

The background of the entire page is a dark navy blue, densely populated with colorful speech bubbles. Each bubble contains a word in a different script or language, including English, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Thai. The colors of the bubbles include yellow, orange, pink, purple, blue, and green. The words are scattered across the page, creating a vibrant, multicultural visual texture.

THARUNKA

SEPTEMBER 2016 / ETHNOCULTURAL

UNSW STUDENT MAGAZINE

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



KONSTANTINOS KOUTROUMPAS
/
GUEST EDITOR
ETHNOCULTURAL OFFICER 2016

"I am not only a citizen of Athens and Greece, I am a citizen of the world too."
Socrates 469-399 BC, *Philosopher*

I took on the role of Ethnocultural officer two months ago. So far, it has been an amazing experience with a lot of work and many things yet to be done. We have been discussing a lot of great ideas within the collective and have started the process of making them a reality.

I would like to thank Tharunka for their work on this issue. It is important to give the students a chance to be heard. My vision for this issue is that it will raise awareness about the challenges that ethnocultural students and students from overseas face, and help create solutions to ease them into our educational system.

Australia sets an example of a multicultural society where mutual respect is endorsed. If you feel like

a citizen of the world, UNSW is a good place to be.

Over the next few months we will be discussing ideas about how to help newcomers adjust more easily, and we will extend the role of the collective to students who are interested in other cultures and languages.

The SRC has been working hard to come with innovative ideas to improve student life. Being new to this role, I was delighted by the warm welcome I actively received by the rest of my colleagues. I am quite confident that this semester will see campaigns that will improve student life and, more importantly, give a voice to students.

On behalf of the SRC, I strongly encourage every student to get involved with our collectives, speak their opinions and work with us to improve our university.



CARLA ZUNIGA-NAVARRO
/
EDITOR

As someone who rarely felt reflected in my "otherness" growing up, the Ethnocultural issue of Tharunka is something, which I hold close to my heart.

Seeing ourselves reflected and represented in writing is so vital to our sense of identity within an often homogenous Australian society, which seeks to minimise our experiences as "culturally diverse". A society, which increasingly closes its borders and its minds to any form of "otherness". A society, which at times seems to be overwhelmingly growing in its intolerance.

This issue of Tharunka seeks to celebrate the experiences of everyone who identifies as a Person of Colour or from an ethnocultural background within the UNSW community. With this issue we want to continue a conversation, to help educate, to share experiences and to provide a platform for these voices, but also to reiterate that the process of intersectionality is ongoing and our knowledge in it ever-growing.

We hope that you read these pages and see yourself reflected. We hope that these pages help that 10 year old you who felt so different. We hear you.

OPEN LETTER TO VICE CHANCELLOR

August 8, 2016

Dear Vice Chancellor Jacobs,

First of all I would like to thank and congratulate you for the great atmosphere you have created within UNSW. Your overall work for our campus has been exceptional and we are lucky to see our university score higher and higher in world rankings, host more students and provide high class education.

The reason I am writing this open letter is to bring to your attention the importance of work while studying. There are many of us who have to work in order to afford living and university costs, while others want to gain real work experience. I would like to focus on the first category- students who have no other choice in order to afford their education. Dealing with living expenses can be stressful, especially for young people. Changing jobs or negotiating hours is also very risky for a financially independent individual. It is important to make university more accessible to them. UNSW should give students the freedom to combine their academic life with their professional career more effectively.

As the Ethnocultural officer it is my duty to serve the interests of those who come from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. Adjusting to a new educational system is challenging. A lot of these students face an extra challenge every semester as they have to accommodate their classes within a busy work schedule. This means that sometimes students can only choose amongst a limited number of work opportunities as their timetable does not allow more options.

My suggestion is accelerating the facilitation of evening classes after 6:00pm. I realise that this would not be viable for every single course. The way I envision this working is to create evening classes for at least the minimum units of credit needed to successfully complete each major.

In my view, this plan will be beneficial for all students. I strongly believe that everyone should be able and encouraged to gain work experience while studying, and have more flexible timetable options to access a wider range of opportunities.

Yours sincerely,



Konstantinos Koutroumpas
Ethnocultural Officer

THARUNKA

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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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WHAT DO SOME ETHNOCULTURAL STUDENTS THINK OF UNSW?

CHANDRA

Is there anything you really like about the UNSW community?

When my friends asked what I love about UNSW community, I would always mention the great number of societies we have at uni. Not only is the membership fee dirt-cheap, there is always a society for everyone's nationality and interests. The great thing about these societies is that you get a chance to make new friends.

Are there any concerns you have?

For a university that celebrates multiculturalism, it does not seem to be the case. It is true our university is multiethnic but not multicultural per se. It would be great to see societies do more joint activities with different nationalities or participate in more competitions.

As an ethnocultural student, what has your experience at UNSW been like so far?

My accent definitely got some weird expressions from people and there are times when I have to repeat my phrases.

There are instances when I mention my origins, telling them that I am an international student. And the surprise looks and remarks: "For someone from [country X], you speak really good English." Some of us study English in our high school curriculum, or studied as an international student.

ANONYMOUS

As an ethnocultural student, what has your experience at UNSW been like so far?

The difficulty of courses is not justifiable given the requirements of the professions and the assessments fail to make logical sense. Feedback is generally not followed by change but instead neglected and current inefficient teaching practices remain in place despite student consensus. Flexibility is a foreign concept to UNSW and often it is impossible to have any class schedule let alone having options to choose from.

Are there any concerns you have?

While UNSW is seemingly a multicultural environment, I think there is little to no racial integration. Perhaps efforts are made to increase integration but currently there is no visible results as the campus is clearly culturally segregated. Frankly, the people who supposedly promote ideas of integration are in fact obnoxious and focus on examples which are not relevant to the issue. Being self-righteous and aggressive in spreading your message does not, and will not, serve your cause. It will instead increase the existing level of cultural isolation and perpetuate already well established negative ideas.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM REALLY?

W / DIVYA VENKATARAMAN

Where are you from?

I'm from Australia.

(Cue the look of mild-moderate surprise.)

No, where are you really from?

As non-White Person™ from a White Country™, this is a recognisable exchange that happens multiple times a day while travelling. It's a fascinating phenomenon, when people you've never met – some sleazeball at a bar, the guy checking you in at your hostel – think they own your identity to the extent they deem your self-identification unsatisfactory.

Because they don't really want to know where you're from. They want to know why you're not white.

There are often no ill intentions behind this, as far as I can tell. Except maybe some of them are getting ready to tell a racist joke and want to make sure they're offending only those not in present company. We will never know.

My favourite is the guessing game. A guy wearing a backwards cap and grinning comes over to the table. I am surprised he can walk under the weight of his good intentions.

My friends and I have taken bets on where you're from. We've got Guyanese (no) Pakistanian (what?), Hindi (a language, but okay) and Balinese (????).

This is a fantastic way to trivialise someone's ethnicity and make them want to punch you in the face. I'm so glad you're having so much fun guessing! I'm so glad I could liven up your Thursday afternoon! Ten more points if you follow up with a line containing the word "exotic".

When I say I'm from Australia, some people look at me like I'm trying to trick them with my foreign sorceress voodoo magic.

No, I really am from Australia. Sydney? I offer, helpfully. See, I even know a city in Australia.

It's clear what they're getting at. For the second line in conversation, it's a bit interrogative however. They want me to tell them that I'm Indian and that I was born there. They want me to reinforce their understanding of Australia as a White Country™. I love talking about my Indianness, of course. I will talk at length about how much I love Chennai and its dirty cosmopolitan glamour, about going to the temple and celebrating Diwali with my family – but this is not something for White Person™ to immediately interrogate me about as a point of reference and distinction.

This is not to say that we can't have frank, interesting discussions about race and identity. Of course, we are all marvellous, unique unicorns and it is absolutely enlightening to discuss each other's backgrounds and the nuggets of wisdom and shared experience we can pass on to each other. But to insist that I am not Australian is not condonable. Ultimately, feel free to ask people who they are and why they are and how they are. Just don't be a dickhead about it.

CAN I TICK MORE THAN ONE BOX?

W / JASMIN-MARY YALDA

Ah, the Australian Census – a joyous night that occurs once every four years. Another thing added to the list of responsibilities I supposedly have now that I’m an adult, along with lodging tax returns, paying my rego and scheduling my own doctor’s appointments (*way to go mum*). But more importantly, the Census is just another way for me to fit my enigmatic sense of self into generic boxes under ambiguous headings like “gender”, “race” and “religion”.

