressed out of my mind at a screen for hours on end with nothing happening you know. It's very boring. One of the papers actually asked us to write an article about how we wrote the show. We had to say to them we can't write that, it's too boring. We just sat at a computer and think a lot. That's how it gets done unfortunately. We missed the boat on all the good times, there's no LSD - I sometimes have an iced tea. That's the closest I get."

Hansen does admit that he has picked up a few fancy, pretentious words from this creative endeavor - even if they aren't the direct result of his writing process.

"I have always been a massive wanker, and this is a great opportunity to be a theatre wanker. I have started using trendy terms that my director taught me, like "when a piece lands". Apparently that's what you now say. I think we used to say, 'I hope this will fly. [Now] if you are really, really cool, you say 'I hope this lands'."

If you are interested to see the two Chaser boys' show "land", check it out at one of two Sydney locations during May.

One Man Show, May 1, Concourse Theatre Chatswood, 7:15pm. May 2, The Metro, 7:30pm. Tickets \$38 + booking fee.

Tharunka, Snog, Marry, Avoid

What is the first change you would make if you ruled the world?

"First change would be I would appoint somebody who knows how to rule the world. I would be terrible. I would fire myself as my first move."

Snog - Who do you admire even though you have no rational reasoning behind that admiration?

"No one, honestly there is no one I like without having good reason for. Well actually, I am a huge fan of Disney animation and I don't have any good excuse for that. And I have never met any of my peers who are in to that."

Marry - If you could have dinner with anyone, every day for the rest of your life, who would it be?

"It would have to be one of my existing friends. If it was someone I had never met before I would be reluctant to sign up to dinner for the rest of my life with them. I will just have to name my old primary school friends."

Avoid - Who are you willing to call out as the poster boy/girl for everything you despise or hate about the world?

"It's every greedy dictator, every reactionary person who doesn't let everybody say what they want to say. I don't know if there is one specific person I would want to name, but any commentator or politician who has tried to silence somebody else, I think that's [the reason] behind why the human race is almost certainly doomed."

*“You did an awesome job of making a guy look like a trans*woman, instead of hiring a trans*woman!” ”*



Image: Ellen DeGeneres

THE BIGGEST WINNER IS STILL THE ACADEMY

Albert Santos

Oh, the Academy Awards. The one night every year where the American film industry comes together to celebrate the best, most innovative and most thought-provoking films of the past year, then hand awards to whatever the Weinstein Brothers produced.

There's a beauty, however, among the parasitic nature of it all. In spite of the smug self-righteousness, white people back patting, tabloid fashion statements, bad Ellen DeGeneres jokes and poorly-conceived social media integration (see: picture above), there are few – if any – high-tier award shows that give screen time to the people behind the scenes, from Best Visual Effects to the people who wrote the music for *Frozen*. It's moments like these that – to quote the beautiful speech of Best Supporting Actress Winner Lupita Nyong'o – “remind me and every child that no matter where you're from, your dreams are valid”.

The big winners of the night were *12 Years a Slave* (three awards, including Best Picture), *Dallas Buyers Club* (three awards, including Best Actor) and *Gravity* (seven awards, including Best Director). Each one deals with topics that a predominantly white, male Academy voting block has trouble comprehending. *12 Years a Slave* is a haunting look back at the recent history of pre-civil war America. *Dallas Buyers Club* deals with the 1980s AIDS epidemic among the LGBTI community. *Gravity* spends over 90 minutes focused solely on an independent woman.

Each film is a deserving winner on face value. Though once you dig deeper, cracks start to show. *12 Years a Slave* is easily one of the best films of 2013, but when the much larger 'spectacle' film *Gravity* wins most of the awards throughout the night, you get the feeling that the win was an act of penance for past wrongdoings. Forgive me if I take the cynic's approach on this one, but it's not a far stretch to think that the Academy – an institution built on traditional, conservative values, who has previously lauded such racist tripe as *Crash* and *The Help* – weren't awarding this film with their highest honour out of pure merit.

Similarly, *Dallas Buyers Club*, aside from being a classic 'Oscar-bait' film, brought its own Pandora's Box to

the fore. Jared Leto's turn as trans*woman Rayon won Best Supporting Actor, despite the fact that the trans* community had spoken out against his casting. The same can be said of the Best Hair and Make-Up Award accolade bestowed to them; the Academy essentially saying, “You did an awesome job of making a guy look like a trans*woman, instead of hiring a trans*woman!” Though, to be fair, in a field where your other options were *The Lone Ranger* and the latest *Jackass* film, it was probably the best choice.

Gravity is an interesting beast. It's somehow the most optimistic of the big winners even though it stars Sandra Bullock. But it's also about not much at all: the US space program is over so there's no commentary to be made there, the film's problems are resolved via dream sequence, and any tale about the introspective nature of loneliness is lost in the constant need to make the emptiness seem exciting. What's left is something more thrilling than a Movie World ride, but also a whole lot less poignant, the final message being a dull “earth good, space bad”.

Like every year, arguably the better films were left out of the envelopes. *Blackfish*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Blue is the Warmest Colour*, *Before Midnight*, *The Wind Rises* and *The Act of Killing* all left the ceremony either unmentioned or empty-handed, despite each one being infinitely better than most Best Picture nominees could ever dream of being. The Academy Awards arguably play out in rote fashion, where the nominees and winners merely exist for the betterment of those that vote for them. The real winners, in the end, are the Academy, who can spend another year feeling good about their 'choices'.

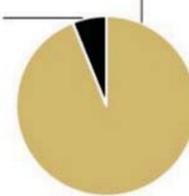
The real sign of the Oscar's lack of contemporary understanding, however, may have appeared during the show itself. The biggest cheer of the night was reserved for, surprisingly, Kevin Spacey, who broke out the southern drawl of Frank Underwood, from TV series *House of Cards*, during proceedings. While it was a funny reprieve for the audience, it also served as a warning: television, especially premium cable channels like HBO, are taking the place that cinema once occupied as the innovative, thought-provoking and indeed best mainstream artistic medium.

Who's voting anyway?

Mostly white

White 94%

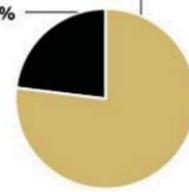
Other 6%



Mostly male

Male 77%

Female 23%



Mostly not Oscar winners

No nomination/win 64%

Won 14%

Nominated but didn't win 19%

Unknown 3%



Source: Times Reporting. Data analysis by Doug Smith, Robert Burns, Khang Nguyen
Los Angeles Times



Lauren McCracken

If Tim Wilson is to be believed, the most pressing human rights issue in Australia today is the lack of freedom to “offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate” someone on the basis of their “race, colour or national or ethnic origin”.

This refers to section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act*, which Mr Wilson, our new Human Rights Commissioner, would like to see removed.

Sorry, did I say Human Rights Commissioner? I meant “Freedom” Commissioner. Mr Wilson’s spunky new informal label is not insignificant. It denotes a shift in focus from the longstanding, hard-fought-over and internationally recognised concept of human rights, to Mr Wilson’s arbitrary definition of freedom.

Free speech is an important human right, but we must not forget what damage we can do to that right by legalising hate speech. Tim Soutphommasane, the current Race Discrimination Commissioner, wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that allowing racial vilification can harm freedom of speech by silencing its victims. He wrote: “Not everyone is in a position of parity to speak back to those who denigrate them on racial grounds.”

Mr Wilson’s focus on defending those guilty of hate speech, rather than their victims, seems even more bizarre when you look at how 18C has actually been interpreted by the courts. No one has ever been convicted for hurting someone’s feelings. Unlawful conduct has consistently been defined as that which causes “profound and serious effects”. In addition, section 18D of the same act defends free speech by protecting instances where someone has acted in good faith. This includes genuine artistic, scientific or academic work, or fair comment or reporting.

This is why Andrew Bolt lost the court case that triggered this debate. The piece, in which he claimed people had chosen to identify as Indigenous Australians for political gain, was not written in good faith. Facts were distorted, ignored or intentionally left out. Such a maliciously written and widely read column unleashes bigger worries for the indigenous community than a defamation case could address.

The Bolt case wrapped up in 2011, yet it now seems to be the only thing our Human Rights Commissioner is yapping on about. Meanwhile, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is being treated as the plaything of our government and opposition.

Our current and former governments are guilty of denying asylum seekers their basic human rights. These include Article 14, “The right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution,” and Article 9, “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.” Article 26, which outlines the right to free elementary education, is also being denied to many children in detention.

At the time of writing, Australia is also refusing to support a UN resolution to investigate serious violations and abuses of human rights in Sri Lanka. Over the last year and a half, Australia has sent more than 1,000 asylum seekers back to Sri Lanka. If Sri Lanka is found guilty of these abuses, so too will Australia be found guilty of denying these people their rights under Article 14.

