



# THARUNKA<sup>x</sup>

MAY 2016 / ENVIRONMENT

UNSW STUDENT MAGAZINE

## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



EMMA DONALDSON

/

GUEST EDITOR

ENVIRONMENT OFFICER  
2016

I've been at complete odds about this editors letter for way too long. I'm not quirky enough or clever enough with words to make you smile, cry or laugh in 300 words like those flashy other Tharunka editors seem to be able to do issue after issue.

I'm an engineering student- none of these things are part of my vocabulary. I'm just here cause I care about what we're doing to our planet. This issue is a brief synopsis of the things we're passionate about in the Environment Collective.

You'll start to recognise the reoccurring orange or red cross (*and goodness were the Tharunka designers happy about such an easy graphics request*) throughout these pages- these represent our Fossil Free UNSW campaign. We're making some noise about divestment on this campus because we think it's totally irresponsible

that our university still invests money in the fossil fuel industry when the presence of climate change is so well known.

If this campaign or any of the other issues we bring to the table in this issue of Tharunka interest you at all, shoot us an email on [enviro@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:enviro@arc.unsw.edu.au) or come along to one of our meetings on Thursdays at 12pm in the Arc Offices.

The Environment Collective have had a lot of fun putting the hard yards in to bring you the material in this issue. Read our stories and then decide what it is you should do with them. Without young people who are doing things with the consistent barrage of information and scientific evidence we are being provided, the future of our planet is increasingly bleak.

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JAYDEN RATHSAM-HUA

/

EDITOR

This issue is about the environment. If you're not quite sure what the environment is, just open your eyes. What do you see? That would be the environment. Walk outside. Where are you standing? The environment. Go back inside. Look out the window. What's on the other side of the glass? The environment.

Do you enjoy the media outlet commonly referred to as the 'National Geographic'? If yes, then you should know that you're in all likelihood subconsciously a fan of the environment. It's all around us.

It's great. I love it so much, I wrote some haikus about it.

*Let me pull you close  
Watch how I push you away  
I'm a gale force wind.*

*So far away now  
You still feel my body heat  
Because I'm the sun.*

*Floating in the sky  
Billowy light blinding white  
Woolworths plastic bag.*

And remember, choose bio-degradable.

## OPEN LETTER TO VICE-CHANCELLOR

Dear Vice-Chancellor Jacobs,

As a group of concerned students, we urge you to make a change to UNSW Australia's investment portfolio; specifically, to divest from the fossil fuel industry.

UNSW has an existing Ethical Investment Policy, which states:

*"The University will not knowingly and directly invest in an organisation that operates at the expense of the environment, human rights, the public safety, the communities in which the organisation conducts its operations or the dignity of its employees."* (Emphasis added)

Due to the hard work of climate scientists, including those at UNSW, we know, with a high degree of certainty, that:

- *climate change is happening;*
- *its impacts on the environment and human rights will be significant and far reaching; and,*
- *that burning fossil fuels is the largest contribution to continued warming*

As we are cognisant of these facts, UNSW's continued investment in fossil fuels contradicts the above policy.

And yet, UNSW continues to invest millions in fossil fuels. Therefore, we call on you to divest.

Climate change will increase the likelihood of extreme weather events, which will disproportionately impact poorer nations, including our Pacific neighbours. If UNSW is really committed to 'social justice', as suggested by the UNSW 2025 strategy, it must divest from an industry culpable for such damage.

The global economy is shifting. American coal giant, Peabody Energy Corporation, is facing bankruptcy. Banks and financial institutions, including JP Morgan, increasingly perceive fossil fuels to be a risky investment, and are hesitant to invest in new coal mines. Recently, the ANU acknowledged that its 2014 divestment decision saved millions of dollars.

Your predecessor dismissed divestment as 'tokenistic'. We contend that it would be symbolic, a signal of the social and institutional change required to meet the challenge of climate change. By taking a lead on this issue, UNSW could fulfil its strategic objectives to promote thought leadership and global impact.

You have previously stated that divestment is too 'political.' However, continued investment in (and support of) the fossil fuel industry is also political. It is cowardly to ignore actions that would benefit the common good, due to a fear of making enemies. This is not how we perceive our university.

In light of the above, we call on the University to:

1. Investigate and disclose UNSW Australia's investments in companies that explore, extract and process fossil fuels;
2. Cease any new investments in these fossil fuel companies;
3. End UNSW Australia's investments in fossil fuel companies within 5 years under a planned divestment regime, with ongoing transparency.

Divestment is just the starting point. UNSW Australia's capacity to address climate change is rich and diverse. It simply makes no sense to purport to look for solutions while simultaneously investing in the problem.

We urge you, as the Vice-Chancellor, to think about your capacity to change this outstanding university for the better, and to think about the students and staff you represent.

We urge you, as a scientist, to examine the evidence before you. Your actions today will be history in 100 years' time.

Yours sincerely,  
*The UNSW Environment Collective*

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Tharunka acknowledges  
the traditional custodians of this land,  
the Gadigal and Bedigal people of the  
Eora nation, on which our university  
now stands.

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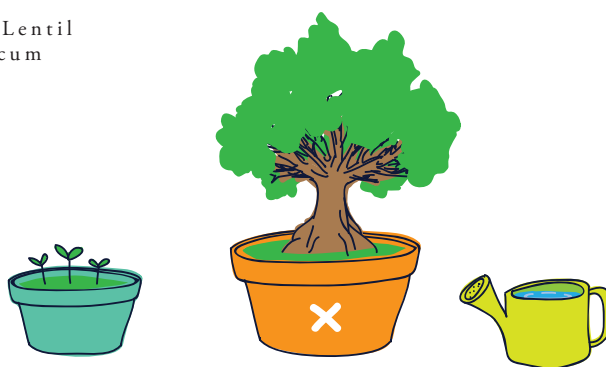
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## AGONY IBIS

*Dear Agony Ibis,*

*I am very worried about my boyfriend. He has recently been caught up in the wave of anti coal seam gas (CSG) protests and he is thinking about camping out at the Pilliga, NSW. In light of NSW's new anti-protest legislation, he may face fines and even imprisonment. Should I break up with him now to save myself the heartbreak of having to help him pay his legal costs, or worse, having to visit him in jail?*

Kick this man to the curb immediately, because what you are dealing with here is an eco-fascist (*and an all-round left-wing nutjob*). It's probably time you settled down with a nice boy from a good family who preferably lives in the North Shore, or around Manly, where they aren't cutting down all the trees and you can walk arm-in-arm along the beach living in perfect Bachelor-esque bliss. Think about your future. Unless, of course, you care about the future of your children and the planet, but thinking about the effects of climate change is a huge waste of time.

This boyfriend of yours is not the kind of man you want around you. He probably cares way too much about his grandma, is obsessed with recycling, and will probably try to force you to give up your car altogether. Having taken the bus a few times before, you can trust me when I say it's

not worth it. Think about all the out-of-the-blue interactions with actual humans you're saving yourself from.

Mike Baird and crew are correct. Who do these people think they are? The government is only trying to protect their safety. Forget about democracy – ordinary people don't know what's good for them anyway. Forget about this guy.

*(You should reconsider my advice if he's got big biceps and happens to represent Australia in rugby.)*

Unfortunately, for all of us, this eco-fascist is taken.



LET THE  
AGONY IBIS  
ANSWER YOUR  
QUESTIONS!

*Wondering  
how to poison  
your enemies  
or sell a  
hundred pounds  
of hair and a  
marmoset? He  
has the answers!  
Just yell your  
question at  
any ibis in  
the courtyard.  
They're  
organised.*



# NEWS

## TURNBULL GOVERNMENT TIPPED TO ADD \$\$ TO YOUR DEGREE

W / A / CASSIE BELL

The looming federal election is causing debate in the higher education sector, as the Education Minister and Budget Officials drop thinly veiled hints about a fee increase.

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) recently released a report on the Higher Education Loans Programme (HELP), which analysed the impact of university debt on the federal budget. The report revealed that since 2009, the cost of HELP loans to taxpayers has increased by 59 per cent.

In response to the report, the Minister for Education, Simon Birmingham, claimed the figures “highlight that there are real sustainability pressures in the higher education budget” and funding for university students has essentially “grown at twice the rate of the economy”.

When probed about the possibility of increasing fees in an interview with Sky News, Senator Birmingham said, “whether [students] pay closer to 50 per cent of the cost of their degree—rather than 40 per cent—is up for discussion.”

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU), however, has warned that if student funding is cut by the proposed 20 per cent, then the HELP debt will be in “serious danger of becoming Australia’s subprime loans crisis”. NTEU National President, Jeannie Rea, added that cost of running the HELP scheme could escalate from its current \$1.7 billion, to \$11.1 billion by 2025-26.

“At this rate of growth, the amount of money that the government spends on subsidising student loans would overtake the amount of money they give universities to educate students through the Commonwealth grants scheme which, with the proposed 20% cut, would amount to something like \$5.2 billion per annum in today’s values,” said Rea.

“The NTEU has repeatedly said that the best way to keep the costs of HELP under control is to reduce university fees and the average size of student debt.