Not that I have anything against the Census—all that data sure does come in handy to the government when planning for the future of healthcare, education, employment and transport in this country.

I have no problem with doing my bit. But as I was sitting with my grandmother, helping her complete her form, I couldn’t help but wonder: Does the race, ethnicity and religion we put down really matter? Is it enough to say that my grandmother is an Australian Assyrian (*or is it Assyrian Australian?*) who affiliates with the Christian faith? Is that a true reflection of the love she feels for this country, and how we’ve been raised to think that the words, “You are blessed to live here,” are gospel? Doesn’t that gratitude make her more Australian than anything else? Shouldn’t the question about ethnicity not matter?

It really just reminds me of every time I’ve had to introduce myself to someone new.

“So, what’s your nationality?”

“Well, I’m Australian, born and raised.”

“Okay, but your background?”

“My parents are Assyrian.”

“Oh, Syrian! So you speak Arabic!”

“No, AS-Syrian and no, I speak Assyrian, not Arabic.”

“Oh, cool. So, are you a practicing Muslim?”

“No actually, I’m Christian.”

Or when I’m travelling and a taxi driver asks me: “Where are you from?” I’ll tell them I’m

from Australia and yet they still ask me, “No, where are you from though?” Sure, I’m not the quintessential Australian lookalike. I’ve got the unruly, dark hair, olive skin and the eyes to match, and I gestulate way more than I should. But what does the typical Australian even look like anymore? And more importantly, why do we feel the need to have a typical Australian?

It’s all just a social construct, a stereotype. And with the expectation of thousands of refugees entering the country over the next few years, is there a need for those questions? Can you put a person in a box? Does that tell you about their friendships, their aspirations and their upbringing?

I had the same upbringing as most Aussie kids. I had vegemite on toast. I watched *Playschool* as a child, *Neighbours* as a teen. I even dressed up as a sausage sizzling on an Australian BBQ for my school’s 2003 Junior Rock Eisteddfod performance. Is there a box I can tick next to, “As Aussie as it gets?” Funnily enough, these are all stereotypes, yet they are all in their own way a small fragment of our unique culture.

I’ve also, however, had my family and my culture. From a young age I was put into an Assyrian school to learn to read, write and speak an ancient language that most of the world hasn’t even heard of before. I’ve studied my history, been force-fed food and been an accessory to big, fat Assyrian weddings (*we can empathise with the Greeks*). It is a part of me, a part of my heritage, make no mistake about that.

But when someone asks me where I’m from, Australia is what comes to mind. I appreciate my roots and am proud of them but this country is my home. I embrace, respect and represent its ideals. And I know I’m not alone in that. I know that every kid, every parent, every person feels that way too. Whether or not they were born here or just arrived—we’re all so lucky to be here.

All of us.

The tapestry of our society is so versatile, so rich. People from all over the world have travelled far and wide to make this their home. We, as a nation, should be so very proud of that.

And with my Census form complete, all the correct boxes ticked, I submit it with a smirk and a shake of my head. I just sent through a whole heap of information about who I am and yet the people who will be processing the form don’t know a single thing about me and my family.

And that really got me thinking about the continuous commentary on the current refugee crisis and war on terrorism. When I turn on my television or log onto Facebook, and see footage of people running for their lives or crying over the loss of a loved one, I am overwhelmed beyond measure.

Instead, I find myself fixated on the fear in the eyes of those caught up in the catastrophe. It does not matter if it’s happening in Paris, or in Belgium, in Gaza, or Iraq. It doesn’t matter if it’s the Muslims being persecuted, or the Jews or Christians. It doesn’t matter that these people are strangers living on the other side of the Earth, speaking in a tongue that I do not understand. What matters most is that HUMANS are being killed.

So yeah, the Census dudes might not know me. They might not know the person next door to me. A piece of paper can only tell them so much. We, as humans, are the only ones responsible for categorising people into race, ethnicity and religion. We are the ones putting up the walls and having a tough time tearing them down when we finally realise that people with the same dreams and aspirations are dying all over the world.

I’m proud to be Australian. I am proud to be Assyrian. But what I want most of all, is to be proud to be a human being. And maybe that’s the only box we need on any form. A tick for humanity—because this world sure does need it.

BEING A MINORITY ISN'T NECESSARILY UP TO YOU

W / CAMERON GRAF

Being Jewish means being part of a minority, but sometimes it feels like the world doesn't treat us like we are one.

"Wait you're Jewish, right?"

If I had a dollar for every time I heard this then I could buy my uni textbooks new.

The follow up question is almost always: "My friend is also Jewish! Do you know her/him?" To which the answer is usually: "Yes, we're cousins." It's not surprising that fellow Jews have a tendency to know each other; our community is so small that six-degrees-of-separation is more appropriately one or two. However, it is rare for me to find people who have never met a Jew before.

Last week, the Federal Government "successfully" attempted to count and map the demographic landscape of the Australian population. Jews, much like several other ethno-religious groups, ticked OTHER and were required to write their faith in the boxes below. With a bit over 100,000 in Australia, we make up a mere 0.5% of the total population, so it doesn't make sense to appear on a list of options. And yet, despite being a minority, how others treat us can make us feel like we are a majority.

Judaism is often referred to as a "major religion of the world", which breaks down the perception of being a minority group. Jews have endured thousands of years of discrimination and violence, from historical exile and oppression, to systematic extermination and genocide. The feeling of only being able to trace your ancestral family back to a single surviving relative is one commonly shared by Jews, and significantly shapes our identity as a people.

In the face of persecution and vitriolic anti-Semitism, the Jewish people have had to band together and stay connected, or otherwise be lost in the annals of history. The need for a developed community with structure and opportunities for Jews to connect with each other is a consequence of such an experience. Having an established community helps us support each other in adverse situations. A minority group shouldn't have to put so much effort into defending itself, but we need to.

Jews are maliciously associated with images of power and control over institutions and governments. However, the reality is that Jews continue to be the subject of discrimination and double standards. In March last year, one Sydney-based group referred to Jews as a "cancerous tumour". At an anti-Israel rally in Sydney in May, we saw posters referencing the classic Rothschild conspiracy of Jewish control. Last week, I saw a swastika drawn on a shop window; the Nazi emblem signifying the genocide of my people.

Even worse is the hatred and violence towards Jews. In Europe, attacks against synagogues and Jewish institutions are all too common, and last year in the USA, 57% of hate-crimes were anti-Semitic, despite Jews constituting less than 3% of the population.

Jews are in this unusual position caught between an actual minority and perceived "majority", or one which doesn't attract traditional minority attention. We're trying to do that which one expects of a minority community—promote awareness, maintain cultural identity, and ultimately seek acceptance and integration into the local population—whilst at the same time defending ourselves against attacks on physical and political fronts. This experience is what encourages the Jewish community to stand up for others and reach out to other minority groups. We know what it's like, and we want to help. We don't fight against hate speech just for our benefit, but for the benefit of all the voices of minority communities that get lost in the mix.

Whether you define us a religion, an ethnicity or a culture (*don't worry, not even we can all agree on just one*), we are a people. We have history, values and a unique identity, and this defines us as who we are more than what some perceptions suggest is true. We are regular minority. The next time you meet or see Jews on campus, come say hello. All we want is to be understood and to get to know you better.

HYPHENATED AFGHAN

W / SOSAN RAHIMI

My name is Sosan. I am 21. I have black hair. I have brown eyes. I am Muslim. I am Afghan-Australian.

On 20 September 2000, I arrived in Sydney from Pakistan on a humanitarian visa. I was 5 years old at the time. Humanitarian visas are granted to people who, whilst not specifically refugees, are subject to discrimination and/or have experienced an abrogation of their human rights in their home countries.

For those unfamiliar with the turbulent socio-political history of Afghanistan, the nation has survived several conflicts ranging from attempted invasions by British India during the 1800s, a communist administration, civil war and an ongoing battle against the Taliban. The US invasion in Afghanistan alone has seen over 26,000 civilian deaths and 100,000 injuries since 2001. Essentially, war has been an ever-present part of the lives of Afghan people for many years. My parents fled Afghanistan soon after the end of Soviet occupation in 1989, following the collapse of the Union.