Let that sink in for a minute. Australia, which we so often credit as being one of the fairest and most egalitarian nations of the world, is denying asylum seekers their core human rights. And yet our “Freedom” Commissioner’s primary focus is restoring the right to spew hate speech. Forgive me for being cynical, but it feels like Mr Wilson’s appointment and the 18C debate is a demented sideshow, concocted to distract us from frightening human rights abuses happening on our watch.



Nicholas Gerovasilis

The federal government’s proposed changes to the Racial Discrimination Act have fostered an animated and polarising debate. The importance of this discussion should not be understated. It is a question of freedom of speech. This fundamental principle is one of the key differentiating factors of any healthy democracy. So it is critical we do not take it for granted.

Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to publicly cause offence, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person or group of people on the basis of race. This is the legislation Andrew Bolt was found to have breached by the Federal Court in 2011, in relation to his comments on fair-skinned Indigenous people.

It is necessary to make two important points about why I believe the current legislation goes too far. Firstly, the provisions are heavily subjective. In summarising his judgment against Bolt, Justice Mordy Bromberg noted that for a successful claim under s18C, it was required that Bolt’s conduct be “reasonably likely” to cause offence, insult, humiliation or intimidation. However, reasonableness as a metric is far from an objective standard, free from individual idiosyncrasies.

The degree of conduct that will “cause offence” will vary markedly between individuals. So it is incorrect to propound the present provision as an entirely unbiased criterion for determining racial discrimination. Yet, in a recent opinion piece (16/3), *Sydney Morning Herald* political correspondent Bianca Hall satirically suggested that if the government gets its way in repealing s18C, the definition of what is racist will be left at the behest of politicians like Attorney-General Brandis or SA Senator Cory Bernardi.

No. That goes to the heart of exactly what the repeal of Section 18C strives to prevent. Unlike Hall, the government doesn’t accept the idea that we need a law to tell us what is racist.

This brings me to the second point, which is that by prescribing in law the limitations on discourse about race, we are extinguishing the space in which public debate ought to be occurring. Janet Albrechtsen, writing in *The Australian* (19/3), highlights this exact concept. As Human Rights Commissioner Tim Wilson expounds, a healthy democracy cannot function where law and social norms are fused. For Albrechtsen, without a gap between these two concepts, the status quo becomes unchallengeable; there can be no constructive debate about where society collectively believes the line falls on acceptable conduct.

If Andrew Bolt’s remarks on fair-skinned Indigenous people indeed abrogate social norms on racial commentary, he should be proven wrong by robust debate. We might find racist views repelling, but by gagging them, we only serve to spare them from the sobering judgment of public opinion. And for those who take offence, there is surely a cathartic comfort in the profound agent of public morality condemning racist sentiments. For mine, this is perhaps an even greater countervail than mere legal reprimand, as it possesses a social character whose significance the legal system often lacks.

However, for those who assert that an unfettered right of free speech is too extreme, the lawyer who represented Bolt in his case, Justin Quill, proposes an intelligent middle-ground solution (*Herald Sun*, 10/3). He suggests that a more appropriate benchmark might be the provisions presently operating in Victoria. The Victorian Racial and Religious Tolerance Act sets the bar at comments that cause “hatred, serious contempt, revulsion or severe ridicule” based on someone’s race. In this sense, there is legal protection for most extreme cases, while also upholding that most critical space in which debate must occur for the sake of a healthy democracy.



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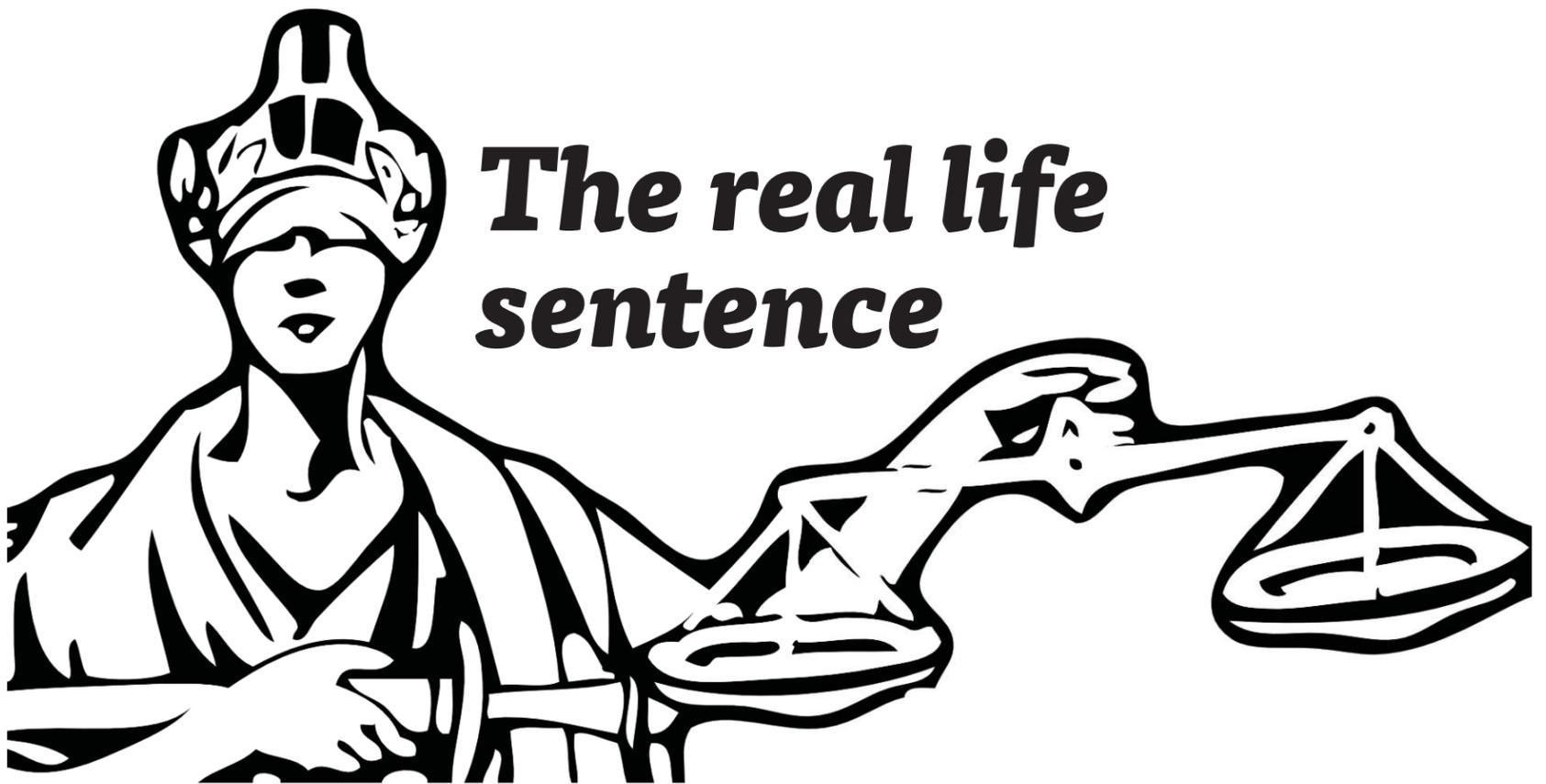


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The real life sentence

Tia Singh

Every time I look at Denise Morcombe, my heart breaks a little. She has a lost look on her face, a constant sadness that only the families of victims can empathise with. Her 13-year-old son, Daniel Morcombe, disappeared on 7 December 2003 while on his way to buy Christmas presents for the family. Ten years on, we now know that Daniel was abducted and killed by serial child sex offender Brett Peter Cowan. On 14 March 2014, Cowan was sentenced to life imprisonment with a non-parole period of 20 years. Twenty years? That is only the statutory minimum standard non-parole period for murder in Queensland.

It turns out that Justice Atkinson, knowing Cowan's criminal history, and having the capacity to ensure he rotted in jail a lot longer than 20 years, didn't get it right. One week after sentencing, the Queensland Attorney-General, Jarrod Bleijie, has announced that the sentence will be appealed. He describes the non-parole period given as "manifestly inadequate" on the "worst of the worst" of child sex offenders.

And rightfully so, Mr Bleijie. In the past, Cowan has been sentenced to jail time for child sex offences. However, on both occasions, in 1987 and 1993, after having spent only half of his sentences behind bars, he was allowed back on the streets. The reasoning provided by Justice Atkinson for not giving Cowan a harsher non-parole period was that it would be a "perverse incentive" for sexual predators "to kill their victims" in order to avoid being caught.