“However as the PBO’s analysis shows the government seems determined to make students pay more and in the process undermine the financial viability of HELP.”

The Department of Education and Training estimates that the current accumulated outstanding Help loans total over \$42 billion, around a quarter of which will not be repaid for various reasons.

/



## FREE AS A BAIRD

If Premier Mike Baird were an honest politician, his next campaign slogan would be “lock em’ out and lock em’ up”; a catchphrase that neatly summarises the goals of his administration.

Two years ago—after slipping on a puddle of \$3000 wine—Mr Baird fell head-first into the premiership without a peep from the population. Since then, he and his trigger-happy Attorney General, Gabrielle Upton, have sprayed our state with legislative bullets; targeting the young, the ethnic and, most recently, the unassuming communities of rural NSW.

Last month, the NSW Government passed the Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Amendment (*Interference*) Bill, making it an offence to gain “aggravated unlawful entry on inclosed lands”. In simpler terms: they passed anti-protest laws, in a bid to thwart the efforts of those campaigning against dangerous Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining.

The new laws mean a 900 per cent increase in the fine for unauthorised entry on to CSG sites. They also give police greater search and seizure powers, and remove legal safeguards for genuine protests and organised assemblies. Perhaps most alarming though, is the provision that could see anti-CSG protestors jailed for seven years. Ironical, considering the maximum jail term in Australia for poisoning a water supply is only five...

The proposal was condemned by the NSW Bar Association, the Law Society of NSW, notable environmentalists and academics. A survey conducted by the NSW Nature Conservation Council, also revealed that 61 per cent of respondents were opposed the amendments. Yet Mr Baird stood by his injudicious bill, claiming that “there’s no problem” and the measures are entirely “appropriate”. Question: is the State Government simply indifferent to the

voices of its people? Or genuinely blinded by its own ambition? Either way, Unions NSW is stepping in to reclaim the rights taken from the farmers and rural communities, who are simply fighting to protect their land, livelihood and legacy. They plan to initiate a constitutional challenge against the Baird Government in the High Court.

Secretary of Unions NSW, Mike Morey, explains, “the grounds of the challenge would be [that] it’s interfering with peoples’ right of political expression in this state. They are the grounds we’ve fought this government on before and won.”

“If there are grounds to actually mount a legal challenge around these laws then we will certainly do it,” he said. “This is about the Baird government, trying to shut down any dissent in this state about what it’s doing. It’s just un-Australian.”

Indeed, this anti-dissent attitude reflects a greater trend threatening our state. First the introduction of the lockdown laws, which imposed a citywide bedtime on the people of Sydney. Then, amendments to the bail laws, which effectively negated the presumption of innocence underpinning our justice system. Now, extraneous anti-protest laws, which undermine individual freedoms and liberties—the cornerstone of democracy. This pattern of slapdash, cause-effect lawmaking is irresponsible, irrational and indicative of an Orwellian New South Wales. It is not unnoticed, and it needs to end.





# FEATURES

WHAT ARE YOUR  
THOUGHTS ON THESE STORIES?

/

HAVE YOUR SAY BY SENDING A  
LETTER TO THE EDITOR.



# STILL STANDING STILL

*BECAUSE UNSW MAKES MONEY FROM  
CLIMATE CHANGE DENIAL*

W / DANNY YAP

A / CASSIE BELL



Leonardo DiCaprio is a long-time advocate of environmental causes and knows his stuff. “Climate change is real,” he said in his first Oscar acceptance speech. “We need to work collectively... We need to support leaders around the world who do not speak for the big polluters or the big corporations, but who speak for all of humanity.” The polluters he speaks of are fossil fuel companies that make a killing from dirty energy sources like coal, oil and gas. These are the kinds of companies that have funded climate denial propaganda and misinformation, making it necessary for informed celebrities like Leo to make a stand. These are the kinds of companies that lobby our governments for less clean energy and more anti-democratic laws against our right to protest. These are the kinds of companies that UNSW continues to hand millions of dollars to through its investment portfolio.

Staff, students and alumni have campaigned for the university to divest from fossil fuels for ethical reasons: If it's wrong to wreck the climate, then it's wrong to profit from doing so. Alarming, 2015 was the hottest year on record, while February this year was the hottest month, by a record breaking margin, according to NASA.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Jacobs, however, seems content to continue down the path of his predecessors, handing millions to the companies most responsible for the problem. While the VC talks-up the university's research in climate science and clean energy as if it's some sort of consolation, I am instead reminded of those who proclaim peacekeeping efforts, but secretly profit from arms trafficking. His favourite catchphrase—that climate change is one of the “grand challenges of our time” — sounds a lot like spin, from a broken record.

Never mind the university's painstakingly obvious position of self-interest on the issue. It receives significant funding from fossil fuel companies for its petroleum engineering school, and “it will be significant to lose it”, confirmed Neil Morris, Vice-President for Campus Life and Community Engagement. As if the world

needs more petroleum engineers right now... Yet these people have somehow missed the writing on the wall (*Pro tip: Google “United Nations Paris climate talks December 2015”*).

Never mind that the university's allegiance with the fossil fuel industry is financially stupid, with fossil fuel-related shares losing value and being outperformed by renewables over recent years. The Gates Foundation, as an example, is worse off by a whopping US \$1.9 billion today than it would be if it had divested from fossil fuels three years ago.

Never mind those red flags, because the real clincher is this: UNSW is violating its own ethical investment policy, a document which states that “the University will not knowingly and directly invest in an organisation that operates at the expense of the environment, human rights... [or] public safety”.

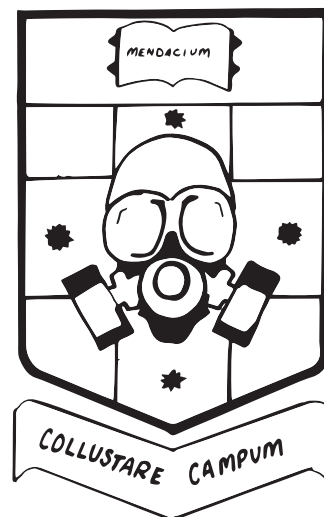
The science of climate change has long been established, and the adverse impacts of fossil fuels on the environment, health and safety are abundantly clear. Fossil fuels may have benefited human civilisation in the past, but there are cleaner and cheaper alternatives today. There is no legitimate reason for UNSW to continue investing in yesterday's technology when it's now causing us harm. Morris even confirmed last year that the breach of policy is “the single biggest issue that's resonating with Ian [the VC]”. But what's happened since then? Nothing.

The VC wants to be seen as taking an ethical stance on climate change, while continuing to hand millions to the big polluters. But he can't have it both ways. You would think the man who calls climate change one of the “grand challenges of our time” would appreciate the fact that you can't address a challenge as fundamental as this, without deviating from business-as-usual. Because what it boils down to is that business-as-usual is now its own form of climate denial. And UNSW, in making all the right sounds about climate change but violating its own investment policy to adhere to the status quo, is denial's new face. Plenty of other

organisations get it — Randwick City Council divested just last month—but not UNSW.

To send the message that denial is not okay, students with Fossil Free UNSW have joined forces with other universities in a nation-wide “Flood The Campus” campaign, which gives VCs until 15th April 2016 to act. After which, actions will likely be escalated. Civil disobedience has a long history throughout the world, bringing justice and progress to moral issues such as that of the Suffragettes, the Civil Rights movement, and Gandhi's march for independence.

If this is what's necessary for UNSW to take leadership on climate, then students will do it peacefully and with the moral high ground, (*check out “Edinburgh University student protest occupation May 2015”*). It has been done before, and it can be done again. So let's stand up and work on this collectively.



# BALANCING SCIENTIFIC PROFESSIONALISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

W / ALEXANDRA AUHL

For students involved in a variety of environmental groups on campus, there is an ethical (and often practical) issue that needs to be considered: the need to balance responsible advocacy with scientific professionalism. It is a complex, and potentially divisive issue.

Academic literature focuses on 'responsible advocacy' for scientists acting in policy settings, which can also apply to scientists who address the media regularly.

But this literature does not address the balance between student activism and the development of the scientific professional. However, many of the principles that apply to the scientist in a policy or press conference setting can be extended to the student scientist in the realm of environmental advocacy.

Some commentators argue that scientists can be advocates as well as scientists. Scientists can advocate for a particular policy approach, but that does not prevent them from professionally carrying out other roles such as reporting, providing assessments, giving recommendations, and offering advice based on the scientific evidence before them. The two roles are not mutually exclusive.

Society needs the input of scientists to help solve 'wicked' problems, and climate change is one of the wickedest problems out there. (*For more on wicked problems, see Rittel and Webber, 1973*). When UNSW consulted its staff, students and alumni on the 2025 UNSW strategy, one of the things they felt "*most passionate about was playing a role in thought leadership around the grand challenge of climate change*".

The problem is that climate change has become so politicised that many climate scientists shy away from providing their opinion on climate policy for fear that their

opinion will be perceived as too 'political.' In this scenario, the public misses out on the valuable insight of the climate scientist.

As a rule, a scientist who does not specialise in the field of climate science should not offer any public opinion on the matter, as it is outside his or her field of expertise. But where does that leave the advocate who feels it is his or her *moral* obligation to take action on climate change?