Travelling across the world and relocating in a vastly different country was not easy, to say the least. The first few years were very difficult. My parents—a paediatrician and an ophthalmologist—couldn't find work despite their qualifications and experience. Our family of seven were living in a two-bedroom home in Parramatta. We didn't know very many people and we didn't travel very far or at all. My parents tried to make the transition easier for us by cloaking our daily lives with every bit of culture that we had become so accustomed to by that stage. We had Afghan meals every day

and only spoke Dari at home. Everything was familiar, but not for very long.

I entered year one in 2001. I couldn't speak English, but class was easy enough that it did not impact my ability to participate. I was quiet, but observant. I managed to get through the better part of the year by mimicking the other students and smiling a heck of a lot. That same year, I began to comprehend the extent to which I differed from my peers. My 9-year-old sister was approached by her classmates, and they told her that she was responsible for 9/11. Kids can be mean.

I had always been cognisant of the fact that I was different, but it had never occurred to me that people made judgments about my family, friends and me, predicated upon the actions of others. Over the last 16 years, public perceptions of Islam, terrorism, Middle Eastern and South East Asian nations has led to chronic misinformation and a lack of understanding, which has manifested in the way Australians treat individuals of non-Anglo Saxon descent.

Unfortunately, since that incident I've witnessed similar acts; local police officers making fun of my father's facial hair and pedestrians crossing the road to avoid walking past my brother. Fortunately, these incidents were far and few between, but that doesn't deter from the unacceptability of each of these interactions.

My family and I were naturalised on 5 March 2003. I vaguely remember going into the CBD and sitting through a long ceremony. We were given our certificates of citizenship and an Australian flag. Funnily enough, I didn't

feel any more Australian afterwards. In fact, I recall another moment when I sincerely began to feel an attachment to a country that I had grown to call home. It was the 2006 FIFA world cup and Australia was playing Brazil. My brother and I had huddled around our TV at an ungodly hour to watch the Socceroos play. I remember screaming every time Brazil stole the ball and ferociously shaking my fists at the final score of 2 to 0. I remember feeling proud. I remember feeling Australian.

I can appreciate that we can't get rid of racism and xenophobia in one day. Although I hope that people soon become aware of the fact that in this globalised world and multicultural society, it is virtually impossible to segregate yourself. It goes without saying that we are all prejudiced to varying degrees. However, the extent to which we can maintain a check on our prejudices will determine whether we regress or progress to become the multicultural society we allege to be.

/

THE PROBLEM WITH AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM

W / ROYDON NG

You would think that over 20 years Australia has outgrown the ideals of Pauline Hanson. Yet here we are, in the wake of the One Nation Party's re-election to Parliament, concerned over the effect she and her party will have on immigration and multiculturalism in our country.

To most of the Asian-Australian community, Ms. Hanson is the despicable red witch from the north. As a child of immigrant parents, growing up in the 90s—when Ms. Hanson first declared that Australia was being “swamped” by Asians in her Parliamentary maiden speech—my family quickly developed a strong disdain for right-wing politics. I'm sure the Muslim Community is feeling the same fear of being targeted, now that she has called for a royal commission into their religion and the placement of surveillance cameras in their places of worship.

But, despite experiencing racially motivated attacks in public (*which my father says increased following Ms. Hanson's speech in Parliament*), my family refused to accept a blanket notion that all Anglo-White Australians were racist. This has in turn encouraged me to take a not-so-black and white view on the issues of immigration and multiculturalism.

Although I am no supporter of One Nation or Ms. Hanson's inflammatory remarks, I often wonder whether multiculturalism is actually working as well as we think it is in Australia. As a young adult living, studying and working in what is regarded as a highly diverse part of Sydney, it seems that what we have now is ethnic tolerance but a lack of cross cultural and inter-ethnic interactions. Modern Australia's understanding of multiculturalism seems to have come from a flawed and limited definition that has stripped it of a practicable meaning.

It would be very easy to label Ms. Hanson a racist and move on with life, but how does that actually deal with the real issues of ethnocultural relations in Australia? After all, Ms. Hanson was legitimately elected to the Senate in Parliament in her own right.

Australians need to persevere in their engagement of controversial issues such as immigration and multiculturalism, rather than merely throwing around insults such as racist, bigot or intolerant. Sure some (*if not most*) of One Nation's policies may be viewed as offensive or fringe, but if we are to succeed in establishing a truly multicultural society it is engagement that will win over hearts and minds; not a campaign of retaliatory name-calling.

In working to achieve genuine multiculturalism, let's not be too quick to pigeon hole people such as that of Ms. Hanson but rather highlight her misunderstandings by showing the rest of the country how genuine inter-ethnic interaction benefits everyone. Fighting prejudice with acts of kindness — such as actively engaging with people of different ethnicities — is better than battling right-wing keyboard warriors.

UNSW is one of the most multicultural campuses in the country. But I pose a challenge to everyone here: Are we merely tolerating our classmates from varying ethnicities or are we striving to break out of our comfort zones to befriend our fellow human beings?

Everyone around us has a unique cross-cultural story to tell. Have we stopped to listen to them? It is this exchange of tradition and history that enhances multiculturalism in our country. The Australian story is now one that consists of many backgrounds, but we must be willing to engage in order to make this happen.

Enhancing multiculturalism is something that everyone ought to be a part of, not just governments or ethnic lobby groups. And after all, multiculturalism is not just a social policy term; it is something that requires practice and commitment.

When Pauline Hanson speaks of one nation, she is right, but her focus is wrong. It's time that Australia acknowledged that more should be done to enhance multiculturalism; to move it beyond current levels of ethnic tolerance and achieve genuine, cross-cultural engagement. Everyone must come together as an active multicultural country to truly reflect the meaning of, “I am, you are, we are Australia”.

/

THE HOLI FOR THE EVERYMAN

W / AKANSHA SINGH

Yoga. Butter chicken. Priyanka Chopra. These are some of India's top exports—and now, it seems, so is Holi.

The Hindu Festival of Colour has become one of the most widely recognised events in the world. Aside from being an integral part of the Hindu calendar, it's instantly recognisable for its massive clouds of bright, rainbow powders, and for the hundreds and thousands of people that congregate in celebration. Photographers and filmmakers are drawn to the festival; it's a unique event, and a wonder to capture on film. The colours symbolise the arrival of spring and encourage forgiveness—so it's no wonder why this religious tradition is one of India's most famous events.

But that doesn't excuse the Colour Run.

Every year when I see the Colour Run event making the rounds on Facebook, it's difficult not to feel frustrated. This might be indulgent of me; I grew up in a Hindu family, and the Holi celebrations in India are the stuff of legends. Primarily though, I am frustrated because a religious event that millions of people celebrate, has bred a cheap imitation in the form of the Colour Run.

The Colour Run is obviously culturally appropriative. These words are thrown around a lot these days, but cultural appropriation essentially means to take elements of another's culture, without permission, for use within your own. Holi—with a history stretching back thousands of years, and originating in a country as deeply religious as India—is foundational to Hindu culture. The Colour Run is not.

"Don't play the race card," I hear you say. "It's multiculturalism, not appropriation." And true, the line between cultural appropriation and multiculturalism is blurred. But not this far.

It's not multiculturalism if the exchange only goes one way. It's not multicultural if one event has existed for thousands of years, and another since 2011, with crowds more willing to attend the one without the pesky religious and cultural strings.

And I understand, of course, that there are greater problems facing India than the westernisation of Holi—problems like domestic violence, poverty and hunger. But that's exactly what makes the Colour Run so appropriative;

it's taken one of the easiest, most attractive parts of India's culture, and has neglected the less popular.

This is such a hurtful practice because it is dismissive of the history and the significance of Holi as a cultural festival. It's especially destructive because of the history of colonialism in India. It may have ended in 1947 but the repercussions are still being lived by India's inhabitants to the current day. From this perspective, I think we can still hold westernisation of Indian customs as a very real problem being faced by Indian culture.

The Colour Run is for charity. It's for exercise. India doesn't own it. But when something has existed for thousands of years in one country, and reaches peak popularity when it is westernised in another, it can't be claimed under the umbrella of multiculturalism.

Ask yourself this: if it's the practice you enjoy, why are so many more willing to attend the Colour Run than Holi?