If anything, I believe the Morcombe case demonstrates that be it 10 days or 10 years later, the families and authorities will not rest until they catch the culprit. Had Cowan, and then some, served their initial sentences, they would not have had the opportunity to attack again. They would be locked up, away from society, where they belong. This is a criminal who admits that by 18, he had preyed on 30 children at his local swimming pool. This is a criminal whose second victim was found with such brutal physical injuries, that police initially suspected he had been hit by a car...

Remember Jill Meagher? The ABC employee who was walking the five-minute distance to her Melbourne

flat from the local bar after drinks with workmates and was raped and killed? Her attacker, Adrian Bayley, had 16 counts of rape and 11 years of jail time to his name. He was out on parole when he murdered Jill. Victorian Premier, Denis Napthine, said that "the system failed Ms Meagher". The story is the same – an opportunistic, repeat offender let back on the streets to attack again. Bayley is now serving a minimum of 35 years behind bars for the rape and murder of Jill. Compare this to Cowan's 20...sound sufficient?

I note that the above comparisons are two different jurisdictions, however, the principle remains the same. A life is a life, be it a child, an adult or a senior citizen, and to take away somebody's liberty to live, through a sexual attack or by ending their life itself, is a disgrace and deserves the harshest of sentences. And repeat offenders? You can guess what my thoughts are...

In all of this, though, I truly believe the real life sentence is served by the victims and the families of those who face these horrific crimes.

RIP Daniel Morcombe – your legacy lives on.

Increased fees deserve a

Linda Ma (@lindicator)

What's making the rounds of student activism recently? The notion that Australia's Group of Eight (Go8) universities have abandoned students' interests in a submission to the current federal government higher education review. The National Day of Action, concurrently organised in March by the National Union of Students across Australian universities, will target this, among other cuts in the university system.

But are students mistaking good policy for ideology? The notion that students enrolled in lucrative degrees should pay more for their degrees deserves greater scrutiny and sympathy.

It is useful to examine the submission from the Go8 to the Kemp & Norton review to understand its actual

recommendations, instead of a garbled version filtered through Facebook. The facts are: The Go8, their hand forced by lean financial situations, have proposed that students in degrees with high projected private financial returns should pay more for their education. Their proposal is to deregulate the cost of such degrees, from the set \$11,725 at present. Greater money would allow these courses to be taught with more resources and a higher level of quality. Considering these degrees are only federally funded at a level of 16.5 per cent, this would not be as large a change in the repayments for these students.

The facts remain that around 50 per cent of university students come from the top 10 per cent of wealthiest households (measured by the socioeconomic status formula) in Australia. The bottom quarter of students

represent only 14.8 per cent of undergraduate students. Demand-driven funding has done little to improve this situation. By contrast, it has increased numbers of students from high-SES backgrounds, but with ATARs below 60. The concentration of university entrants from wealthy backgrounds is even more notable in "prestige" degrees like law, commerce and accounting.

It is untrue that the Go8 proposal will lead to low-income students being shut out of these degrees. An original architect of the HECS scheme, Professor Bruce Chapman's research shows that under the HECS model, intending students of such degrees are not statistically affected by a rise in fees. Provided that prospective students receive price signals of their future income, indicating that they expect to more than recoup the money they spent in obtaining their degree, they will continue



Christopher Wong

"I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

– Evelyn Hall on Voltaire

A disturbing trend has emerged amongst those who identify with progressive politics. It is a preoccupation with the stifling of humour that is perceived as discriminatory – be it of the racial, sexual or religious persuasion. This preoccupation is seen in the ardent defence of the s18C provision of the Racial Discrimination Act – the "Bolt Laws". It is also seen on university campuses across Australia, and in the progressive media.

The premise of this argument is that offensive humour, be it in jest or otherwise, normalises discriminatory attitudes, and consequently, should be banned. Sociologists have described this as an example of "Social Dominance Theory", whereby prejudicial social attitudes result in the subjugation of certain minority groups in society. It has also been identified in other forms as the "Prejudiced Norm Theory", which suggests that "disparagement humour" increases the tolerance of discrimination against the subjects of that humour.

There are two problems with the logic employed by this argument. First, it assumes that the airing of prejudicial opinions normalises them. Second, it leads to the conclusion that stifling these opinions will reduce the level of prejudice in society. But perhaps most importantly, it ignores our fundamental right to voice our opinions, however distasteful to others they may be.

Finding a racist or sexist joke funny may well indicate that you hold similar deep-seated views, but the sharing of that joke does nothing to enforce or validate those views. Offensive jokes are the result of prejudicial attitudes in society; they do not, however, cause those views. Those attitudes were formed as a result of a knowledge deficit – a stalwart perception held of a group unaffected by facts or logic. Offensive humour is unlikely to be the source of those types of beliefs. It is implausible to suppose that offensive jokes will encourage people who do not hold prejudicial attitudes to begin forming their own.

Focusing on the result of prejudicial attitudes diverts attention from examining the source of those views. Banning the voicing of offensive humour in public arenas does nothing to change the prejudicial attitudes that formed them. Furthermore, it unnecessar-

ily antagonises those who hold these views. Changing their opinion is a far less likely prospect if they perceive their rights as being infringed.

If the goal is to stamp out discriminatory attitudes, then focus should be directed to the causes of prejudice, rather than its end product. Allowing an open discourse has never prevented societal change from the ground up – see, for example, our changing attitudes to Indigenous Australians or non-Anglo immigrants post-World War II.

Most importantly, however, we should not ban speech because we deem it morally repugnant. In a fair and egalitarian society, matters of opinion cannot be objectively judged. Consequently, no attempt should be made to do so. It is principally inconsistent to allow the majority to freely speak their mind, but deny that same right to a minority. Our right to free speech allows for all views to be discussed openly. It enriches society, and encourages debate. Laws like s18C only serve to prevent prejudicial views being debated in an open forum, where their merit or lack thereof can be assessed.

If the goal is to tackle prejudice head on, it is better to see its true face, rather than pretend it doesn't exist.

second look

to enter these careers in droves. And they do – we are seeing massive surpluses in law and commerce graduates that do not necessarily match the demand for such professionals.

The average male law graduate can expect to earn nearly \$1.2 million more in their lifetime compared to the median male school-leaver. Considering the cost of an individual law degree amounts to just over \$30,000, it is a lucrative investment a student makes in their future earning capacity. In the (statistically unlikely) event that such a student did not earn more than the repayment threshold (\$51,309 p/a in 2014), they would not be required to repay their loan. It seems unjustifiable to hand out money to students who will soon be relatively very wealthy compared to the general population – at the expense of the very taxpayers who now find themselves, by comparison, impoverished. As the

Go8 submission puts it, "The policy is socially regressive...and requires a larger relative contribution from those in the taxpaying community who are less able to pay."

Even if economics comes out to show the enrichment of these graduates, does there remain questions of intergenerational equity? After all, in the days that our political leaders went to university, university was a negligible or lesser cost. While our principles of equity may be intuitively offended, this is only because, in the past, there were much more greater inequities of opportunity.

Excluding the economically unsustainable period of free university education, historically, higher education in Australia has been limited to the very wealthy, or a very narrow tranche of the extremely talented, with negative impacts for the intellectual and economic

richness of our society. Most of us would conclude it is preferable that more of our young people are given the opportunity to invest in their own futures and to share in the benefits of higher education.

Ultimately, it is the government's responsibility to extract the greatest possible benefit for the public from the investment of public money. This outcome is not achieved through subsidising investment – beyond what is necessary to incentivise courses of public benefit – in the employability of students who will end up being handsomely remunerated. Such costs merely come at the expense of those who couldn't or didn't seek higher education.



LOVE BACON

Amos Robinson

“Love bacon? Like to travel? Hate gravity?”

B-Stein fondled his last memories of Earth as he unexcitedly, indiscriminately picked at his breakfast. Terra. Solid ground. It had been three years since he felt the ground, and three years of eating the same bacon every day. And it was the same bacon. It was the same atoms of carbon, sodium, iron, and whatever else he had brought with him, reconstituted from his effluent, delicately pressed together to form the shape of some dead animal.

While B-Stein is preoccupied with his breakfast, strange vibrations are starting to emanate from small electromagnets around the ship. The vibrations move through the recycled air, and reach B-Stein in a few milliseconds.

“Christ”, he muttered, “not another one”.

His crewmate F-Meier had been experimenting with the porkulator, trying to extract something slightly less porky, but all his experiments so far had ended up as a ball of plasmodic, flaming flesh.

B-Stein started to undo the velcro that was conveniently fastening him to his seat. The loud crackling zipping, which he had relished as a child, brought no joy to him any more. He felt a strange, yet familiar, sensation of air passing by him as he was sucked towards a new hole in the ship’s hull. He didn’t feel particularly cold, but did find it quite hard to breathe. This caused him a great amount of stress. He didn’t think of his wife L-Stein or their unborn child.