Taking action on climate change reveals a certain bias, while not taking action also reveals a bias. It is important to thoughtfully navigate these biases and to recognise some of the inherent biases within scientific inquiry. But when the scientist steps through the door of his or her office, s/he can minimise the influence of bias by adhering to the scientific method. That is the highest principle to adhere to in the pursuit of further knowledge about the universe and about Earth.

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## #SAVINGSYDNEYSTREES: WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

W / OLIVIA INWOOD

A / CASSIE BELL

*"The environmental destruction we are witnessing is evidence of the pervasive feeling of disconnection many feel with their immediate environments."* – community activist group, Randwick Treekeepers

As I enter my third year living on the UNSW campus, this quote feels particularly relevant when I think about how we interact with our local environment.

Recently, the destruction of trees in the Randwick area, to make way for the CBD and South East Light Rail Project, has caused particular controversy. The first set of trees (primarily Moreton Bay Figs) were cut down in December, along the stretch of Alison Road that borders Centennial Park and Randwick Racecourse. Since then, trees have been stripped from Wansey Road and Anzac Parade. In March, for example, six century-old trees were removed in less than an hour; giving residents little to no time to react.

Local activist groups have been campaigning about this issue since 2013, when the NSW government first announced the Light Rail Project. At this time, there was no mention of the removal of "significant trees". This was until December 2014, when the light rail realignment occurred, meaning that the Alison Road route would now travel alongside Centennial Parklands. One month prior, a new eight-storey hotel and entertainment facility was approved for development in Randwick Racecourse. According to the Better Planning Network (BPN) Report, the government also approved an increase in the size of light rail vehicles from 45m to 67m, resulting in the further loss of trees.

The specific number of trees marked for removal is not entirely clear. The Randwick Council website claims 300; The Randwick Treekeepers website warns over 400, while the

"Saving Sydney's Trees" Facebook page states 589 significant trees will lose their home. The BPN Report also states that "Modification 4" is under review, regarding the relocation of the light rail route from High Cross Park to High Street.

Legally, locals do not have much power when it comes to these changes. Under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW), the NSW Government deems the Light Rail a "critical infrastructure project", allowing it to remove as many trees as it see fit. Through community protests, tree vigils and a regular social media presence, activists urge that a design review or parliamentary inquiry be conducted, requiring direct intervention by NSW Premier, Mike Baird, or the Minister for Transport, Andrew Constance.

Among these community initiatives, the most recent was a vigil held for UNSW's "Tree of Knowledge" on the corner of High Street and Wansey Road. This tree was planted in 1860; 100 years before UNSW was established. Historically, these Fig trees have shaped an urban forest in the Randwick cityscape and are listed on the NSW State Register for their cultural value. Aesthetically, these trees have created a picturesque boulevard and provided shady walking and cycling tracks.

Despite the dim prospects for many of these trees, I have learnt that it is crucial to appreciate the intrinsic connection between the environment and its heritage. Although we often take our surroundings for granted, it is issues like these that make us question the importance we should place on our local environments in the long term.



## 6 WEEKS IN BROOME

W / KATE BONSER

A / CASSIE BELL





A shower-dwelling gecko, a giant rhinoceros beetle and a fat goanna (or “Barney”) sunning himself by the roadside — a few of the first encounters I had on my arrival into the small town of Broome.

I had come to Broome to undertake a six-week internship as part of the Aurora Internship Program; a national program aimed at law, anthropology and social science students and graduates, seeking to gain experience working in organisations that support the Indigenous sector. Aurora places interns in the areas of native title, land rights, policy development, advocacy and research in both local and remote areas of Australia. I was fortunate enough to be placed at Nyamba Buru Yawuru (NBY) Broome, the operational arm of the Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) that holds native title on behalf of Yawuru native title holders. This remarkable native title agreement saw the Yawuru people become the native title holders of some 530,000 hectares of land in and surrounding Broome, following a Federal Court ruling in April 2006.

My time at NBY coincided with an emerging national discussion around Indigenous land tenure reform and the concept of native title “fungibility”. Unlike other property rights, native title rights and interests are “non-fungible”, meaning that they cannot be sold, transferred or leveraged to generate capital. Here lies the root of our problem: if native title holders are unable to leverage their primary asset, without extinguishing it, to generate *their own* economic development, how might they otherwise escape the cycle of welfare dependency that entrenches them in impoverishment?

Set against the discouraging and seemingly ideological policy position of the WA Government in regards to this issue, my supervisor Howard and I sought Commonwealth support for land tenure reform on Yawuru native title land. Although our work was heavily research-based, our project also involved regular off-site meetings with WA ministers and officials and on one occasion, the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs. I was constantly fascinated by the work I was doing, and I am so grateful for the creative license I

was afforded on my internship to test my ideas amongst such knowledgeable and influential people in this field.

The sense of self-empowerment that comes with making one’s own economic decisions, rather than passively responding to externally imposed development agendas, is key to feeling a sense of “Mabu liyan”. A Yawuru term, meaning “to feel good in oneself”; experiencing a sense of who you are as connected to culture, and a greater connectedness to community and country. Looking back, it is this notion that gave purpose to a lot of the work I undertook whilst interning at NBY.

“Mabu” (*good*) “liyan” (*feeling in one’s heart*) comes from a sense of being revitalised by culture. During my time at NBY, I was fortunate enough to be welcomed out on-country as a part of a weekly cultural immersion program led by Auntie Di Appleby and the Yawuru country managers. Against the beautiful backdrop of Crab Creek and Roebuck Bay, we spent our time listening to stories, watching the country managers make Boomerangs, and fishing off the beach. The experience of going out on-country and learning from Yawuru people about the importance of keeping traditional knowledge, skill and language alive, was truly priceless. I will never forget the extraordinary stories of the people I met here.

Tea breaks at the NBY office turned into long yarns about weekend adventure plans, the fish catch of the evening prior, or if we were lucky, a nibble on some warm home-made damper. Our friend Johnno even brought his pet olive python (“*Oliver*”) one afternoon to join in on the action. We were welcomed so warmly into the NBY family with everyone hoping to show us what they loved most about Broome. Along with two other interns, I explored Broome and its surrounds, ventured out on some unforgettable road trips and made a fairly large dent in the town’s ginger beer stocks (*a glass of the local Broome brew was the best tonic for that heat!*).

One of our greatest adventures was our 4WD trip up to an Aboriginal community called One-Arm Point (*also known as Ardyaloon*)

with our close friend Dwes — a Bardi-Jawi man from Cygnet Bay. We spent our time swimming and fishing in the glassy, bright turquoise waters. Dwes was so proud to show us his country and it was disturbing to recall the fact that this beautiful community had been targeted for closure by the WA Government only months prior. Our road trip finished at Cape Leveque, the northern-most westerly point of Australia, where we marvelled at the striking contrasts between the red pindan rocks, the white sand and the blue water.

Outside of the office, I volunteered at Kimberly Wildlife Rescue helping with emergency wildlife relief and rehabilitation. The wet season’s magnificent lightening storms and bouts of torrential rain meant we were constantly inundated with injured or abandoned baby joeys. I’ll never forget watching the roo’s little heads popping out of their blankets when they heard the kettle starting to boil at feeding time. Here I made friends with a great group of backpackers who introduced me to the vibrant Broome nightlife. I would highly encourage future Aurora interns to ask around to see where else they can volunteer their time in their host community.

For a very small pocket of Australia, Broome had a lot to teach me about accepting difference, embracing change and looking to the future with positivity. The recent appointment of former NBY Chair and Yawuru man Patrick Dodson, as a Labor Senator for Western Australia, is a huge step forward for the Yawuru people of Broome and other Aboriginal people throughout the Kimberley. Mr. Dodson hopes to engage in a “far deeper conversation about the importance and value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to [Northern] development, and the basic need to address the importance of elevating poverty and disadvantage”.

Online applications for the Winter 2016 round of Aurora Internships are now open through 1 April at <http://www.auroraproject.com.au/aurorainternshipprogram>. This is truly an opportunity not to be missed.

Gala Mabu  
(Thank you)



## KEEP OFF THE GRASS

W / EMMA DONALDSON (AND HER DAD)

I'm writing this using the very temperamental internet connection on my family farm in Willala, just outside the town of Boggabri in North Western NSW. My Dad is sitting beside me — marvelling at the rate at which I can type — and we're examining the Bureau of Meteorology for any sign of upcoming rain. My family has been in the business of farming this area for 140 years, and over that time, it has evolved into the management of what we call a "sustainable beef cattle" and "mixed winter cropping" business.

I asked my Dad to describe the sort of operation he runs here and he replied very simply, "we're in the business of growing grass, resulting in taking carbon out of the atmosphere and putting it in the soil". Generally, people are pretty aware that trees are great at getting rid of carbon from the atmosphere; but few know that pastures can do it too. Carbon in soils is the most important building block for micro and macro biology, so it makes perfect financial sense that we run this business with the focus of making sure it is in the soil, rather than the atmosphere.