There are plenty of marathons in the world, and they don't garner nearly as much attention as the Colour Run. It's the playfulness, the colour, and the surrealism that has made the event so popular, and it is exactly these elements that have been copied. Holi has existed for thousands of years, and Indian diaspora is not a recent phenomenon. There are plenty of places to celebrate Holi, even outside of India.

Most of all, the Colour Run is just lazy. It's the latest in a string of offences against India due to westernisation, and proves an inability to see that just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

Perhaps the day will come where we don't have to have these conversations. When Coachella comes around, and there won't be a bindi in sight. When Halloween costumes are hilarious, and not insensitive.

Until then, we should watch the marathons we run—just in case we're running into a more hurtful, and divisive, future.

/

SHARIA LAW

W / AMNA SAADI

“Amna Saadi, do you support Sharia Law?”

This question has been hurled my way a few times in my short 20 years of life. The most recent incident occurred in the Facebook comments of a local newspaper article.

I’m stationed in a small rural town for the year, and the highly-acclaimed regional paper boasts a readership of just over 27 people. Their front page story detailed a shocking robbery in which the thief got away with \$7 in stolen goods from a pharmacy.

The journalist had poignantly asked the public for their opinion on what punishment best suited this reprehensible crime and—being the witty maestro I am—I made a joke. I commented that I thought capital punishment was necessary and prudent in this case—a quip I thought deserved at least a “lol”. Instead, I was met with a bit more trepidation. A few minutes later, I was notified that a local woman had replied to my comment.

“Amna Saadi,” she said, “are you saying that you support Sharia Law?”

There it was, that standard question that’s asked of everyone indiscriminately. I mean, can’t you remember the last time you asked if someone supports Sharia Law? I sure can. It’s a regular part of my morning routine:

1. Wake up.
2. Get dressed.
3. Have breakfast (*Halal of course*).
4. Brush my teeth.
5. Ask a stranger if they support Sharia Law.

I’ve heard this question a few times before. While attending an Anglican school in year 12, I was elected Vice Captain, and was fortunate enough to have my captaincy validated by a nearby student’s parent: “Maybe she’ll bring some Sharia to Grammar.”

Again, I thought, what a strange piece of Aussie vernacular. The laidback humour of Australians was

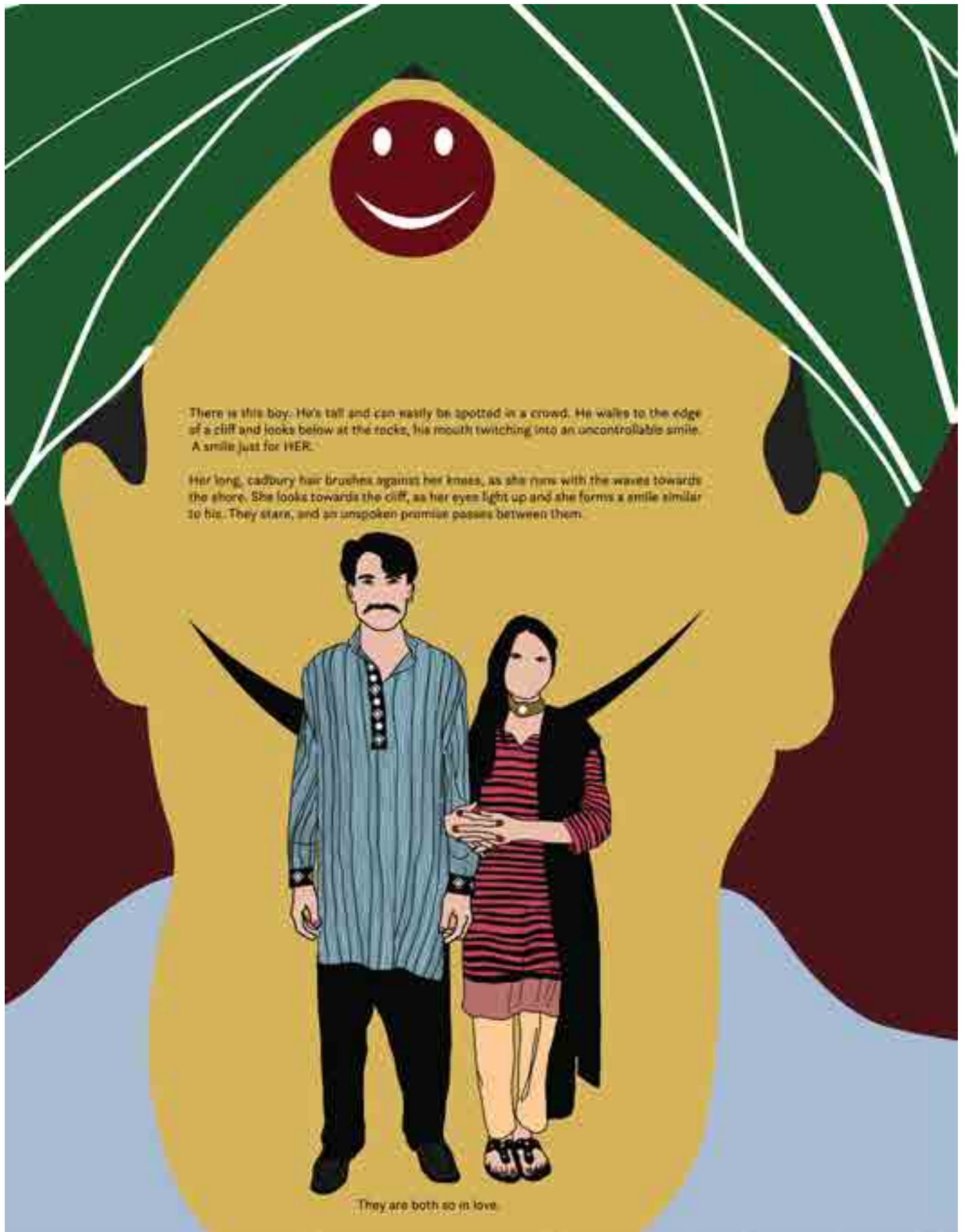
something I had always admired, but I felt some distaste in the comment. In an effort to make sure I wasn’t reading into anything, I glanced towards my friends to see their reaction. But surprisingly, they’re laughing faces didn’t quite empathise—I must have misunderstood.

I faced the question again when I was with my Mum in the supermarket. This time, they didn’t explicitly say “Sharia”, but they did comment on Mum’s choice of head gear. She used to wear this beautiful green and gold embellished scarf that matched beautifully with her corduroy jacket and jean combo. I always thought she wore those colours very well. But for some reason, my mother’s fashion sense offended them more than sneakers and jeans would offend Gok Wan. Oh well, I thought. This must be normal. Just another day in the life of an ordinary Aussie.

Clearly all those people were just asking a question, voicing an opinion. Who was I to be offended by it? They weren’t making a judgement based purely on my strange sounding name, the colour of my skin or my questionable ethnicity. They weren’t assuming that all people of one religion are the same. They weren’t masking their unfounded contempt for someone’s culture behind a casual joke. They weren’t being racist, or bigoted and they definitely weren’t intending any malice. No, no. They were just asking a basic screening question.

When Ms Hanson or good ol’ Sonia Kruger share their opinions on the intersection of border control and Muslims, I need to remind myself that this is just normal and to be expected. The latest statistic shows that 10% of Australians are Islamophobic, so as a Muslim, I should jump on that bandwagon fast. When my little brother is told that he must apologise for acts of terror committed overseas, he needs to turn the other “Aussie” cheek and take it.