After the porkulator explosion of ’808, the hull breach was, purely by accident, sealed by the porkulator itself. Despite plans to remove the porkulator and weld the hull shut, by the time they were ready, the exterior was already overgrown with meat. A committee was formed, and it was decided not to risk further injury and leave the porkulator where it was. Plus, it tasted much better now.

B-Stein with L-Stein née Schön begat B-Stein-II, who with K-Stein née Meier begat P-Berg née Stein.

F-Meier with M-Meier née Feldt begat K-Stein née Meier.

F-Berg begat J-Berg, mother unknown; J-Berg and P-Berg née Stein begat T-Berg.

T-Berg put on his shaving suit. The shaving suit had begun life as an ordinary space suit, designed primarily for keeping oxygen in and radiation out. After a few unfortunate accidents shaving the pork, however, it was decided that it must also keep very sharp objects such as carving knives out as well.

T-Berg gave a firm tug on each of the fastenings, seals, rings and pinnipeds of his suit. No oxygen would be escaping today. He shook the carving knife to check the fuel, and heard sufficient petrol splashing inside its tank.

T-Berg had some trouble negotiating the ship without his velcro boots, and slowly worked his way to the airlock. He closed the inner lock, took the pressure down, and opened the outer lock. Before leaving through the outer lock, he pulled on the cord and started the carving knife.

He shimmied out of the lock, turning on his electromagnetic boots to anchor him to the exterior of the hull.

“Strange”, he thought, “there doesn’t seem to be any growth since last week. Something must be wrong with the porkulator”.

The hull breach where the porkulator was embedded was a five minute walk away, and he walked there uneventfully. He hadn’t been this far from the airlock before, but it all looked the same: a sea of meat, seared from the unfiltered radiation of a thousand distant stars.

He identified the porkulator as a large protrusion of meat, and started digging away with the carving knife. He stuffed what he could into his carry bag, and let the rest drift away into the void.

As he got deeper, his anxiety grew. Nobody had seen the porkulator since ’808. What if he reopened the hull? No, it was unlikely that he could reopen the hull. That entire section of the interior had been filled with meat for generations. He kept digging, and finally reached a metal compartment, like a safe or a refrigerator.

T-Berg had studied well, and knew a bit about porkulator mechanics: you had the source material that needed to be kept frozen so it wouldn’t get rancid, and the probes into the source material to inspect the DNA and structure. The effluent input pipes were then filtered, processed and the output was a delicious porky meal, full of vitamins, calcium, and everything else your body decided it didn’t want in the first place.

T-Berg carved around the refrigerator door and pried it open. The light didn’t turn on. One thing T-Berg knew about refrigerators and freezers was that they had lights. He turned his headlamp on and peered in, to find the perfectly preserved face of his maternal great grandfather.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH KALE?

Laksha Prasad (@lakshaprasad)

It’s the latest trendy accessory to put on your fork, and the most popular green thing since Shrek – kale. Yes, the vegetable that all of our parents attempted to lace our dinners with (and an accomplice to the dreaded brussel sprouts), has now become the most sought-out culinary delight on the trendy bandwagon.

But why has this dull, salty cabbage-variant accrued such popularity? I mean, it lacks the creativity of the “Cronut” and the glamour of Beluga caviar, yet it seems to have outlasted both on the trend scale.

Could it be that it is a recently discovered “super-vegetable”, like the “Black Galaxy Tomato”?

Answer – not likely!

The origins of kale are firmly rooted in Europe during the early Middle Ages (pun intended), where it was incredibly popular amongst peasants who grew it due to its low maintenance as a sustenance-plant.

However, remnants of kale cuisine can also be traced to Greece in fourth century B.C., and East Africa.

It’s also important to note that during World War II, the “Dig For Victory” campaign encouraged the cultivation of kale, which was easy to grow and seen to supplement the nutrients that rationing removed. If you need propaganda to support the growth of this vegetable, it definitely doesn’t sell itself!

So, kale has been around for a very long time and obviously doesn’t possess that “novelty” factor that normally oils the wheels of a rampant bandwagon.

Could it be that it tastes remarkable (or remar-kale-ble for that matter)?

I guess it is up to personal preference, but if you enjoy a very neutrally flavoured (or at best – “salty”), papery vegetable, then this is the cabbage of your dreams.

Kale and its myriad of varieties are most commonly incorporated in mashed potatoes or deep-fried into “Kale Chips”.

Frankly, the prospect of silently stewing it through chunks of potato, or frying it so deeply in batter that it ceases to have any taste at all, speaks volumes of its appeal to the palate.

That’s probably because the traditional Danish dish of “stewed kale” is just way too green-intensive to appeal to anyone at all?

How about the “well it’s just so exotic” factor?

Kale comes in six main “cultivars” – curly-leaved, plain-leaved, cavolo nero, jersey, leaf and spear, and rape kale – none of which has a particularly striking appeal, except for the variety named after a state offence. But personally, I’m against all forms of sexual harassment, even the leafy ones!

The colours range from dark purple to dark green, depending on the climate and region it is grown in, which may add to the attraction slightly.

However, on a geographical scale, kale and its varieties are now readily available on a global scale, and as its origins are relatively found in most continents, the exotic factor is not very strong here.

The nutrition; it must be the bloody nutrition – please tell me that it’s just really freakin’ healthy!

This is the most plausible reason for the longevity of the kale craze that has swept over the world.

As diet regimes continue to keep the organic aisle of your local Woolies packed with gym junkies stocking up on quinoa and protein shakes, fresh vegetables, such as the iron and vitamin-rich kale, will remain at the top rung of the trends ladder.

Kale is naturally a robust source of calcium and vitamin A, C and K. It’s also low in calories and great for cardiovascular health – which is probably why “green juices” have become such a strong competitor on the juice market.

It seems the rise of the fitness-frenzy has coerced the renewal of the kale craze – and not its natural charisma as an archaic, tasteless cabbage-variant.

Kale has put the “it” in fitness, and everyone is strapping on his or her joggers to catch a ride on this bandwagon.





DARK SOULS II

Game review by Jeremy Szal

Welcome to the land of *Dark Souls*. You will die. Get this in your brain. You will die, and die, and die, and die, and then die again. You will rage, throw your controller across the room in frustration, and then pick it up again and die some more.

This is what makes *Dark Souls II* a brilliant game.

For those unfamiliar with the sequel to one of the most difficult RPGs ever created, this is a game that is meant to test you, to push you to your limits – both physically and mentally. This is a game for those who are sick of having their hand held by modern games and are willing to embark on a journey that is pure man versus machine. Don't believe me?

In order for you to progress, you need to collect souls, level up, kill bosses and advance through. Standard procedure, eh? Listen up.

Each time you die, you lose all of your souls, a chunk your health and go back to the last checkpoint. Is that checkpoint an hour back the way you came? Did you have 20,000 souls? Is your health almost cut in half? Too bad. You go back. And every enemy respawns. You cannot sell your weapons for more souls. You can't save up your souls. You either have them or spend them.

If you do die, you have one chance to redeem yourself: If you can get back to where you died (with less health, less resources and facing each enemy again), you'll get your souls back. If not, then they're gone forever, and you can never get them back.

So why the hell would anyone want to play this? *Dark Souls II* gives a feeling of reward and accomplishment that few games can ever attempt to provide. There is nothing more satisfying than killing that boss that stood in your way for so many hours and caused so many deaths. The incredible feeling of journeying with a friend or stranger in co-op and hacking your way through a difficult challenge is immensely fulfilling. But that can vanish in an instant if your partner suddenly turns on you, stealing your souls and wiping your progress away.

The world is a morbid, yet subtle one, filled with hopelessness and despair, though with tiny flickers of hope on the very horizon. Travelling through this dark fantasy world and its bizarre locations, disturbing lore and vicious enemies is an experience that you can't get anywhere else. I've been gaming for a decade and a half, and never has a game ever been so rewarding, so daunting, so brutal, so rich, so unforgiving, and so utterly addictive as *Dark Souls*.

If you have the dedication, the willingness to fight, the strength to get back up on your feet every time you're knocked down, and – most importantly – the skill and patience, then *Dark Souls II* will reward you. That I can guarantee.

Prepare to die.



RECONDITE

Live Music review by Kyle Redman

A renovated Club 77 played host to Berlin-based house, techno and acid producer Recondite. At home in the underground basement, the German took the stage right on lockout in front of a crowded 77. It's a venue that has come and gone in the years, but it's recently making an attempted revival. In its latest iteration, the club venue feels much larger, having done away with the display cages and sealed DJ booth.