But how exactly do you make sure carbon is actually moving from the atmosphere to the soil, when you've got several hundred cattle tromping over it and munching on its growth? Easy. It's called "rotational grazing and groundcover" — we plant perennial species of grasses (*meaning they grow all year round*) and pair them with appropriate species of legumes, so that we know that the soil will never be exposed to the elements and left to degrade. We let cattle graze on small areas of land for a short period, then move them on so that the pasture has up to six months to completely recover before it gets munched on again. Those "hard luck" drought shots of cracked, barren earth aren't on our agenda here at all.

As the sequestration of carbon from the atmosphere is one of our primary objectives, you can imagine that it's our last wish to deal with an industry whose operation effectively removes safely stored carbon and disperses it throughout the atmosphere. But this happened, in August 2010, with a knock on the door from a nicely dressed gentleman from the Coal Seam Gas (CSG) industry, who wanted to put a major gas pipeline through our farm.

Put simply, CSG is a methane based fuel gas and its extraction relies on the total dewatering of a coal seam (*aquifer*) located well below existing aquifers utilised domestically and by agriculture. As a consequence of numerous CSG bore holes, our clean aquifers are inevitably connected to the coal seam aquifer, which is anything but

clean. These aquifers, sometimes referred to as 'fossil water', contain any number of heavy metals, carbonates, salts and arsenics, and are brought to the surface where there is absolutely no solution for them besides the gifting of a poisonous legacy for our future generations.

After Mr nicely dressed Coal Seam Gas claimed that 5km of a major gas pipeline would have no effect on our farming business, we decided to conduct some investigations of our own. Five years of research and two trips to the gasfields of the Surat Basin in Queensland proved that this industry is anything but innocuous. Anything but conducive to healthy water resources, non-mining businesses, and communities — and so we became activists overnight.

Now, we find ourselves in the middle of Santos' Petroleum Exploration License number 238 and the threat of extraction hangs round our neck like a millstone. We are sandwiched between two pilot production areas that may very well become gasfields and, in turn, the puppeteers of their future CSG business.

Ultimately though, it's not just gas that we're resisting, it's the coal. It's the renowned Leard State Forest immediately to our East being quietly obliterated. It's the half a million acres of productive farmland through the Narrabri, Gunnedah and Liverpool Plains Local Government areas that is lying idle and beginning to degrade because it is owned by multinationals waiting to put coalmines in. It's the "us versus them" mindset that is destroying our neighbourhoods because community opinion is increasingly swayed by whatever grants people can get out of the coal and gas companies. It's the feeling of being fibbed to and trodden on. And, it's one of the biggest issues threatening the future of agriculture in this region.

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# HOW SHOULD WE MEASURE HUMAN PROGRESS?

W / JESSICA VORREITER

As a society, the all-encompassing constraint we are facing is that of ecological limits. Despite the Western belief in the linear march of progress, we have to understand that we can only evolve within the Earth's planetary boundaries. The methods we use to measure human progress, such as GDP, do not address the fundamental issue of where our wealth comes from—the natural world.

There is no doubt that we are reaching a critical point, where our actions are affecting the very fabric of nature. According to an international team of 18 researchers, climate change, biogeochemical cycles, land-use change and biosphere integrity, are four of the nine planetary boundaries that have already been breached. In effect, this means we are altering the functions of nature itself, and we have no idea what the outcomes of these actions will be.

This is a big wake up call for our generation, which has been told since birth that there are no limits—that we should be aiming to have more, to do more and to experience more. The idea that there is an obstacle, other than ourselves, that might stop us from fulfilling this never-ending ambition is alien to us. However, this thinking is not compatible with a world that has a finite amount of resources. It shakes our faith in what we have known all our lives because it is the antithesis of everything our culture values.

Is there anything wrong with the idea that there are limits to what we can have? Early Enlightenment thinkers believed that if we could only meet our material needs, the conditions would be ripe for moral and social progress. But we have forgotten that material needs are the means to moral advancement and they have become an end in themselves. How can we reconcile the idea that the progress we have been working towards, may be the progress that will hinder our children's ability to have the same standard of living?

The only solution is to somehow decouple our economic growth from environmental damage, and this means we need something other than GDP to measure progress. It is not enough to assume anymore that environmental and social good follow economic prosperity. Our times of ecological damage, rising mental illness and rising income inequality point to a vastly different state of affairs. Since GDP has been rising as we destroy nature's capital, alternative measures that account for social and economic indicators must become the new yardstick by which we measure human progress. Many alternative indicators exist such as the Genuine Progress Indicator or green GDP.

Can progress that destroys the environment truly be called progress? We need a measure of growth that fully encompasses the three pillars on which humanity stands: the environment, society and the economy. This is a huge challenge to our culture but one that needs to be embraced, in order to both understand and combat the multiple ecological crises that face us.

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# THE BEST ENVIRONMENTALISTS I KNOW ARE THE ONES WHO HAVE OVER 60,000 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

W / BREANA MACPHERSON-RICE

A / CASSIE BELL

*"You talk of  
conservation, keep the  
forest pristine green  
Yet in 200 years  
your materialism has  
stripped the forest  
clean"*

- Kev Carmody, 'Thou  
Shalt Not Steal'

On a gusty winter evening in July last year, I sat as part of a large crowd gathered around a smouldering fire on the soggy baseball field of Flinders University, Adelaide. Drawn here by the Students of Sustainability conference, we had the privilege of listening to First Nations elders, who had travelled from all over the country to share their stories on Kaurana land.

For me, that evening was a reality check. As a young environmental science student, my empirical knowledge of nuclear fuel, energy, and waste was pretty limited. I guess it wasn't an industry I'd readily support — a brief recollection of Fukushima hinted that much — but I wasn't aware of any reasons I should oppose such an industry in Australia.

My perspective widened dramatically after I attended the conference. Mitch, a fierce Aranda/Luritja activist from the desert, told us of the British nuclear bomb tests at Maralinga in the 50s — a legacy I somehow hadn't heard of before. I discovered that these tests poisoned and killed many Indigenous people, contaminating their land and lifeblood with radioactivity indefinitely.

Arabunna Elder, Uncle Kevin Buzzacott, told us the dreamtime story of the sleepy Kalta lizard that lives under the ground, not to be disturbed due to the poison in its belly. This lesson has been kept alive through the oral histories of generations that stretch back far longer than any Western civilisation. Yet, instead of heeding this message, we have excavated the ground to build the Olympic Dam mine — one of the largest producers of Australian uranium, which is transformed into radioactive yellowcake and sold across the world. It is an established fact that Australian uranium was present in the reactors at Fukushima when the plant went down.

Understandably, First Nations communities here are distraught, feeling they have failed to pass on their ancestor's warnings to prevent disasters from happening today. I believe, however, that it is we who have failed: to listen, and to act.

Since hearing these stories, I have come to understand that Australia is only minimally entangled in the nuclear industry because of the tireless efforts of First Nations groups around the country. The more I learn, the more I realise that the same is true of most environmental struggles in Australia. We need only listen to the traditional custodians of this land to understand that they are the ones fighting hardest against the projects damaging our land. Their knowledge about this country spans *two ice ages* and countless generations — it's fair to say they are pretty reliable when it comes to thinking sustainably.

Ultimately, when it comes to the environment, I've learnt that it's time for us to sit down and listen to those who know best.



*The Students of Sustainability  
conference will be held this year  
from the 7-11 July in Brisbane on  
Jagera and Turrbal land.*

*For more information:  
[www.studentsofsustainability.org](http://www.studentsofsustainability.org)*

The image is a graphic design featuring a teal background. A large white square is positioned in the center, containing the word "CREATIVE" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. To the right of the white square, there is a diagonal split between the teal background and an orange background. The orange background is covered with a repeating pattern of white, stylized tree icons. The teal background also features a diagonal split with the orange background, creating a geometric composition. The word "CREATIVE" is centered within the white square.

**CREATIVE**

## HOME II

W / BRITTNEY RIGBY

My dad has been a police officer for more than thirty years. His job is hard, I've always known that, but it was still just a job, and he was still just my dad.

At school, I started realising that my friends' dads had "regular" jobs, jobs that gave them free weekends, but didn't give them night shifts or nightmares, jobs that meant they lived in "regular" houses.

In contrast, our house was a police residence, attached to the police station in the middle of town. That meant a very blurry line between dad being at work and dad being at home. Work was always just through the door, paperwork was something that was done on days off, I'd be picked up at work or dropped off to school in the paddy wagon.

Our house and the police station were the same building, and we always had strangers knocking on our door. Mum always answered, comforting victims, answering questions, telling drunks to "bugger off". There were lost people and crying people and one guy dripping with blood on the doorstep. Once there was a gunman, threatening to blow our heads off, while my sister and I hid under the covers. We saw a lot, and went to school and told nobody.

One day, an elderly couple arrived at our front door. We were expecting them; their son had shot himself in his car and they were driving down to collect it. He was a farmer and the drought out west had become too much, but no one knew why he had driven this far to end it all.

Dad had spoken to his parents to organise a time for them to access the holding yard, where vehicles seized or involved in accidents were kept. They told him which day worked best for them; he didn't tell them it was his only day off that week. They'd be there in the afternoon.