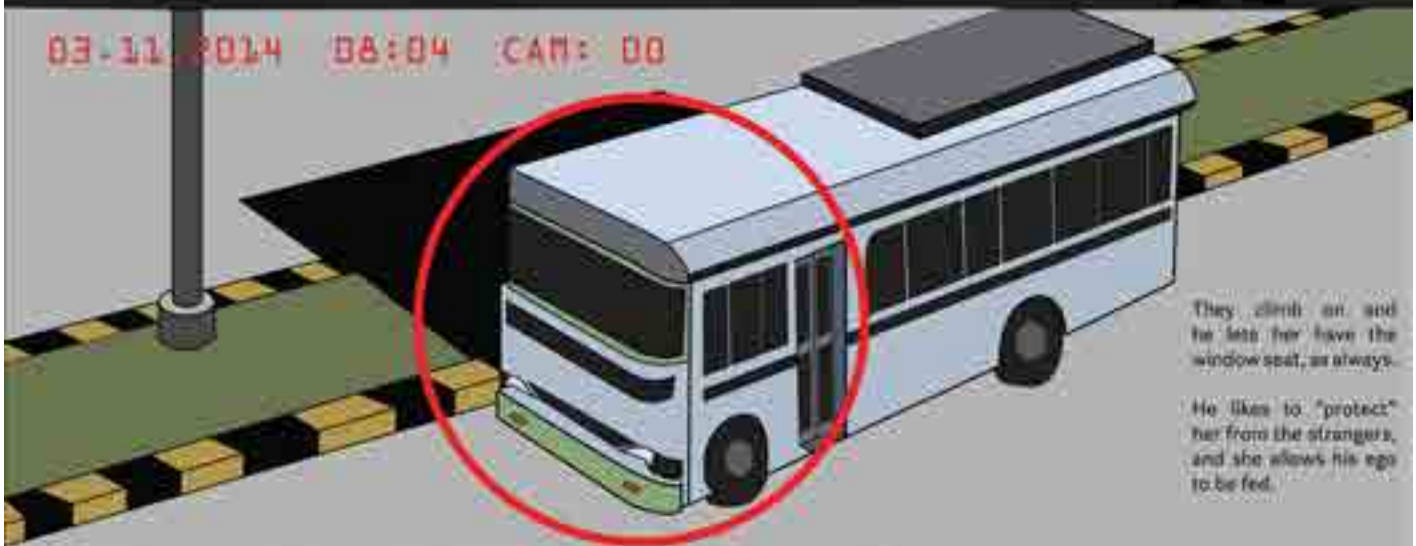
Australia has always taken pride in being the great cultural melting pot, but nowadays we’re getting a little pickier with our ingredients. When I get asked if I support Sharia Law, I’ll just add it to the list of experiences to reflect on when thinking about what it really means to be Australian.



There is this boy. He's tall and can easily be spotted in a crowd. He walks to the edge of a cliff and looks below at the rocks, his mouth twitching into an uncontrollable smile. A smile just for HER.

Her long, cadbury hair brushes against her knees, as she runs with the waves towards the shore. She looks towards the cliff, as her eyes light up and she forms a smile similar to his. They stare, and an unspoken promise passes between them.

They are both so in love







NATIONAL —



43 [REDACTED] victims death toll rises to 45

By [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Forty-three people belonging to the [REDACTED] were laid to rest on Thursday in the community's [REDACTED] graveyard and mourning in the metropolis.

At least 43 people, including 17 women, were massacred near [REDACTED] when gunmen boarded the bus they were travelling in and shot them at a point-blank range. Six other women and

two men were wounded in the brutal assault.

The grey incident sent ripples in the power corridors of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. [REDACTED] prime minister and the army chief [REDACTED] sat together with representatives of the intelligence and law enforcement agencies and decided to accelerate the 'targeted operation'.

Two of the wounded persons died [REDACTED] said on Thursday an official of the [REDACTED] police station within whose juris-

isdiction the carnage was carried out. The two deaths took the toll to 45. The official said one of the two, a young man, died late on Wednesday night and the other, a young woman, at around 11am on Thursday at [REDACTED] Institute/Hospital.

All victims were residents of community [REDACTED]

Several hundred police and Rangers personnel with armoured personnel carriers were deployed for security.

The funeral prayers were held inside the hall [REDACTED] which were attended by a few hundred members of the community.

[REDACTED] mourns victims of bus carnage

SPOTLIGHT ON

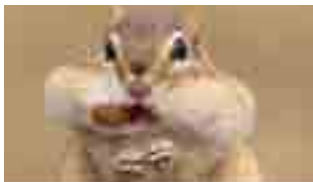
W / JAYDEN RATHSAM-HUA



CLAIRE CAO

Hi Claire! What do you study, what year are you in, and how many how many chips can a chipmunk chip if a chipmunk can chip wood?

Hey! I'm a 2nd year, and I study Law and Arts. And I don't know, but if you can, please include a pic of a chipmunk with its mouth fat with acorns in this interview.



You're an artist. Why?

Since I first picked up a crayon, art has been the main passion that's stuck with me through the years. I'm constantly inspired by the creativity and dynamic work of artists and animators. They motivate me to keep putting stuff out there.

What's your favourite medium to work with?

Probably oil or acrylics! But I'm warming up to digital art – it's super convenient and fun.

Who are your greatest artistic inspirations?

I HAVE SO MANY but in terms of painting: Cezanne, Hopper, Rene Magritte. In terms of illustration, mainly Ghibli films, Jillian Tamaki, Yoshitaka Amano and Yuko Shimizu among others.

If you could only use a single food group to create art, what would it be?

The one with eggs. Eggs are super versatile.

How long did it take you to develop your style? What was your process?

My style is still developing, the process is never-ending! My style progressed when I started trying to learn more about anatomy and perspective, and doodling more regularly.

Describe some of the ways you source inspiration for your work.

I collect images that inspire me; mainly of cool places around the world, beautiful clothes, odd-looking people. Sometimes it's more intangible than that, like I read something that really knocks things around in my brain, and I just do series of ugly doodles until I come up with something decent.

I also draw a lot of fan art, so my whole desktop is like screen caps of Captain America's face.

What are some of your favourite exhibitions/museums? Are there any left on your bucket list?

I love the White Rabbit gallery in the city. It's focused on Chinese contemporary art and it's always refreshing to see their creative (*and often weird as hell*) pieces. I've also been to the Louvre but it was such a horrible, rushed tour that I have to go again. I'd also die to visit the Met and the MoMa.

Where can we see your work? Online? Offline?

I have a blog (*that I need to post on more*): <http://clairexinwen.tumblr.com>.

Offline, I'm the designer for ArtsSoc, so you should totally check out my cover photos. Hopefully, I'll start getting my paintings out there too when I get back into making them!

/

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Response to Letter to the Ed #1 (Flynn Malnic) in the Foundation Day issue

Hey Flynn,

First up, we appreciate your interest and passion and we really do encourage you to get further involved with Tharunka and the Environment Collective. The Environment Collective values anybody who cares about the environment and we would love to have you come along to one of our meetings (*which are Friday 1-2pm in the Arc spaces*)!

You are correct in assuming that our writers came predominantly from members of the Environment Collective (quite naturally, since many passionate environmentalists find value in coming together), however the Environment issue of Tharunka was open to anybody who wanted to contribute, not only members of the collective. We can see how you might feel upset that perhaps that the writer's call-out on this issue wasn't publicised well enough?

Both Tharunka and the Environment Collective believe that an array of voices, perspectives and opinions are valuable and essential in the quest for seeking solutions. The Environment Collective are aware of the presence of the Mining Engineering school at UNSW, with several members themselves being students of the school. We believe that by working together with our various skill sets we are better equipped at creating change. We also believe that it is important to develop an understanding and acknowledgment toward that which contributes to environmental issues such as climate change. We believe that coal seam gas, coal mining and nuclear energy are simply more harmful to our species than they are helpful, and as such we think that that our energy is better spent raising up sustainable alternatives such as renewable energy.

Is it not wrong to suggest that bringing to light the problems we face equates to being part of the problem? Is education and raising awareness not an essential first step towards finding a solution? It is from our perspective essential to challenge the status quo, which is still for the most part telling us that coal is the answer to all our problems. Yet human induced climate change is happening, it's being made worse by coal and fossil fuels, and it's hurting us - especially the less privileged amongst us. It's an urgent problem which needs to be addressed now. Sustainable energy alternatives are well established and are already financially viable. It simply just isn't a matter of continuing to search for further alternatives - they already exist (*The book 'Sustainable Energy Solutions for Climate Change' by Mark Dissendorf is a good resource on this that we can vouch for*)! We aren't saying that we need to completely cut off the entire production and supply of fossil fuels, because that is of course unrealistic. What we are saying is that we need to be actively participating in the transition towards renewable energy now. It is our responsibility to acknowledge this and to begin to do as much as we can to create a new reality for ourselves - by investing in renewables, and divesting from fossil fuels. A huge part of it comes down to funding, and the amount of funding the government is throwing into coal extraction - it's counterproductive and a worrying waste of time and money.