Warming things up from a 9:30 pm open until the 1:30 am kick-off were locals Aaron Robins and BROHN, both playing some typical house to deep house one would regularly find at a S.A.S.H night. After a while of this, the floor lost momentum, with melodic breakdowns and track changes out of nowhere being the most frequent transgressions. None of this was grinding enough to warrant some fresh air, though – just a break on the couches with a beer in anticipation.

Recondite's set was billed as "live" – but this should always been taken with a grain of salt. The use of "live" here just implies the set will be short and composed of his original content (in contrast to a longer DJ set of probably three hours with varying input).

What "live" did mean for us basement dwellers was an hour-and-a-half-long set of Recondite's catalogue of tracks from huge international labels such as Ghostly International, Hotflush and Acid Test, as well as recent EPs from Innervisions and the suitably themed Berlin-based label Dystopian. The platform of DJing with his own productions allowed him to do some small edits of his own tracks while completely respecting their intentions and architecture. This "live" show wasn't going to mindlessly rearrange tracks for the sake of doing something creative live.

Visiting his own take on the old Roland 303 sound in tracks "Felicity" and "Tie In" from his album *On Acid*, Recondite changed the mood completely when he took control of the Funktion Ones. Perfectly suited to the dark basement, tracks "Cleric" and "EC10" had their eerie melodies floating off the walls, while the deep sub bass seemed to visibly force the crowd to move.

The crowd did thin as it approached 3 am, mainly due to the lockout. Anyone who actually did leave missed the closing few tracks from the most recent Innervisions PSY EP. "Fiery" and "PSY" are a step away from the melancholic house or acid on albums *On Acid* and *Hinterland* – instead, they pace further in the direction of degraded Berlin-inspired techno.

It's always special when a little piece of Berlin makes its way to Sydney, be it Dettmann's set last month or Len Faki playing just last week. Recondite was no different, treating Sydney to a special set composed entirely of the catalogue of this rising house and techno star. Keep an eye out for more releases on Hotflush and Acid Test this year.

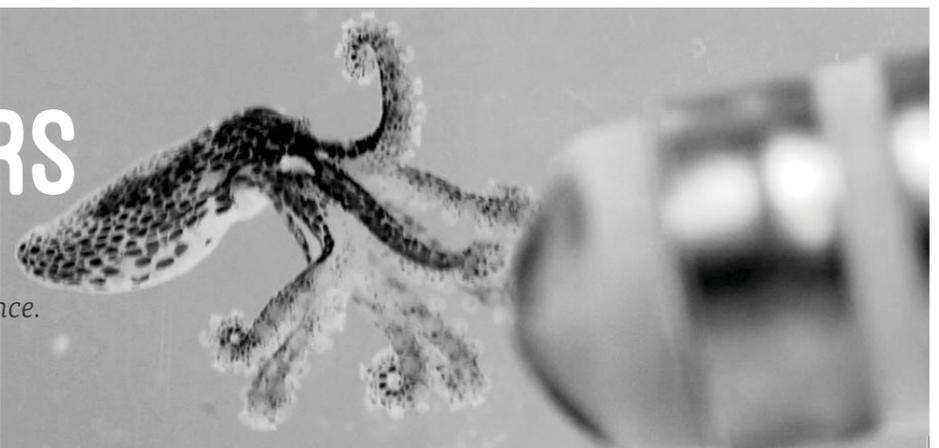
WANTED: THARUNKA SCIENCE CONTRIBUTORS

Hi there generic UNSW science student.

You probably know a lot of cool shit. We want to know about it too.

Tharunka is looking for contributors interested in writing about science.

If that's you, and you're cool - you're in.





SEASON TWO HOUSE OF CARDS

Albert Santos @albertinho

The strangest thing about *House of Cards* is how it is even considered television. A more apt name would be: "A 14-hour cinematic drama delivered via a web-based platform". There is nothing remotely "episodic" about it, especially when compared to the equally enthralling, long-form BBC original. Netflix's *House of Cards* laughs at the entire concept of televised episodes, begging its audience to watch the whole series in a single binge (pizza delivery on speed-dial recommended). With this in mind, as well as the nature of Netflix itself – a service that gets live data of a user's tastes every time they log on – it's hard not to be cynical about Frank and Claire Underwood's rise to power.

Season Two (titled Chapters 14 to 26) picks up right where we left off: Frank Underwood (Kevin Spacey, whose devilish Southern drawl remains the show's highlight) is now Vice President, journalist Zoe Barnes (Kate Mara) has information that could get him arrested, and there is a whole realm of people either playing or being played. This season sees the new Vice President move towards gaining control of the presidency, currently occupied by Garrett Walker (Michael Gill).

To get there means not only keeping past skeletons well hidden – a subplot revolving around the lewd past of Claire Underwood (Robin Wright) develops – but also means destroying Walker's closest ally, philanthropist Raymond Tusk (Gerald McRaney). McRaney's Tusk is the closest the series has ever got to a true antagonist to Underwood; equal parts Clive Palmer and Rupert Murdoch, you hate him nigh-immediately. It's to McRaney's credit that we actually begin to cheer on Underwood's political games, instead of merely looking on in curious disgust.

It's this curious disgust, though, that continues to drive *House of Cards*. Without giving too much away, several major players are written out with such efficiency that it makes acting in *Game of Thrones* look like a secure job. One pivotal exchange in the last chapter, however, between Claire and a former marine proves to be the crux of not only the series, but the whole show itself: After all these murders, backstabbing and political games, what do we make of the real people who are affected? When did a system designed to serve the people become so evil?

House of Cards is – at face value – one of the best TV shows around and definitely worth watching. But on a meta-level, it may well be one of the worst. It's at once exploiting our established attachment with a medium it doesn't use – for us to watch a show it developed through methodical equation; everyone loves political dramas like *The West Wing* and *Scandal*, so this will be good. It establishes cynicism in government, but doesn't acknowledge the cynicism it develops towards itself. It proves that codifying mainstream artistic taste has become so efficient that it can get critical acclaim, win awards and develop cult status – and get away with it.

In all fairness, it's a move that'd even make Frank proud.



SEX, LOVE & RAMMSTEIN – NYMPHOMANIAC

Review by Catherine Knight

Director Lars von Trier somehow manages to make a four-hour marathon of art-house porn not tedious in the slightest in his epic film *Nymphomaniac*. The two-part, sexually explicit drama injects heavy emotion into telling the life of self-confessed nympho Joe (Charlotte Gainsbourg). Broken up into chapters, the film explores the most memorable relationships, both platonic and otherwise, that make up the first 50 years of her life.

Part one of the film is admittedly far stronger than part two. This first half is framed by the mundane, as Joe's highly erotic life is fairly normal in all other areas. This allows for a more real telling of sex addiction and the fantastical entanglements she experiences. Using porn doubles for its principal actors, *Nymphomaniac* challenges the audience with unstimulated sex – so yes, that is real semen being projected 30 feet high as you choke on your popcorn. Yet despite the graphic nature of the sex scenes, it still comes across as less gratuitous and objectifying than most mainstream James Bond-esque films. After all, von Trier's entire approach, in keeping with the Dogme 95 movement he established, is to avoid the Hollywood gloss-over. If "the grittier the better" is his motto, von Trier has certainly achieved that with *Nymphomaniac*.

The story avoids a lot of easy tropes in exploring the childhood of a sex addict. Where many other texts reason that hypersexuality in adulthood is the consequence of either sexual abuse in youth, or simply just "daddy issues", *Nymphomaniac* refuses to stereotype Joe's story. Instead, we see a very healthy and loving relationship between Joe and her father, played by Christian Slater. The heavy focus on the father-daughter relationship shows Joe's genuine warmth as a person, completely separate from her sex life.

Indie film queen Charlotte Gainsbourg gives an outstanding performance playing the adult Joe. Intensely captivating on screen, she has the audience as equally engaged watching her simply talk in a cramped room as they are watching her set fire to a car or fuck her brains out. Shia LaBeouf (despite his confused accent that travels between American, cockney English and South African) is equally brilliant in his thoroughly unsympathetic role.

Nymphomaniac uses unique storytelling that really pushes the visual medium. Manuel Alberto Claro's stunning cinematography is combined with interesting and playful cuts to cartoon-like sequences that support explanations of obscurities from fly-fishing to Fibonacci numbers. This visually maps the way our minds often flit to different images in conversation.

The soundtrack throughout is beautiful, and for the most part, evokes a gentle melancholy in tone. This is hilariously deviated from with Rammstein's "Fuhre Mich" and Talking Heads' "Burning Down the House" – choices which reflect a self-aware humour of the film's own pretension.