The morning of their arrival, I was sent down to Bi-Lo to buy a hundred dollars worth of cleaning products. Mum, Dad and I spent three hours scrubbing blood out of the car's upholstery – Dad refused to let these people see their son's car like that. When they got there, their old car broke down. It was a Sunday, and the mechanic wouldn't be in until the next morning. Mum insisted they stay with us, bought them pyjamas and a change of clothes, hugged them while they sobbed.

I don't remember their names, but that day is part of the reason my stomach squirms when I hear people oink at police, when Dad has been harassed in the street, when I don't tell people what my dad's job is for fear of their reaction. It was a strange sort of an upbringing, upon reflection. The four walls of that police residence hold a thousand stories, the ceiling has caught a million whispers, the carpet stores the footprints of polished police boots alongside polished school shoes.

My dad's job is stressful, and difficult, and testing, and dangerous, and damn bloody hard. But I've never minded being known as "that copper's daughter," when that copper is my best friend. And I never minded living at a police station, when walking through the front door always felt like coming home.

## BUS THOUGHTS

W / DEBBY XU

### ON TREES

One thought: A day in May

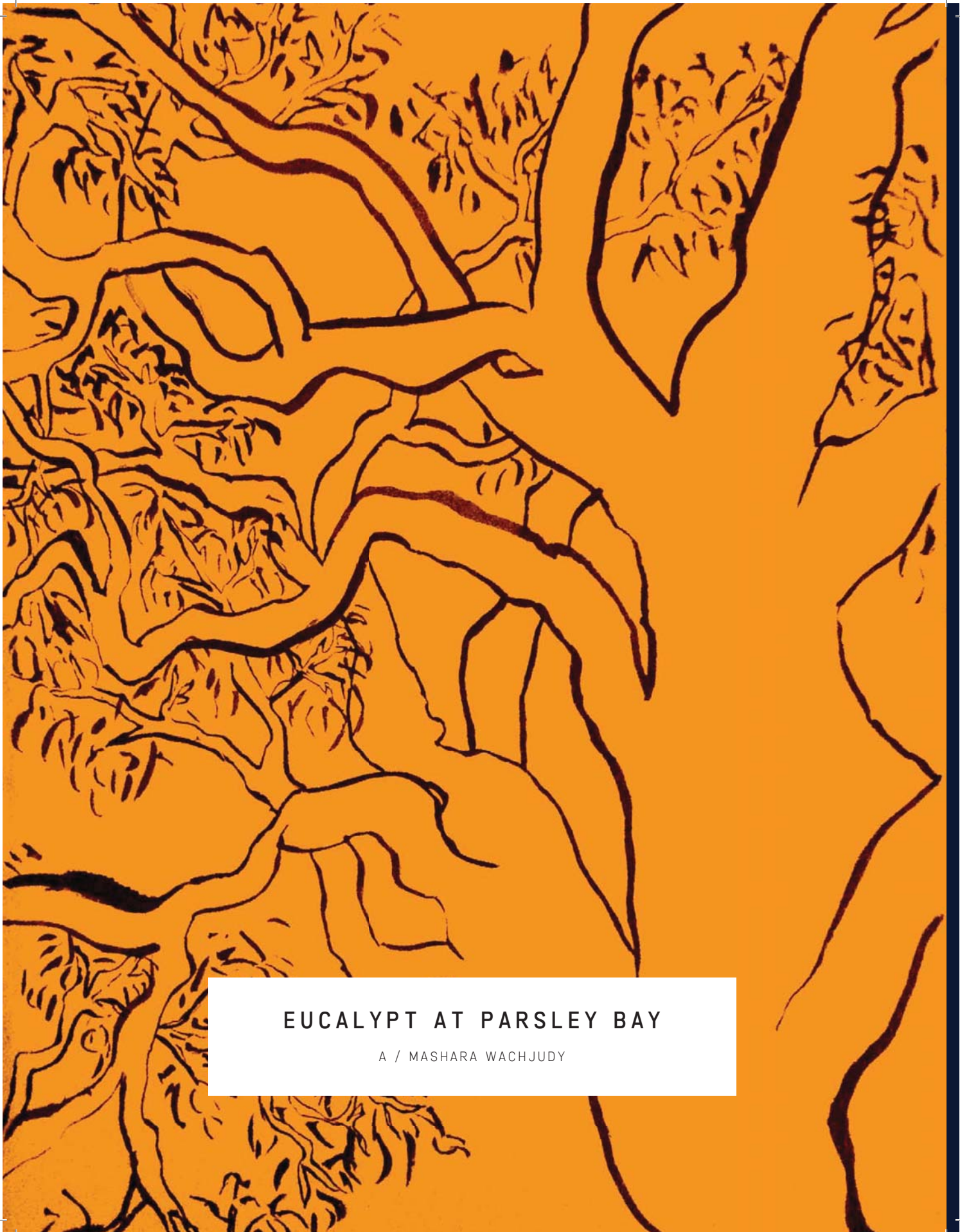
Sunlight springs off leaves like fateful encounters, embracing the spongy crispness, indulging and revelling in it. This weather makes me think of winter, my own perception of winter, where snow would fall like a slippery slide to the earth, heavily and with anticipation. Snow glistens, sunlight sparkles, both are white and captivating, both seasons are too. The family and its warmth, the world and its unknown-ness. Persephone, I thank you for your love for Hades, Demeter I'm sorry for your loss, but today is my pure gratitude for the disparate nature of how things are.

A very different thought:

I also complain about our common commute towards university. It would be more convenient if I changed trains, rather than taking the bus, where I wait and wait and still, run a risk of not saving a seat. But look- see, see those ancient pillars of wisdom we would sacrifice. They are wrapped pitifully in sandbag material as a means of protest. We cut it down for convenience, while their thick long branches, like a grandmother's extended arm, continue to stretch towards the sun, protect earthlings in shade – ambitious in their responsibility while still young in hundreds or thousands of years of living.

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# EUCALYPT AT PARSLEY BAY

A / MASHARA WACHJUDY



The background is a composition of geometric shapes. A dark navy blue area occupies the top-left and bottom-left portions. A teal area occupies the bottom-right and a diagonal section in the middle-right. A vertical orange strip with a subtle pattern is on the far left. A white square is centered in the dark blue area.

REGULARS

The background of the entire page is a solid teal color. Overlaid on this background is a repeating pattern of white line-art mugs. Each mug is depicted with a simple handle on the right and a small, stylized spout or steam on the left. The mugs are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some slightly offset from others to create a sense of depth and movement.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

W / BREANA MACPHERSON-RICE

*HANNAH COX*

1. Name, degree, where you're from?

Hannah Cox, studying a Bachelor of Science (*Environmental Management*) majoring in Geography, and I'm from Darwin.

2. How did you end up at the food cooperative on campus, *Thoughtful Foods*?

I'd just come back from Mexico for the first time, and I was very broke but very, very stubbornly keen to eat organic food. I was living on – after I paid rent – 30 bucks a week, and the only way I could eat organic was if I worked at *Thoughtful Foods*. You can be broke and eat organic!

3. Tell us a little bit about your hot lunches project for the semester, 'What's cooking at *Thoughtful Foods*', and where the inspiration came from.

Again, I was in Mexico, and I was just having big dreams. I was eating with all these Mexican mummies all the time and I was like, 'I wanna be a Mexican mumma!' and just provide good, simple food for people. So yeah, I just took it to *Thoughtful Foods* and made my dream come true! I guess it's pretty selfish in that way!

4. What's one of your favourite vegetables, and why?

My favourite food probably is onions, because there's so much you can do with them, and you can get a whole bag for a dollar. Just by chopping them up a different way they become more party! One of my favourite things to do with onions is to caramelise them. Just slice them up in rings, or half rings, fry them up until they're browning, and then add a big splash of vinegar and a teaspoon of sugar, turn it down really, really low and forget about it for half an hour. Then come back, turn the heat up really high, and just...burn the bottoms. Then, put it on everything – put it on hummus, or pasta, or rice... or just eat it by the spoonful, it's so good!

5. What was the craziest thing to happen to you over summer?

I went up to one of the most dangerous states in Mexico, cause there's some really cool mountains, but there's also a lot of narco' influence – like, drug cartels pretty much run the country up there. So, that was pretty hectic – I saw lots of guns in the hands of young people, and people with very different backgrounds to us. But – the beans up there were the best in the country! I had like, beans every day that I was there, cooked by various different families, and they were so good. It was just like bowls of beans with tortillas and that was all you could have. They were a cut above.

6. I know that this week you're riding your bicycle back from the *Byron Bay Blues* fest. What's one piece of advice you'd give to anyone preparing for a multi-day ride?

Probably take mates. Don't do it by yourself!

7. Do you have a favourite expression in another language that English translation doesn't quite do justice to?

Yeah, there's two – one that English does do justice to, and one that it doesn't. The first one is 'poner huevos', which just means like 'lay some eggs', as in 'put in some effort' but it just translates directly to 'lay some eggs', so that obviously comes across really well! And the other one is just like, 'padre', which translates directly to 'father', but it means 'cool'. You can take that to all different levels.