We aren't malicious people who want to kick people out of their jobs out of spite. We believe in a transition towards a better planet, and we believe in action. Sometimes we make mistakes, but isn't that just the nature of being human? We are people who have a deep love for our beautiful planet and the incredible people that live on it; we are people who seek to do our best to make things better for the benefit of all, and we're sure that you are too. So let's talk, let's unite and see what we can do. Because at the end of the day we are all one, all members of the human race, and this is our moment.

Kind regards,

The UNSW Environment Collective

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Response to Letter to the Ed #1 (Flynn Malnic) in the Foundation Day Issue

Hi Flynn,

Thank you for your email.

Naturally, we are only able to consider the pieces that we receive for publication. We do regular call outs for submissions on social media, and ask for contributions on our website and in our issues. When it comes to opinion pieces, we let our contributors write what they are passionate about, drawing upon their own experiences and research. It may well be that they do not share the same views as you or others at the university, but they are the ones who have reached out to Tharunka and have shown interest in being published. Had you submitted a piece to be published in the issue, we would have been more than happy to consider it. We want nothing more than for UNSW students to write for us, regardless of their views.

Furthermore, we would like to disagree with your argument that eighty percent of our articles in the "Enviro" issue railed against mining, coal seam gas or climate change. To be fair, eighty percent of our articles weren't even about mining, coal

It is also incorrect to suggest that none offered a solution. One writer called for UNSW to divest its interests in fossil fuel industries. Another encouraged students to volunteer in rural Australian towns to advance the rights of native title holders. Yet another stressed the importance of giving Indigenous groups the opportunity to express themselves, regarding the preservation of the land on which they have lived for years. They may not be solutions that you agree with (*or believe are effective*), but that does not mean they aren't solutions.

As you said, there needs to be a discussion of solutions, and Tharunka is here as a medium through which students can do that. As a student publication, we are restricted by the voices of the students – we simply cannot publish what we do not have. We have reached out to you and other students, but you must meet us half way by contributing.

There is still time.

Kind regards,

The Tharunka Editorial Team

When did you graduate, what did you study, and where is Sydney's best date destination? (please help).

Hi Jayden! I graduated with a Bachelor's in Music in 2015 and Honours in Indigenous Studies in 2016. I focused on Hip Hop music and what Australian Aboriginal rappers are discussing in their music. If you're looking for a gr8 d8 m8, you need to check out Mappen Noodle Restaurant on George St; great udon, easy on your wallet.

What inspired you to take a Music bachelors? Do you consider yourself a musician?

I wasn't necessarily "inspired" to do this degree. It was more like music is the only thing I'm good at. Music is also the only thing I truly understand, and when someone told me I could study music at university, I thought, why not? Also, obviously I didn't become a musician until I got my degree.

How has Indigenous Studies influenced your style of Hip Hop?

There are so many things about Hip Hop that people don't know about. First of all, some of the best rappers in Australia are Indigenous. Hip Hop is a subculture bound together by struggles, and some of the worst and most unthinkable struggles in this country are experienced by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. I'm not just talking Invasion and the Stolen Generation (although that's an underlying hellish matter), but also identity politics, systematic racial discrimination and gaps in wage, health and education. You could only imagine what black rappers like Jimlah and Briggs have to say about all of this.

Indr: Indigenous rappers bleed their soul onto the beat. You need to hear the cry of these rappers, because you won't hear their story on Home and Away. Not for another 50 years anyway.

Who are your greatest musical influences?

There's a lot of them! I'm into artists like Kendrick, Chance, Anderson Paak, Kapsody, Hiatus Kaiyote, Robert Glasper, Yasiin Bey, Snoop Dogg, Erykah Badu, Beyonce, De La Soul, Black Eyed Peas, Eminem, Alicia Keys, Jay Z, ok I should end it here.

Come clean. What's your guiltiest musical pleasure?

Sk8r Boi... and Crank Dat SouJa Boi.

Tell us about your impression of Australia's current Hip Hop landscape. Has it changed over the past few years? Where's it heading?

I played a gig on the streets of Newtown the other week with a band called the Beatlab (I was the fill-in drummer) and we invited any rappers walking past to come and spit a couple lyrics on the mic. We were there for an hour, and in that hour, 12 random people came up and rapped. And they were all pretty dope.

Hip Hop is (finally) influencing Australia in a big way! People are starting to appreciate the educational and political power of rap music. We're looking to Hip Hop in schools and university to provide that "street knowledge" that was previously inaccessible, and to some extent, unknown to a wider Anglo-Australian audience (pre-1970s).

How have Indigenous communities embraced the Hip Hop? Have sub-genres emerged?

Hip Hop culture helped nurture these shared struggles of racist oppression between African Americans and Aboriginal Australians. Both peoples suffered immense and unique strategies of racial segregation, oppression, and in our case, assimilation. When a group called "N.W.A" (I don't need to tell you what it stands for) hit our Australian TV screens in the late 1980's, Aboriginal youth connected to these rappers. For these teens, it was another black face on TV that was channelling all that hate and negativity through this fresh music.

Nowadays, we use Hip Hop in Indigenous communities to help empower kids, educate them to educate others about culture. Many remote Indigenous communities are rapping in their native languages. I myself am using rap music to reignite the language of my people, the Murrawarri republic in Brewarrina.

There's a profound philosophy to Hip Hop culture and its music. I could write pages here about the idea of "street knowledge" and rap music's counter-narrative against even our own system in Australia, but instead, if you're interested and want to know more about Hip Hop feel free to email me!

rhyanclapham@gmail.com

Is there anywhere we can check your work out online? Any gigs in the works?

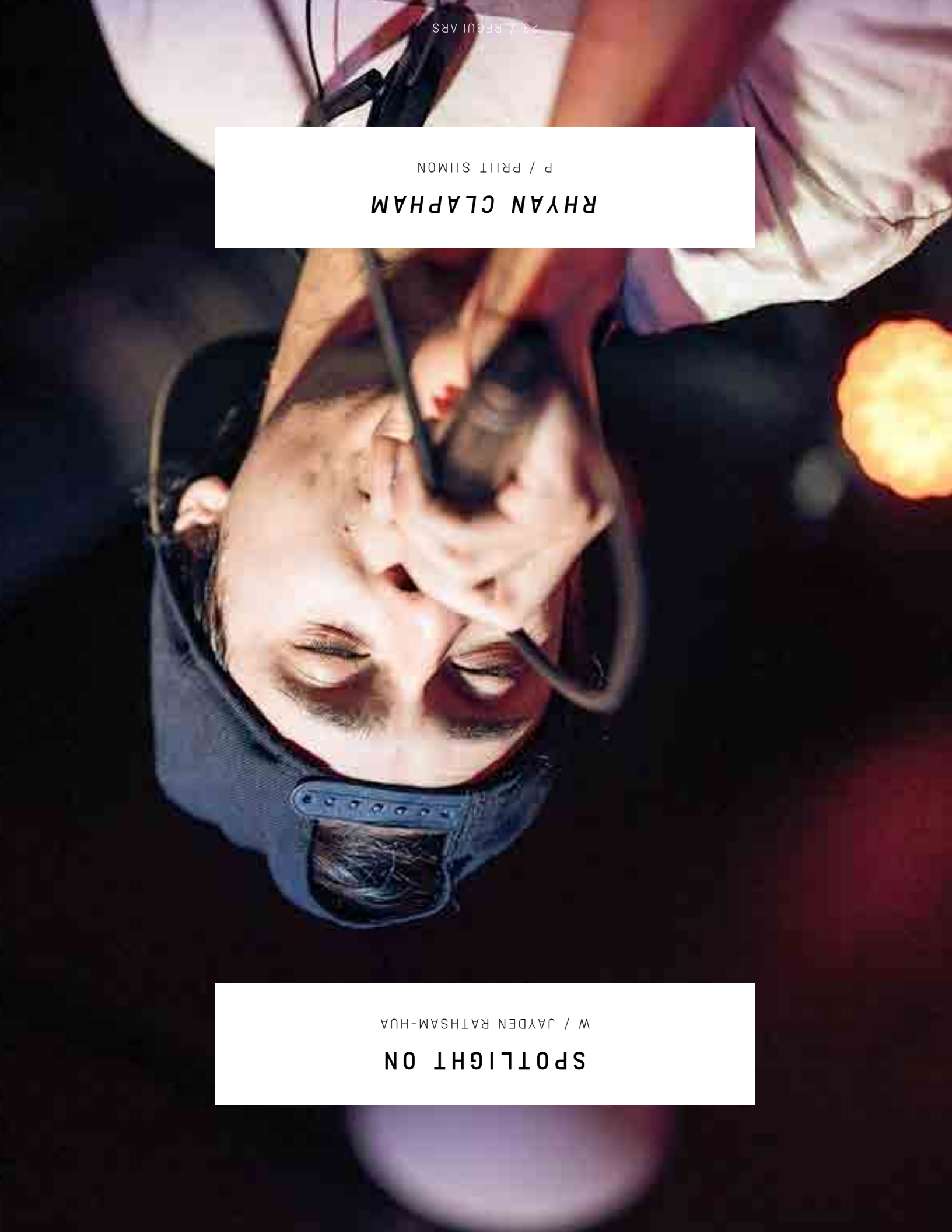
Let's put everything I said to the test!