Nymphomaniac refuses to sentimentalise, glorify or exploit the story of a sex addict and gives no real closure to the audience through a message. Criticised for its "shock value", the film will find you squirming when you least expect it.

***Nymphomaniac* hits cinemas on the 27th of March**

THE SRC ARE YOUR ELECTED STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES — YOUR VOICE ON CAMPUS!



SRC President

Joel Wilson

Hi, all – mid-semester break is creeping up, which means we are almost half-way through Semester 1. What a perfect time to reflect on the positive and negative aspects of this university, so that you can make sure the rest of your university experience is even better.

Arc is currently conducting an extensive consultation process, so that we can identify where student services expenditure should be prioritised. You can contribute by answering the SSAF Survey, or by entering submissions on what services you think need increased funding. We can then use this data to lobby for the changes we believe are necessary and include a clear list of recommendations to the University.

The last report led to the introduction of new retail outlets on campus, including Subway and IGA, three microwave banks, increased study spaces and the transfer of sporting clubs to Arc. But we want more for UNSW students. Help us fight for increased funding to medical services and the Student Equity and Disability Unit (SEADU), so that you can receive the help you need to make the most of your university experience.

Please get in touch, or come and see me in the Blockhouse to chat about any changes you would like to see at UNSW. My email address is srcpresident@arc.unsw.edu.au and you can sign up to our collectives through our website and Facebook page to keep up to date with our projects and events!



General Secretary

Maja Sieczko

The SRC has been working hard this semester to make sure that your uni experience is one of the best. Our Welfare Officer has started up Free Breakfasts on Tuesdays; Education is working to make sure that we have an after-hours study space for undergrads on campus; Enviro is campaigning for renewable energy on

campus; and our International and Ethnocultural Office bearers have been working hard to build up their collectives to make sure that they are representing you as best as they can. Make sure you like our Facebook page and sign up to our mailing list, so that you keep up to date with all of our events and campaigns.



Education Officer

Billy Bruffey

The March 26 National Day of Action was a huge success, and a victory for the Education Collective. With hundreds there on the day, the Collective has shown that we can affect change and have fun at the same time! But the Collective never stops – the next month is going to be just as big as any. We have plans to make huge changes to the way we enrol in courses, to course outlines, and the late withdrawal procedure. And we need all the volunteers we can get! So come along to the Education Collective. We meet each Thursday at 12 noon at the Blockhouse. Shoot me an email for more details: education@arc.unsw.edu.au



Students with Disabilities Officer

Alexandra Little

Hey guys! The start of semester is going really well for the disability portfolio. I have met with the Director of SEADU to discuss the state of disability support at UNSW and presented the concerns that have been brought to me by students. I have also met with the Associate Dean (Education) of Medicine to address some of the unique challenges faced by medicine students with disabilities.

March is Epilepsy Awareness Month and we will be selling purple merchandise on behalf of Epilepsy Australia until mid-April. I'd love to have a fundraising barbecue, but the rain doesn't seem interested in going away!

I have been asked to help re-establish the Australasian Network of Students with Disabilities, which looks like it's going to be a really exciting project. I've

also been invited to sit on the board of the Australian Disability Clearinghouse for Education and Training. There has never been a student advisor on this board, and I'm really excited to be involved. I'm currently trying to work out how to start up a social wheelchair basketball league on campus and will try and get my hands on some funds, so stay tuned! Now that we've got our new Welfare Officer Brendan on board, collective meetings will be held at 3 pm on Tuesdays in the Disability and Welfare Space.



Environment Officer

Nicholas Gurieff

After the first RESOC BBQ of the year, the collaborative RenewUNSW initiative is kicking off with a number of volunteers beginning work on our first report. The research offers the opportunity to gain professional experience in the growing fields of energy efficiency and renewable energy while contributing to something meaningful.

If you'd like to get involved, feel free to drop in on our weekly meetings at 11 am Tuesdays in the Activist Space on Level 1 of the Blockhouse. These follow on from the 10 am weekly Environment Collective morning-teas, where like-minded people get together and talk about environment issues more broadly with some free food and drink. If you're looking to get in contact, or to just stay informed, then you can also jump on Facebook and our website at www.srcenviro.org



Queer Officers

Dylan Lloyd & Cassandra Harris

Hi, everyone!

A lot's been happening with Queer this past month.

Our pleas with the university overlords for Crisis Accommodation on campus and Queer Scholarships have been going well, with accommodation options being drafted at this very moment! This will hopefully mean the existence of safe places for any UNSW students to stay

should the unexpected happen – to get along with studies while they find somewhere permanent to stay.

We've been hard at work planning for NDA (queer blocs, yay!) as well as the International Trans* Day of Visibility. As always, our meetings are held twice weekly on Mondays and Thursdays, 4 – 6 pm at the Queer Space. If you're interested, please email queer@arc.unsw.edu.au and we'll happily answer any questions you have.

Love, Dylan and Cassie :)



Welfare Officer

Brendan Byron

Hi guys,

Brendan here! There are some big issues in student welfare at the moment, like the changes to withdrawal procedures. Not many people know this: If you withdraw from a course without academic penalty this year, even if you've got a good reason for doing so, it will go on your transcript forever.

Imagine attending job interviews five years from now and explaining that time you contracted a chronic illness, or suffered a personal tragedy. These changes are bad for students, so look forward to being pestered with petitions about it soon.

Other than preparing for that, I've been busy with stocking the Welfare Room with food, providing Free Breakfasts on the main walkway on Tuesday mornings, and getting people together for Disability/Welfare Collective meetings, every Tuesday from 3 pm in the Blockhouse. If any of those sounds good to you, come along. I'll see you there!

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Bill Shorten ceases to exist for 24 hours, to little concern

Ammy Singh (@ammyed)

Authorities are investigating a bizarre 24 hour time period in which Opposition Leader, Bill Shorten, went unseen and unheard from, to no obvious concern from his family, colleagues, media observers, and the entire Australian public.

Early reports suggest that nobody noticed.

The Australian Federal Police was alerted to the disappearance after receiving several dozen faxes from Jeremy of the 'Wow! We need Real Leaders vote ONE for BILL SHORTEN. Bill shorten is The MAN!!' Facebook fan page, expressing concern at the lack of public sightings of Shorten in the preceding day.

Upon further investigation, the Opposition Leader's daily skim soy caramel latte with chocolate freckles was discovered abandoned on his desk from the previous morning.

Shorten was found wandering in a tailcoat in a fugue state at Manuka Oval shortly after, and told first responders that the last thing he remembered seeing was "a laser-like beam emerging from Julie Bishop's eyes".

Foreign Minister Bishop told Tharunka she has no recollection of a laser-like beam or other laser-related substance within the general vicinity of, let alone emerging from within, her eyes.

"We wish Bill Shorten the swiftest of recoveries," a spokesperson for the Bishop office said.

While the Shorten family today rejoiced the return of their benevolent patriarch, authorities are still attempting to piece together how such a gross oversight of a human's existence could have occurred.

"It's not unusual for Bill to blend into the background on occasion, but I've never seen anything like this in our five years of marriage," said Shorten's wife, Chloe Bryce. "And I really do mean blend into the background, specifically that sofa over there," Bryce said, pointing to a dull, beige sofa in the corner of the Shorten family living room.

The Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, Tony Negus, described the scenario as "the perfect storm".

Said Negus, "every once in a while you get someone who just flies under the radar until they cease to exist, but we've never had anyone as high profile as Mr... ah... Sorry, Mr... Sorrell?" Negus trailed off with a nervous laugh.

Equally as stumped, party colleagues told Tharunka that, upon reflection, something had seemed slightly different about Question Time that day, namely that it was better.

The Opposition Leader's office is understood to be investigating how Shorten's absence went unnoticed for so long, in an event unheard of since Prime Minister Harold Holt went swimming at a beach in 1967 and never returned.

Agony Ibis

Dear Agony Ibis,

I've recently been saddened by the kidnapping of my two brothers; they and I are triplets in our family so we're all exactly the same, well, kind of. We're all bald, have bushy eye brows and have a penchant for cricket (even though we're not really sporty whatsoever) and the Queen. The only difference is that they're both about a foot taller than me. Which is odd, since everything else about us is the same... except that they're 2 dimensional and I'm 3 dimensional. I'm just calling in to see if one of your many spies has seen them. I'm deftly worried for their well-being, so have you? Seen them? Please?

Thank you for all your help,
Soon-to-be-sir-Winston H.



Mr. H,

Your initials wouldn't happen to be JWH would they? That doesn't matter, but yes I have seen your two brothers around. They currently reside in a shabby household in the inner west, drinking wine and smoking cigarettes until 4 in the morning. They're also enjoying the ABC and have taken a likening to small bars. Does this annoy you? Are you scared? You should be. Expect a video. Perhaps of men in balaclavas. With a big banner in the back. Beware videos with big banners in them.