8. You can snap your fingers tomorrow and whatever you wish for will change. What would you choose?

This is a real hard one. But obviously climate change is a little bit of an inconvenience in my life (*and everyone's life at the moment*). It'd be pretty sick if it wasn't here.

9. Best coop snack for a long day of class?

Tamari almonds and sultanas. You got your sugar, nuts, salt – too easy.

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## AN HOUR FROM CAMPUS

W / BEN McCOY

### THE COAST TRACK

The Coast Track is a 28km track through the Royal National Park, running from the north of Wollongong (*Otford*) to the south of Cronulla (*Bundeena*). Along the way, you'll find the Figure 8 Pools, Wedding Cake Rock, the Wattamolla picnic area, plenty of waterfalls and swimming holes, as well as a whole heap of surfing beaches. It's an amazing part of our country and it's all incredibly accessible!

#### *Getting There*

To get to the start of the track, make your way to Otford train station. Take the South Coast train line and get up early- it's going to be a big day. Once you're at the station, it's really easy to find the start of the track. Just head up from the exit and follow the signs. Although the first 800m is a leg burner, you'll be rewarded with a spectacular view. Once you hit the coast, the track is easy to spot. You'll also enjoy the company of many others who made the trip over!

#### *What To Bring*

Water, sunscreen, hat, and energy food are the essentials. Bring a set of swimming trunks and a towel too, as there are so many great places to swim. Sturdy shoes (*thongs will be the end of you*) and a first aid kit may also be a good idea.

#### *Getting Home*

Arriving at Bundeena, there are signs to the ferry terminal to Cronulla. Usually, the ferry leaves every hour on the hour until six or seven at night, depending on the time of the year. Once at Cronulla, Central Station is a train ride away. Don't miss the last ferry, or you'll be swimming!

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## COOL MOSS COLUMN

W / P / MAX JONES

Dear Cool Moss Column,

I am aware that we avoid political posts on this column, but for the love of moss I cannot hold my thumbs.

While my adventures searching for nature's green delight have been punctuated by many chance (*and sought out*) encounters, nothing so far could have prepared me for the urban mungle (*moss/jungle*) that is Venice. As you are all aware, the Venetians are known for three things amongst travellers. Water. Glass. And the harmony it's population has, over many millions of years, painstakingly developed between the artificial and the mossial. Here the moss creeps at every corner, up every structure, and is nourished by the rising and falling of the tides. For me nothing could capture that harmony better than this heavenly staircase, [captured in a wide angle dynamic panorama using the HTC One M8 - one of my better photographs]. The decent down the stair symbolically represents a bridge between us and moss. Just as the walker takes the soft, slippery ooze (a wet moss variety) onto his shoe and his body, it too takes the walker onto and inside itself with compassion.

I have looked fondly on at tourists in this city purchasing selfie sticks; for those unprepared to roll bare-skinned in the moss, there is no better way to understand it than to hang gleefully off a bridge using one of these contraptions to accommodate effective macro photography. Bravo, budding mossketeers!

BUT we cannot stop at admiration for the way these exotic 'venetians' have married everyday life with the cultivation of moss. We must try to emulate it in our own home cities and countries. This post I know will reach a global audience; CMGs readership has grown steadily enough for that much to be a certainty. These ages have been dark - or, rather, too bright and dry - but I have felt a change sweeping through my underknees these last couple of days. The time has come for moss revolution. As they say here in venice: lunga vita al moss!

Sincerely,  
Max Jones

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## REVIEWS

### OPTIMISM

BY BOB BROWN

W / HARRY HOLBROOK

*Optimism* provides an unparalleled glimpse into the life and times of author, Bob Brown. For those who don't know, Brown is the former Leader of the Australian Greens, and one of the most significant individuals in Australia's environmental movement.

His memoirs follow the many twists and turns in his life. From an adolescence spent enduring the challenges of society's archaic views of homosexuality, to a career as a doctor taking him to the other side of the world. He also had a fundamental role in Tasmania's early environmental battles, and then, finally, a career in politics.

It's not difficult to see what led Brown into a lifetime of environmentalism. His love for and connection with the natural world is clearly expressed through vivid descriptions of his surroundings.

Above all and as expected, an unwavering sense of optimism permeates his memoirs. Despite the obstacles faced, Brown believes that positivity is the only way to create change.

He leaves readers with a simple message:

*'We should tread carefully on Earth and share it well – not least to ensure our fellow species their own living room and to guarantee we leave the world the better for those of our own species who will follow us.'*

### WACO

BY VILENT SOHO

W / EMMA DONALDSON

I bought this album on a sunny Saturday, the day after it was released, from a record store where Violent Soho were doing a signing that afternoon. By the time I arrived, with my eyes on buying Soho's highly anticipated fourth album, there was already a long line of silently focused fans snaking around the block. Many were sporting Violent Soho t-shirts, Sennheiser headphones and/or an energy drink, and most had come along to the signing alone- myself included.

Violent Soho fans are selfish fans- each of us believing that we have a connection with each alcohol-fuelled anthem that far transcends that of the next guy (*one even claimed he drank a VB with Luke Boerdam one time*). Everyone in that line wanted nothing more than a weekend alone with *WACO* before we had to share it at work, school or uni on Monday morning.

Described as *Hungry Ghosts'* "older sister" by lead singer Boerdam, *WACO* is the obvious 'bad influence' on the band's previous album. *WACO* is stronger, darker and more worldly than *Hungry Ghost*, and has been supplying her underage alcohol and cheap cigarettes for years. She offers the same wailing vocals, heavy riffs and driving bass line that Soho fans have come to crave but re-conceptualises them to include themes that explode from Violent Soho's usual frame of the suburbs.

The opening track '*How to Taste*' is a euphoric reminder that next time I listen to this, it'll probably be from the guts of a sweaty mosh pit in which hundreds of punters are screaming the lyrics back at their masters. It's a wall of guitars and visceral screams, and we're totally okay with it.

A standout on the album is definitely, '*Evergreen*', and it hits you just below the kneecaps- hard. It's a contrast of a sort of sweetness that is new to Violent Soho's sound with the wailing verses and crashing choruses we expect. We're totally cool with this too.

Violent Soho remind us with *WACO*, that they're still one of the only Australian bands capable of crafting punk rock anthems that are as at home in a quiet backyard Sunday sesh as they are affront a seething mosh pit. All hail Violent Soho.

## REVIEWS

### THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

BY AVI LEWIS

W / ELIZABETH MORLEY

"Is it really possible to be bored by the end of the world?" author Naomi Klein asks at the beginning of *This Changes Everything*, a climate-change documentary inspired by Klein's 2014 book of the same name. In striking images, director Avi Lewis travels across the world to capture the real anger and struggle of ordinary citizens in the face of big companies exploiting Mother Earth and their communities.

Despite what you might expect from a climate change documentary, this film isn't about melting glaciers or polar bears, as adorable as they may be. *This Changes Everything* instead argues that what should drive us to incite climate action is ourselves – humankind – and the problems we face as a diverse society stuck in an economic system that works against the majority of us. It touches upon the intersections of race and class with environmental struggle to highlight the massive failings of governments and corporations, yet also showing the environmental, social, and economic gains possible if governments choose to work in line with climate action.

The film follows many stories around the world, including a young couple's battle against a ruptured Exxon pipeline in their Montana goat ranch; poor Indian communities using their bodies to obstruct the building of power plants on life-giving wetlands, and an indigenous group in Canada rebelling against the toxic spills on ancestral lands.

All this material has a hard time coming together in a natural crescendo, and one could argue that it might lack the emotional urgency or focus necessary in the closing scenes – a problem when the key task of this film is to mobilise viewers who have lacked motivation and knowledge to act on their environmental concerns.

An unsettling but ultimately encouraging documentary about global warming and grassroots activism, *This Changes Everything* presents an optimistic view of an approaching disaster that seeks to empower rather than to scare. But maybe we should be scared. If we truly are presiding over the possible annihilation of our species, perhaps a kick in the pants is what we really need.

### THE WAIT

BY PIERO MESSINA

W / NATALIE SEKULOVSKA

Anna (*Juliette Binoche*) is mourning the recent death of her son, Giuseppe. She's surprised by an unexpected visitor, his lover, Jeanne (*Lou de Laâge*), who is eager to know when he'll be returning to his mother's Sicilian villa. Unable to break the news to the young girl, Anna tells her Giuseppe has promised to return in time for Easter. It's clear she pities Jeanne. But we get the feeling that's not the only reason she lies. She maintains the ruse for another motive: to convince herself that he's not really gone.

*The Wait* is a shift from the typical open-endedness of European art house cinema. We're given enough subtle hints to piece together the ending (*despite not knowing how Giuseppe dies*) and we find that sense of closure comforting. But sometimes closure isn't enough to satisfy us. We can't help but look for the hidden layers of meaning in the film and, inevitably, we fall for the trap cleverly set for us. Clouded by our instinctively human desire to explain the unexplainable and outwit the director, we forget that the film is, quite simply, about the wait.