Check me out on:

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/rhyanclaphamdobby/
YOUTUBE: youtube.com/user/rhyanclaphamDOBBY

I'm also performing a little bit!

Bedrock Collective @ Lord Gladstone Hotel 12th August 7pm - Hip Hop Jams @ STYFOX Enmore 14th August 8pm



23 / REGULARS

P / PRIIT SIIMON

RHYAN CLAPHAM

W / JAYDEN RATHSAM-HUA

SPOTLIGHT ON

SCARED BEINGS

W / VANESSA TURNBULL-ROBERTS

Here's a little grain of our truth:

The truth can be scary, we turn a blind eye to what we see as confronting. We are Scared Beings.

But why are you scared... Are you guilty?

Have you failed to educate yourself on what this land is built on? Dispossession? Assimilation? Genocide...

But it was in the past... It wasn't me...

I wasn't even born...

If you have that attitude then you too are also to blame...

Our anthem says we are young and free, but how does that work? We are the longest living, still existing culture in the world

far from young this sacred country is.

I come from a fierce bloodline that is so sacred, a white soul could not comprehend. Here is our truth, here is our pain, here is our fight.

This country was perfect, this country knew the concept of sharing, protection, scarification, and survival.

The land is still here, and the only difference is that the spirits of some individual's walking throughout this land are not.

I think they have lost themselves somewhere.

I do hope you can find yourselves sometime... Stop being such Scared Beings

I cannot help but see people wishing now for what once was this whole land, the people who nourished mother earth and treated this land as their own sacred beings... have you heard anyone really say 'yeah I love Sydney'... ' Yeah I love the traffic and moving 3cm ahead in the space of 30 minutes'...

Yeah I love the pollution'... 'Ah so fresh'... Me either.

UNSWEETENED Finalist

RESILIENT PEOPLE

W / BRIDGET CAMA

Today we stand resilient people
Whose fight you cannot take away
You came, you aimed, you shot, you fired
Uncivilised. Nomad. Savage. Brutal.
Were just a few labels that you placed
On men, on women, a dying race
Land stolen never ceded,
Where is our 228 years of rent?
Mothers cry for their stolen children
Victims of cultural genocide
As they scream out in desperation
Turn your head, close your eyes,
It all happened years ago
But we remain resilient people,
Our spirituality continues
Through land and sea, kin and mob,
Our culture and people will live on
Our burning will to survive
Colonisation, genocide

Runner up, UNSWesteened Indigenous Fiction Category

Bridget Cama is a proud Wiradjuri and Fijian woman studying a Bachelor of Arts/ Law at UNSW majoring in Indigenous Studies. She loves spending her spare time engaging and ranting about social issues, connecting with people, travelling and immersing herself in culture.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS TERTIARY EDUCATION STUDENT GAMES

W / BRIDGET CAMA, KIMBERLEY PECKHAM & RYAN AHEARNE

Every year, the National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games (NITESG) sees over 400 Indigenous tertiary education students come together and compete in sport. However, the significance of these games is much greater than the idea of playing sport and competing for the overall title. It is about culture, community and spirit.

The NITESG began in 1996 as a joint class project between 13 students enrolled in a Diploma of Aboriginal Studies (*Community Recreation*) at the then Wollotuka School for Aboriginal Studies at The University of Newcastle. In 2016, the UNSW Nura Gili Indigenous team competed in the 21st annual Indigenous Unigames held at Australian Catholic University, Brisbane from 26-30 June. Teams compete in netball, basketball, volleyball and touch football. They are expected to train twice a week and, while at the games, the students play four days consecutively, with a minimum of three games a day.

The games are a huge event on our calendar year, allowing students from all around Australia to connect and share experiences. Although this is a sporting event it allows us to showcase the talent in Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities. It is also about having a good laugh with the mob, getting down on the dance floor, sharing culture and connecting in strength. It is pretty unbelievable to see over 400 students gathering together – all of them Indigenous, all of them university students. Moreover, the games major sponsor was *Deadly Choice*, an initiative for Urban Indigenous communities, which encourages healthy life choices for themselves and their family.

Being Indigenous, there are always huge barriers when completing our degrees. By having the games annually, it allows all of us to come together and discuss the struggles and success we have faced. Students are also encouraged to take up leadership responsibilities, community consultation and work in groups to achieve a common goal.

JUVENILE DELINQUENT OR OPPRESSED BY THE SYSTEM?

W / HAYLEY BARRINGTON & KIMBERLEY PECKHAM

Australian population, it would be to the benefit of all those detained—particularly those who recognise as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander—for the Royal Commission to be rolled out nation wide.

Not only are indigenous youths being

incarcerated at far greater rates, their sentencing is inconsistent, compared to their non-indigenous peers. One Aboriginal boy, for example, received a 12 month prison sentence for stealing hamburger buns, despite having an otherwise clean record.

While the penalties for theft in the juvenile system are broad, confinement or placement in a detention centre is usually left for repeat offenders or those committing harsher crimes. This is just one example that highlights the need for changes to be made in numerous areas of the Australian justice system.

Despite the investigation into the Northern Territory's juvenile detention centres, there is no escaping the inherently racist system that has placed so many indigenous youths and people in prison all across Australia.

The issues bringing our young people into court run far deeper than many can comprehend—the unmistakable presence of intergenerational trauma and inequality runs rampant through Indigenous communities still

The mistreatment of Indigenous peoples within Australia is nothing new. From first contact, there has been an obvious division between Indigenous Australians and those colonising.

A recent *Four Corners* episode, "Australia's Shame", has highlighted the extent to which such divisions are still evident today. Divisions which created and continue to maintain the oppression of all First Nations peoples across Australia.

The episode shed light on the mistreatment of a number of Indigenous youths during 2014 at the Don Dale Detention Centre located in the Northern Territory. Tear gassing, hooding, shackling and stripping of clothing at the hands of prison officials were among the incidents exposed in extremely confronting CCTV footage.

The exposure of such incidents gave rise to a number of questions: in particular, the ability of state facilities to cater to our young people in an appropriate manner. Especially, in situations where parents or caregivers are removed from the role and substituted by such facilities.

The Australian public were quick to express their outrage towards what has been termed as the "torture" of Australian children whilst in the care of the state. It is almost guaranteed that the Royal Commission into the Northern Territory's juvenile detention centers will further expose grotesque treatment of Australian children while under the supervision of the state.

As Indigenous youths account for an estimated 39% of the juvenile justice population, yet make up just 5% of the total

STAN GRANT, WALLACE WURTH LECTURE

W / RUBY LANGTON-BATTY

while they rejoice in their own. His speech unequivocally rejected the symbolism of "recognition". As a member of the Referendum Council on constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Grant understands that it is perverse to ask Australia to recognise us in a constitution that was designed to exclude us. "A Treaty, even unattainable, sings to the heart of Indigenous people in a way that recognition cannot."

Yet Grant acknowledges that constitutional reform

represents a chance to complete our nation. "We are still the only country in the world that would not enshrine the sovereign rights of the First Peoples." "Symbolic" constitutional reform would shrink Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ambitions, and betray our two-century fight for rights. We need more than recognition. As Professor Megan Davis wrote in *Is our Country: Indigenous Arguments for Meaningful Constitutional Recognition and Reform*: "While there is a commitment to addressing the statistical disparity...there is a prodigious disavowal of these historical matters as relevant to health and wellbeing. Acknowledgement of the history is the foundation of durable solutions." Grant calls for a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission", telling us not only that "remembering is a moral duty", but that it is an imperative starting point for Australia to grow into a nation that would acknowledge the inherent rights of the First Peoples.