Yours,

Sir Agony Ibis (yes, it's Sir now)

Seeking New President / Vice-Chancellor

An exciting opportunity to lead Australia's finest corporation-cum-educational institution into the 21st century has arisen. UNSW is searching for its next President and Vice-Chancellor, following the imminent retirement of our beloved benevolent ruler, Professor Fred Hilmer.

For too long have we suffered under the socialist reign of terror enacted by Professor Hilmer. For too long have students borne the brunt of a university committed to their education over their contribution to the University's coffers. The time has come for direct action.

Arise, good 'Corporate Integration Director'! Come forth, fair 'Services Usability Specialist'! Hark, all 'Dynamic Functionality Consultants'! Soon, you too shall stand upon the vast plains of the Village Green and proclaim, "My name is Vice-Chancellor, king of kings: Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!".

Essential Criteria:

1. 4-Point Plan transcribed on, at minimum, a paper napkin.
2. A single-minded commitment to the ruthless pursuit of extracting the maximum possible "dollar dividend" from a 55,000-strong student body.
3. Prior experience running an industry giant, preferably of the media monolith variety, into the ground.
4. Willingness to integrate the phrase "fee deregulation" a minimum of two times into every conversation for the duration of your term.

Desirable criteria:

1. Knighthood or damehood.
2. An easily caricatured face.
3. Respect for freedom of speech.
4. Sith Lord vibe optional.

Dear Student, love A.Hack

Connor Mulholland @connormul94

Dear Student,

I hope the first few weeks of university find you well. I am writing this letter to inform you of perhaps the most amazing and fulfilling university experience open to you. You may be pondering, dear Student, what is this great opportunity I speak of?

Why, it is none other than the incredibly rewarding life of university politics. It is through university politics that so many fine representatives of Australian democracy have honed their skills and learnt their trade.

I implore you to find your calling, whether that is left or right, and soon you shall be marching to the beat of your faction's drum! Changing the world, one flyer at a time.

From protests to stacking out meetings, you shall transform yourself into a stellar hack in no time at all! You shall be the envy of all your non-political friends. They will be amazed at your insider knowledge of secretive party machinations; indeed, you will become so synonymous with factions, it is practically your middle name!

Before you know it, university students shall veer away from you merely upon sight, as you approach them for yet another campaign. But do not fear, dear Student, for you shall be warmly embraced into your faction, and soon they shall be your only friends. Politics will become your world! An exclusive bubble reserved for only the finest provocateurs of university life.

Do not fret, however, for all your countless weekends spent toeing the party line by campaigning at train stations and local shopping centres in suburbs (you secretly ridicule) shall be worthwhile. All your time spent away from loved ones, or ignoring your studies, only pushes you closer to your factional overlord of an MP. They may not appear gracious or humble, but they are, because without you, they would never be able to fulfill their political aspirations, and like you, change the world for the better! (Or at least your resume.)

And so, dear Student, I hope I have convinced you to follow suit and heed my call. Join today and help contribute to the very irrelevancy of student politics.

XOXO, Uni Hack

In defence of the last sport people would expect me to follow



Sarah Fernandes (@sezdra)

In the lead up to the biggest wrestling event of the year – WrestleMania 30 – I need to make a confession: I fucking love professional wrestling.

I watch it almost religiously every week, downloading WWE's Monday Night Raw as soon as it airs in the US. I look up GIFs of my favourite moments. I listen to podcasts with my favourite wrestlers on them. I look up old matches on YouTube. I speculate with my only other two friends who watch it about what will happen next.

The thing is, almost nobody else I know loves it, and they're often surprised to find out that I do. I was raised on a diet of British comedy and extra homework by immigrant parents who valued education and intelligence above all else, especially sport. My friendship circle is comprised mostly of lanky, Bukowski-reading, Tom Waits-loving board game enthusiasts – not really the people you'd expect to see at a WWE match.

Fans of wrestling are all too familiar with dealing with the negative stigma surrounding the sport (note that when I say "sport", I'm only referring to wrestling's athletic nature). Mentioning that you watch wrestling

provokes everything from laughter to aggression to sheer disbelief from people. I, too, used to think wrestling was just beefed up, testosterone-fuelled dude-bros pretending to hit each other for the spectacle of other beefed up, testosterone-fuelled dude-bros. But the further I dug into wrestling lore, the more I realised it was so much bigger than that.

What a lot of people don't realise about pro wrestling is that it has a storyline. Each wrestler has a character that exists within WWE's fictional universe, which is often based on their real life persona. Allegiances are broken; friendships are formed; the authority becomes corrupt; and sometimes, the most loyal good guys turn out to be evil all along. These are classic tropes of the good versus evil stories not uncommon in the superhero, western and sci-fi movies we all so readily consume.

Watching indie darling Daniel Bryan gain a grassroots following with the Yes Movement, challenging the corrupt authority, is stimulating in the other-worldly way only fiction can be. It's this storytelling layer that I love, and it's what makes it so much more than just an athletic display.

Of course, some characters are plain absurd – but that's part of the appeal. There's Fandango, the sequined ballroom dancer, who refuses to wrestle unless the announcer pronounces his name correctly ("You

gotta let the A's breeeeeeeeathe!"). Adam Rose, a rock star whose entrance involves lots of thrusting and a posse of partygoers carrying him on their shoulders, is another favourite of mine. At times the acting is terrible, or the plot is ridiculous, but you love those parts for the same reason you love awful movies like *The Room*, *Birdemic* or *Troll 2* – because it's really fucking fun.

Some people take issue with the idea that it's "fake" and that the outcomes of each match are scripted. While some moves are choreographed, a lot of wrestling is actually improvised, and no wrestler leaves a match without a few good bruises and cuts. They're not hitting as hard as they let on, or throwing with as much force as their opponent's reactions would have you believe, but there's nothing fake about dislocated jaws, ruptured spinal disks, broken necks or torn retinas – all of which have happened to WWE stars in the past. Many of the throws, submission holds and other moves are not only akin to high-level gymnastics, but elicit that same engrossing sense of amazement from the audience (if you don't believe me, look up the latest NXT match between Sami Zayn and Antonio Cesaro).

Secondly, its semi-fictional nature doesn't make it any less enjoyable. You wouldn't call out *Star Wars* as unworthy of praise just because it's "fake". In fact, the notion that there's a story behind every punch and kick makes each move that little bit more exciting.

Thirdly, because of this semi-fictional aspect, wrestling is one of the only sports in the world where fan's opinions can change the course of a match. The popularity of Daniel Bryan amongst fans has seen him go from WWE underdog to gaining a match against the COO of the company at the biggest wrestling event of the year.

The WWE does have its flaws. Its women's division, like in many other sports, is severely underrepresented and is perceived to be "lesser" than the men's division. When boring characters are pitted against each other, a match can lose its appeal pretty quickly.

For all its strengths and weaknesses, though, I still love pro wrestling. The fact that people like Simon Pegg, Nick Frost, Andy Kaufman, Gillian Jacobs, Max Landis, Billy Corgan, and even Werner Herzog, enjoy it too gives me solace in the fact that loving something for what it genuinely is, and not getting bogged down

Is Formula One too quiet?

Sam Davies @spdavies

Australian motorsport fans were out in force for the first race of the new Formula One season on March 16th, and they were treated to some fantastic action. Much of it was provided by local lad Daniel Ricciardo in his first race for Red Bull Racing team, the current Championship holders. The season-opening Melbourne Grand Prix, held on March 16th, saw Riccardo claim second place, much to the delight of the home crowd. He was later disqualified for failing to abide by strict new fuel limit rules introduced this year. Damn. The new fuelling system has not, however, been the only controversy surrounding this year's F1.

Only one race into the new season, and already there are question marks around the decision of the FIA, F1's governing body, to introduce a raft of new rule and regulations for this year. Perhaps the most high-profile of these, Aussie disgust at their man's disqualification aside, has surrounded the introduction of new engines to power this year's cars. But this is not a technical issue. Rather, some fans and drivers have argued that these new regulations have negatively impacted on the sound the cars make. Formula One's supremo Bernie Ecclestone said recently that he was "horrified" by the noise made by this year's new breed of F1 cars. He even claimed that they didn't "sound like racing cars".

The argument stems from a host of new rules have been introduced for this season's World Championship, the most significant of which being the replacement

of the 2.4-litre V8 engines from 2013 with 1.6-litre V6 turbo power units. The difference in sound is, undeniably, dramatic. For a start, the old cars were much, much louder. In fact, punters could not watch the races, which last close to two hours, without wearing ear protectors lest they wanted to become deaf. The old V8s were also distinct for their high-pitched scream as they accelerated. In their place, the new engines (or 'power units', as they should be called on the because of the presence of their hybrid energy recovery systems) are quieter. The sound is also a deep, grunting, rumbling drone, replacing the previous screeching.