Much of the film's emotional intensity comes from Binoche's artistic genius and knack for living and breathing her character. Her performance is raw and minimalistic, but that's all that is really needed for us to see Anna's veiled grief. Although de Laâge isn't quite at Binoche's level yet, she must be credited for her effort. Not only does she let Jeanne's naïve youthfulness shine through, she also shows her character's vulnerability, as she waits, concerned and desperate for her lover's return.

## GREAT! REVIEW

### BATMAN VS. SUPERMAN

W / JAYDEN RATHSAM-HUA

Many people have lambasted *Batman v Superman* as a terrible movie. It's a pretty big call. Perhaps we should step back and give it another chance. Look at it with fresh eyes. If you've already seen it, reading on may just change your mind on the film. It's the second major installment of superhero movies set in the DC universe, leading up to the eventual union of heroes in the Justice League. Naturally, many people have compared the film to *The Avengers*; the parallels are clear. However, is making such a comparison conducive to an accurate appraisal of the film's entertainment value, let alone quality? Let's find out.

Let's quickly touch on the salient crowning glory of the film. What *The Avengers* failed to deliver, effectively leaving the audience empty-handed, *Batman v Superman* makes up for in droves: A totally incoherent plot. If you think about it, a totally incoherent plot may be a bad thing. But if you really think about it, it could be a good thing. Take for example the motivating reason for Batman and Superman's rivalry. There isn't one. Upon first thought, I was left feeling vacuous and robbed of a film's potential for crafting a well-rounded narrative. But upon second thought, I was forced to ponder the bigger questions: "Who is the real hero?" "Who even is the villain?" "Is a clash of titans inevitable, despite common moral ground?" "Was that a piece of my choc top that I felt landing on my shirt?" Snyder has brought us a movie that stays with the audience... long after the credits roll. Further, pondering these deep socio-philosophical questions is given an additional degree of heft with the inclusion of Neil Degrasse Tyson's cameo, which masterfully bolsters the scientific grit of the movie. Absolute genius.

In many ways, *Batman v Superman* treads new ground for cinematic adaptations of superhero comics. More specifically, this film bravely departs from employing a tired trope that has been countlessly revisited by other superhero films: faithfulness to the source material. In the comic books, Batman is known as the world's greatest detective, and more importantly, follows one critical rule with how his brand of vigilante justice is served: Without casualties. It's 2016, and Snyder has declared that it's time to move on and lay on the grit. In this film, Batman is no longer encumbered by the debilitation of having a moral conscience. The audience is not given the Batman it needs, but the one it deserves; one that is willing to pull the trigger on making the tough

decisions, and more pertinently, pull the trigger on his 50-caliber machine gun to put an end to crime in Gotham.

I have great respect for experimental film. Defying conventions and ingrained ideas of how a film should look and sound facilitate the evolution of artistic expression. This in mind, the more I reflect upon *Batman v Superman*, the more I respect Snyder's directions in producing such an avant garde work. Of course, there are many filmic elements that are often re-invented, ie. the choice of camera, narrative structure, editing, and the blending of different media forms. Snyder is able to look past all this folly, and directly draw his inspiration for change from the beating heart of any character-driven plot: raw performance.

Remarkably, Snyder redefines the role of the actor by surgically removing all traces of acting from the film in all ways imaginable. Instead, he cleverly opts to replace all forms of physical expression with frowning. Never has an ensemble of characters anchored a film's dark tone with such a simple method. I was constantly reminded of the gritty gravitas implied by the conflict between the two heroes. Interestingly, Snyder has disclosed in an interview that through the use of subliminal imagery, the 'v' shape formed by every character's eyebrow placement acts as the sole reminder of Batman's 'versing' of Superman. I have to say. I was convinced. It worked.

Where the innovations of competing superhero films may give audience members a breath of fresh air, *Batman v Superman* reinvents the game by offering all cinema goers a breath of gritty asbestos-rich smog. While some movie buffs crave an intelligible plot, dimensional characters, and balanced emotional notes, Snyder has created a film that appeals to an audience which demands greater complexity. Creating a story with a thousand inconclusive narrative threads, incomprehensible motivations for characters' actions and an atmosphere of unrelenting forlornness makes for a comic-book universe with a clear artistic identity and future direction. If the film's dominant imagery and tone are by any stretch a representation of what this very direction is, I can safely declare that it is headed down the straight and narrow toward the sticks and stones of contemporary grit: the dirt.

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# VEGAN SPICED LENTIL STUFFED CAPSICUMS

W / EMMA DONALDSON

A / CASSIE BELL



*Preparation time: 15 mins*

*Cooking time: 20 mins*

*Serves 2*

## *Ingredients:*

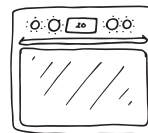
- 2 sticks celery, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 4 tsp ground cumin
- 400g brown lentils, soaked
- 1 large tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 leek, finely sliced
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh coriander
- 1 carrot, finely diced
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- 2 capsicums, whole

## *Method:*

- 1 Heat some olive oil in a pan and add the leek, garlic, celery and carrots. Cook until limp.  
  
Add lentils, tomatoes, cumin, coriander and stock and simmer gently for 5 minutes or until sauce has thickened.
- 2 Take your capsicums and carefully cut around the stalk, removing it and the seeds inside but keeping the rest of the capsicum intact. Keep the stalk as a 'lid' for your stuffed capsicums.
- 3 Place capsicums on a tray and spoon the spiced lentil filling inside. Replace the stalk 'lid' on top.



- 4 Drizzle with a little olive oil before baking in a 180°C oven.
- 5 Bake for 20mins or until the capsicum skin is blistering.



- 6 Best served with a fresh garnish of coriander and a spoonful of tomato relish.  
*Enjoy!*



## ETHNOCULTURAL



The Ethnocultural Collective at UNSW believes in the importance of a pluralist, multicultural community, in which all backgrounds, cultures, and creeds are respected.

This is an especially potent message in the aftermath of the Brussels tragedy – although there are those who would hope to portray these acts of terrorism as being the sole responsibility of all Muslims everywhere, or choose to scapegoat vulnerable refugees (*many of whom are fleeing the very terror that some, like our Prime Minister, have sought to hold them accountable for*), we need to recognise that our strength and liberty is derived precisely from our diversity, not despite it.

We should keep this in mind as we listen to Jean-Luc Bodson, the Belgian Ambassador to Australia, who sharply rebuked Malcolm Turnbull's claim that the tragedy in Brussels was linked to a refugee intake.

In response to the Prime Minister, Ambassador Bodson has warned: "It's dangerous because it's precisely what ISIS wants — that we would make a confusion between terrorism and migrants and between terrorism and Islam."

As the late postcolonial giant Edward Said had said, "Modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, émigrés, refugees." In honor of the contribution of refugees, emigrants, and all people from diverse and minority backgrounds to Australian society, the Ethnocultural Collective is in the process of developing a calendar of campus events to mark cultural celebrations like Eid and Diwali, as well as working to install an ethnocultural mural near the Village Green walkway.

## INTERNATIONAL



After O-week, there are campaign and many activities running and supported by SDI.

- International students' forum
- This event encourages international students to express their problems facing in university and figuring out whether how to solve it.
- Lord Mayer welcome international students
- This was a good opportunity for international students to get to know other international students from other universities across Australia.
- Travel concession campaign

This campaign is running by cooperating with NUS, Usyd, and UTS.

What are the big issues for international students?

We are waiting to hear from you!

Come and join our activities or you can send your ideas to improve quality of international students' lives at [international@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:international@arc.unsw.edu.au).

## INDIGENOUS



The Indigenous collective have been active on campus and in student life so far this semester with regular collective meetings being held at Nura Gili at 5 p.m. on Tuesdays and kicking off our semester with Trivia Night in week two. Trivia Night was the first Indigenous Society event for the year and was a success with seven teams competing and over 30 people in attendance. The night involved five rounds of trivia ranging from film, music, sport to current issues, icebreaker games and lots of pizza! The winning team won movie tickets to the Ritz Cinema in Randwick which were donated. All Indigenous Society events are free and anyone can come along!

Upcoming events for the Indigenous collective and society will start back up after the Easter Break with regular fortnightly Yarn and Eat Nights. Each night will focus on a specific topic with a presentation by a special guest. Topics may be presented through different forms including art, film, spoken word, inspirational guest speaker, music, song or dance etc. A facilitated safe space session will then take place where conversation on the topic will be had followed by light refreshments. A contingent of UNSW Indigenous Students also attended the YARN Australia Event "Black Panther Woman" at 107 Redfern which focused on the story of Auntie Marlene Cummings and her experiences as a black woman in the 60's and as a member of the Australian Black Panther Party. For future events, stay up to date by following us on Facebook at UNSW Indigenous Society.

The Indigenous Society is also supporting the committee and Indigenous students who are currently fundraising for the National

Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games in Brisbane in June 2016. The NITESG committee will be holding fundraises throughout the semester including Trivia Night, bake stalls and BBQ's so please come along and support!

This year, the aim of the Indigenous collective is to stay active by improving Indigenous student life, supporting Indigenous students, hosting educational and cultural appropriate events, making UNSW a more culturally appropriate campus and to be an active and informed voice on current issues.