The change has not only upset some fans and Mr. Ecclestone, but even led to the organisers of the Australia Grand Prix to threaten legal action because the new sound represented, they claimed, a breach of



Li Na's No. 1 Fantasy

Lawrence Leung

Serena Williams's prolonged boycott of the Indian Wells tournament also has a practical impact on the women's tour. By electing not to play, she forgoes a potential one thousand ranking points. Serena has never concerned herself with rankings – she's won a major ranked No. 81 in the world – but she enjoys the perks of being world No. 1. Currently boasting a total of 181 weeks at No. 1, you may think Serena would cruise her way to an impressive two-hundredth week at the top. However, she may need to keep an eye out for No. 2 Li Na.

Serena Williams, at the time of writing, owns 12,660 ranking points, which stands 5,475 points above Li – a seemingly insurmountable advantage, considering that winning one Grand Slam tournament earns a player a mere 2000 points.

Despite this, the complexities of tennis's ranking system provide a ray of hope for the No. 2. Tennis players earn ranking points by winning successive matches in a tournament. These points are awarded for 52 weeks, or until that same tournament is completed again the following year. For example, Andy Murray won Wimbledon 2013, thus earning him 2000 ranking points. He maintains those points until the conclusion of Wimbledon 2014, after which, he will lose all 2000 ranking points. To maintain the same number of points, Murray must "defend" his points and win Wimbledon 2014, which will again earn him 2000 points. Therefore, he cannot gain any points from Wimbledon this year – he only stands to lose or "defend" his ranking.

So how does this impact Li Na? Well consider this: Having won every single match between late February and early June in 2013, Serena Williams has 5,370 points to defend at Miami, Charleston, Rome, Madrid

and the French Open. Therefore, she cannot gain points at any of these tournaments – instead, she must defend them. Any single loss will cost Williams hundreds of points (maybe even thousands if she exits early at the French Open), which opens the door for Li Na.

Defending champion Williams has "only" won on the clay courts of the French Open once in the last 11 years – Li Na won it back in 2011. The clay courts of the upcoming tennis season are not ideal for either woman, so it would not be surprising for an early upset at some point during the season. If that were not enough, Serena has another 3,800 points to defend between Wimbledon and the US Open, as well as 2,500 points after the Grand Slam season.

Of course, Li Na also has points to defend – a paltry eight hundred points compared to 5,370 for the clay season. Li lost early in premier lead-up tournaments, as well as at the French Open, which means she has a chance to gain thousands of points if she finds the form that pushed her strong title run at the Australian Open. Li Na had a strong finish to the year, but she still has many chances to gain points. With a renewed love of tennis, and an openly expressed desire to win another major and become world No. 1, it's now or never for Li Na.

Although Li Na has struggled since her triumph at the Australian Open, her penchant for unpredictability, as well as her natural ability, does not preclude her from another miracle shot at a major. After ascending to No. 2 and winning her second Grand Slam, Li Na wants more.

Already far and away the most decorated Asian tennis superstar in history, Li Na is at the peak of her game. It's fascinating to watch two 32-year-old women (many tennis superstars retire before their late 20s) continue to strive and fight to be on top. If Li Na can pull through, you heard it here first.

contract. Despite this, the cars undoubtedly still sound like racing cars, whatever Bernie argues. No doubt the noise is less, but it is layered with more depth and intricacies, where before one was presented with only a violent scream. The noise of the old beasts was undoubtedly exciting for the first lap or two, but after two hours of persistent ear-splitting noisiness many spectators found the noise tedious, painful in fact.

What's more, the new engines excel in many other areas where the V8 was deficient. The reasons for the new rules were to spice up a sport that had been becoming more and more predictable over the last few seasons and which was in danger of stagnating. Sebastian Vettel has won the last four championships, the last pretty comfortably. In Melbourne this year, Vettel failed to finish. Ricciardo (originally) claimed second place in

his Red Bull debut, and Kevin Magnussen, in his first ever F1 race at only twenty-one years of age, finished third. Unpredictability and excitement were restored.

The new engines are also widely regarded as presenting a greater challenge to drivers. Many have long complained that the sport has become far too much about computers, strategy, and tyre management. The extra torque of the new engines, as well as (more) new rules that have reduced aerodynamic downforce on the cars, has brought genuine driver skill back to the forefront of Formula One, where it belongs. These new cars are also around 35% more efficient than last year's, a step in a greener direction for the sport.

With all these strengths, it seems petty to focus on this one perceived weakness of the new V6s, the sound. Indeed, the noise of the cars is a matter of taste. Person-

ally, I like it. It's a deep, strong, drone, as opposed to the monotone screech on previously. Anyway, at least you can now watch a race without your ears bleeding.



UniGames in Sydney after 11 years



Niko Pajarillo
@nikopajarillo

A huge sporting competition pitting all major universities across Australia against each other in a blazing fight for glory.

A tournament held exclusively for students, representing only their university, to assuredly prove which institution truly produces the most exceptional athletes.

"The Olympics of university sport", crammed into a single action-packed week in one of the country's major cities.

Sounds more like something out of a movie or children's TV show, doesn't it?

Well, it's real, and it's happening again this September.

I am writing, of course, of the annual Australian University Games.

Held every year with over 7,000 students competing in over 30 different sports, "UniGames" attracts students from all around the country to one city, to face off in a week-long blitz of athleticism, toughness and friendly rivalry.

UNSW Touch Football club captain Sophie Connelly believes the UniGames is an experience like no other.

"UniGames is something I tell everyone to get involved in at uni because it's definitely one of the best things you can do if you're playing sport at university," says Connelly.

"It's essentially the University equivalent of the Olympics – there are multiple

different sports, with a whole lot of athletes getting together for a week. But, given that it's university-based, it sort of turns into a week-long party as well!"

Arc sports development coordinator Scott Nicholson agrees, saying getting involved is a must for all sports enthusiasts: "Having been to four Australian UniGames myself, it's the best memory I have of when I went to university. It's the most fun you'll ever have in a week. People you've met before will become your best friends for life in the space of five days."

2014 marks the first year the Australian UniGames will be played in Sydney since 2001, with every second year being played on the Gold Coast.

Australian University Sport project manager Mark Lockie says that while UniGames is an event to be taken seriously, students of all skill levels are encouraged to try out.

"The fun and social element is a big part of what students are looking for when they compete, but certainly the competitive side is quite serious as well," he says.

"With that number of students, there's a wide range of abilities, so we get international-level athletes competing, but there might be some sports where there are beginners just giving it a go and helping out their university."

To get involved, students are encouraged to first participate in the Regional

UniGames in July, before the actual Australian UniGames in September. The regional games are smaller tournaments, which involve universities playing only against others within their region. For example, universities in Queensland and the Northern Territory would participate in the Northern UniGames, whereas universities from Victoria and South Australia would participate in the Southern UniGames.

UNSW fields teams in the Eastern UniGames division, played in Newcastle this year.

"Regional games are really just another opportunity for participation, and it includes some different sports than the AUG," says Lockie.

"Only about 2,500 students participate in the Eastern UniGames every year. Some of the sports use the regional games as an opportunity to give people who aren't able to go to the Australian games an opportunity to compete for their university.

"Regional games are just another chance for students to have a go."

To register for both the Regional and Australian events, students are first required to trial for their desired sport.

For specific trial dates and times for the various sports, Scott Nicholson recommends staying in touch online: "Basically, if people want to get involved, they go to unigames.com.au and there's an expression of interest form. They just

have to fill that out for me and that will let me tell them when the trials are.

"Similarly, if they like our Facebook page (Arc Sport Unsw), they'll keep updated there about when we're gonna have the trials for each sport. We'll put the trial details up through all our media channels like Facebook and our email. We'll even put up some posters, so everyone knows when and where they are."

Regional games trials will take place from Week 5 to Week 8 this semester, with the actual games spanning from July 6 to July 10 in Newcastle.

Australian UniGames trials will start around Week 2, semester two, with the actual event happening from September 28 to October 3 in Sydney.

When asked for a final word, Lockie spoke very positively.

"The venues will be [of a] fantastic quality, and we try to make sure the competition is run to the highest standard possible. It's a well-organised event.

"The feedback that we get every year from students is that UniGames is one of the best experiences they have while they're at university. They get to meet a lot of people from their own university, as well as other universities around Australia. There are few other vehicles to do that within university life."

For more information, visit sport.arc.unsw.edu.au/unigames