We are looking at holding a sports day in semester 2, cultural trip and weekend cultural events in the local Sydney area. If you would like to get involved or have any questions regarding the Indigenous collective and society, please contact Bridget Cama on [b.cama@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:b.cama@arc.unsw.edu.au).

*Collective meeting times  
semester 1:*

Tuesdays 5PM - Nura Gili

## WELFARE



Hi all,

The Welfare Collective is committed to providing adequate services to the community that best reflects their needs. We are working closely with CAPS and Student Minds to ensure that we create a great Mental Health Day on the 20th April for all students.

Our Collective has also engaged in the campaign for the removal of parallel import restrictions on textbooks which has been run by the National Union of Students. This campaign aims to ensure that we remove restrictions on the importation of textbooks from overseas into Australia which would place downward pressure on textbook prices.

We are providing free breakfast every Monday and Thursday morning for students outside the Collective rooms. Feel free to pop past and if you are interested in volunteering then people let me know because we are always looking for more!

We have held events which have a focus on engaging new people and encouraging them to understand more about the services that the university provides. Representatives from Headspace will be coming in to talk to students about the mental health services that they provide as we seek to further engage stakeholders in our programs and initiatives.

I also want to stress our focus on making sure that there are enough places for students to rest on campus. We are currently engaging in lobbying on this issue.

If you have any ideas that you want to push forward to improve student welfare on this campus please let me know at any time or come along to a Welfare Collective meeting! :)

## WOMENS



A survey last year by the National Union of Students showed that 80% of women students at UNSW have sexual harassment or assault. 80%! This is a disturbingly high proportion which demonstrates that sexist attitudes towards women persist on our campus, and in fact negatively affect women's ability to access an equal standard of education and have an equally enjoyable experience of student life.

Whilst about half of incidents of sexual assault occurred on campus, horrifying only 3% of students had reported it to anyone in an official role at UNSW. This is fairly indicative of the harmful culture of victim-blaming, shame and avoidance that surrounds issues of sexual assault and a University policy and reporting system which fails miserably to protect and support the needs of students.

We need to do better! As a primary concern affecting women students at UNSW, the SRC Women's Collective are committed to tackling this issue. We're engaging in ongoing discussions with the University and the Colleges, and are developing a big, loud and vocal campaign aimed at ending sexual assault and violence against women. This will include having a free screening of the documentary 'The Hunting Ground' in early May to raise awareness (watch the trailer - its super great, along with Lady Gaga's 'Till it happens to you'), petitions, a huge rally, education around 'consent' and more.

If you'd like to get involved, come along to one of our women's collective meetings to find out more! We meet every week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12-1.30pm in the Women's Room (*near the top of the Basser steps*) - usually over tea and cupcakes or popcorn.

You can join the Facebook group 'UNSW Women's Collective' for more info or e-mail [women@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:women@arc.unsw.edu.au)

## SWD



Since O-Week the Students With Disabilities Collective has been active in bringing accessibility concerns to the SRC, which has resulted in the SRC passing a motion to make sure all SRC events are held where possible in accessible venues or in venues that have partial accessibility that SRC events be held in the accessible part of that venue.

We are gearing up to in April finally start the process of the accessibility and disability experience surveys. As always please don't hesitate to contact me or the collective at [disabilities@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:disabilities@arc.unsw.edu.au).

## EDUCATION



G'day UNSW!

This month, the Education Collective has been doing a bunch of cool stuff to fight for your future! We've been putting up posters around campus and stalling for the NDA. We've also led contingents to a whole number of protests on important issues including the cuts to healthcare, Safe Schools, and supported our fellow students at the University of Sydney in fighting against the restructures at their university that result in lost jobs and lost quality learning time for students!

Speaking of restructures - the UNSW Education Collective has been keeping an eye out for possible restructures happening here and across the country! If you'd like to know more, or you have some opinions about what might be happening here at UNSW in the future, please come along to our Collective meetings or get in contact with me/your SRC!

The importance of education activism has only increased as the semester has gone on, as the 20% cut to public university funded suggested under Abbott is predicted to go ahead under Turnbull - most likely resulting in a sharp rise in the amount students have to contribute to their degrees - in short, increased fees. As if that wasn't enough, the government has also been looking at possibly chasing up the outstanding HECS debts from the estates of students who have passed away.

If you want to stand up for fair education, and against the rise in fees and collection of HECS from the estates of the deceased, come see us outside the Library at 1pm on Thursdays, come to the Collective meeting at 2pm on Thursdays and join us at our Free BBQ for Free Education in April.

*The continued investment of UNSW's endowment in the fossil fuel industry shows a lack of leadership. It is unethical as well as financially irresponsible. Fossil Free UNSW call for UNSW to divest from fossil fuels and commit to a sustainable future.*



*Orange crosses stand for the number of students and non-academic staff that indicated their support for UNSW's divestment in Fossil Free UNSW's referendum last year. Out of the 1000 people who participated, 78% supported divestment.*

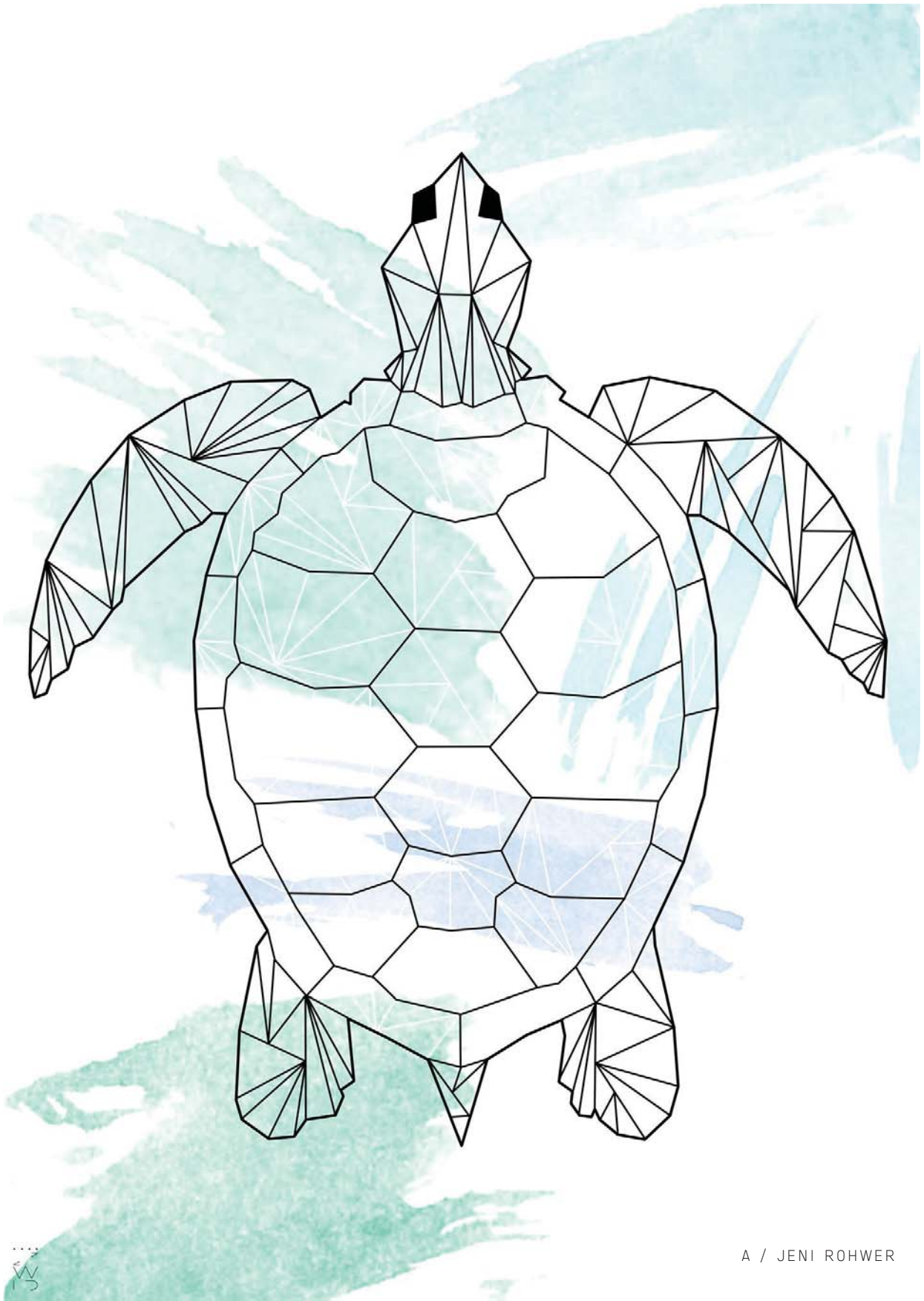


*Red academic hats represent the number of academic staff and alumni who signed Fossil Free UNSW's open letter, supporting divestment. It received 156 signatures, belonging to members of each of the faculties at UNSW.*



*Visit our Facebook page:*  
<https://www.facebook.com/FossilFreeUnsw/>







# MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## IMPORTANT DATES:

ANZAC DAY  
MOTHER'S DAY  
NATIONAL SORRY DAY

APRIL 25TH  
MAY 8TH  
MAY 26TH