This was not a wholesale rejection of constitutional reform, but a holding-force of the position that if we are to have it, the model must be substantial. Being a member of the Referendum Council puts Grant in the unique position of understanding the various models for constitutional reform offered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advocates. These are models that could include constitutional guarantees of: representation in parliament, the right to be heard in relation to policy development, and the ratification of agreements, treaties and negotiated settlements.

Constitutional reform, if worth pursuing at all, must be an impetus for fundamental change to our nation, and a reckoning of our history.

On July 29, Stan Grant was awarded an honorary doctorate by UNSW and delivered the Wallace Wurth Lecture. His delivery was more than a speech—it was a performance that took the audience on a journey – from the beginning of our Nation's colonial history, to the contemporary institutional indifference towards the First Peoples' rights.

Grant began from a powerful starting point—ideas. Particularly, the seminal ideas of our liberal democracy. He posed the question: How and when will the First Peoples of this Nation have a place within the Australian liberal democracy? He insisted that he would be forced to depart from the world of ideas in order to "speak from the heart", because of the sheer rage he felt after seeing the horrific events in the Don Dale Juvenile Detention Centre.

However, Grant's response to seeing those boys being tortured in Don Dale was in equal measure emotional and intellectual. He articulated, as only a brilliant mind like his could, that these events are a reminder that our nation's foundational history—of violent dispossession based on the myth of Terra Nullius—continues to manifest in the legal and social institutions of this country. He delivered his lecture more like a sermon, each line more powerful than the last, reaching into his personal experiences, linking the history of our nation with the empty rhetoric and bleak reality of our modern political.

As an Aboriginal public figure (*a "proud Windjuri man"*), Grant acts with impeccable diplomacy, setting aside personal beliefs to meet conservative politicians on their terms. Yet these people who "wrap their words in civility, while masking the beating hearts of their bigotry" seek only to endorse the minimum requirement for action with regard to our people, of which the reactionary Royal Commission is proof.

Nowhere is it more clear that we have come to an intractable position with the keepers of our "Nation" than with recognition debate. Grant addressed the ideas of "recognition" and treaty from a position of disillusionment with the dominant voices that tell us to forget our history

UNSILENCING THE ABORIGINAL WOMAN'S VOICE

W / BRIDGET CAMA

*Calm down! - Relax!
- Take a chill pill!
Woah... so much sass!
You're such an angry
black woman...*

These are comments that I (*and many of my female Aboriginal friends and colleagues*) receive on a regular basis. As Aboriginal women, we have and always have been strong, authoritative figures in our communities and families. Leaders - Holders of knowledge and Skills - Elders - Mothers - Givers of Life. Why then, is it so challenging for an Aboriginal woman to have an opinion or to advocate for rights and changes to be made?

The effects of colonisation and the institutions that have grown from this ongoing event have resulted in the oppression of Aboriginal women's voices, their knowledge and their role in Aboriginal and mainstream society. From early colonial records we see the beginning of what results in the assumption that Aboriginal women are submissive. We see descriptions and reports, which are written through a lens of the Western concepts of gender roles and nuclear families, cut and pasted to describe the functioning of an Aboriginal family. These totally dismiss the role of women in Aboriginal society and further silence their voices. This practice of silencing Aboriginal women continues today.

The imposition of Western knowledge systems and Eurocentric ideas of gender continue to control the definition of Aboriginal women, silencing and assuming that we are without any social power, knowledge or history. As Deborah Bird Rose points out, even in the structure of land rights hearings, there is the idea that men are the 'central actors in society'. Ultimately, this has devastating effects on Aboriginal women, our knowledge and the protection of sacred women's sites.

In pre-colonial times, and in various parts of Australia today, Aboriginal women hold large amounts of traditional knowledge, and manage law, rituals and sacred places. However, institutions continue to marginalise Aboriginal women and disfranchise their relationship and knowledge of country and culture. This silencing of women's voices allows for stereotypes and myths that men dominate Aboriginal society, and that women merely exist in subservience.

Aboriginal women, pre and post contact with Europeans, have played important roles in all aspects of society. Don't let biased reports and descriptions by old white men fool you. The truth is, we have always been angry black women, as some may put it. Every action, every word that makes those people go into defensive mode is another step closer to breaking the idea that Aboriginal women don't have anything to say. We are not and never have been subservient actors in our culture, societies and families.

SHAPING INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS: RECOGNITION OR TREATY?

W / AARON LOWTH

Without adequate constitutional reform, our treaties will be destined to the same fate of Australia's other treaties. For example, Australia has ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Yet according to the United Nations special rapporteur on torture, Juan Mendez, the treatment of the boys at Don Dale can amount to torture or to very cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment under any circumstance. Any treaty obligations require a harder defensive mechanism in the constitution to ensure that they are not just discarded or forgotten like most of Australia's current obligations.

It has been almost fifty years since the '67 Referendum. A generation has passed yet we still lack any form of constitutional recognition, land rights or a treaty in modern Australia. We are seeing the gap between Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) and the rest of Australia growing in key areas of health, incarceration and education.

Legally, we have not made progress when it comes to the protection of Indigenous culture and art through intellectual property law. Yet, our communities are divided over the question of constitutional recognition or treaty. But that is because this debate will shape the future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relationships with various arms of government. Supporters of recognition (*and to some extent*

This is a complex debate and it is not something I can summarise in 500 words. What I can say with confidence is that both campaigns need to work together and consult properly with different communities about what form any recognition and treaty should take. We need the process to be open, collaborative and with the best interest of Indigenous Australians at heart.

Supporters of recognition (*and to some extent* *Recognise*) advocate for substantive change to the Constitution. This includes reforming the Race Powers, treaty making provisions and the inclusion of a new preamble. On the other side of the debate are those pushing for a treaty as priority with the Commonwealth. What has been missing in the debate has been a dialogue between both sides.

I personally believe the way forward is joint recognition and treaty campaign focusing on reforming the Constitution, as well as drafting supplementary treaties at the State and Commonwealth level. This approach stems from my core belief that we need treaties not just at a Commonwealth level, but that those treaties also need something substantive protecting them in our governing document. We need to do something that alters

the underlying basis of our legal system in a way that benefits Indigenous Australians. This requires changing the Constitution in more than just a symbolic manner. The Race Powers need replacing with something that offers protection to vulnerable communities from racist legislation and policy. If drafted appropriately, such protection would stop those in power creating laws to the detriment of Indigenous Australians.

WHERE ARE THE INDIGENOUS VOICES IN MAINSTREAM MEDIA?

W / REBEKAH HATFIELD

Over the past few weeks, mainstream media outlets have increasingly covered stories about Indigenous people – most notably, the torture of Indigenous children at the Don Dale Detention Centre in the Northern Territory, and the racist cartoon created by Bill Leaks and published in *The Australian*.

Many mainstream media outlets, however, fail to include Indigenous Australians in the conversation.

These issues affect our community and families directly, yet we are rarely asked contribute to the dialogue, provide comments about solutions, or discuss how these issues makes us feel as a community.

Although some commentators such as Nakkiah Lui and Celeste Liddle have recently been asked to join the conversation, Indigenous commentators aren't usually given the opportunity to speak on our behalf.

Having allies is always important, especially as Indigenous people only make up 3 per cent of the Australian population. However, allies can never really speak for us. They will never understand what it means to be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person and sometimes they may even derail or detract from the issue.

There needs to be systemic change within the media industry, specifically more space for Indigenous people to talk about issues that affect us.

I am a journalism student in my final semester.

Throughout my whole degree we have only spent half a lecture discussing ethics in journalism. Even less time was spent on dealing with vulnerable people, or educating students about why vulnerable people may be in this position.

If this is the beginning of a career in journalism, then we can only expect the continuation of one sided, white centric stories in the media sphere.

Not only do changes need to be made to the education of young journalists but also to the reporting of stories in the mainstream media. There are plenty of Indigenous journalists, academics, authors, politicians and commentators out there. Media outlets need to start using these resources. Doesn't it just make sense to report from an Indigenous perspective when the story is about Indigenous issues? Wouldn't a journalist go to a doctor if they were covering a story about a health issue?

Who is better qualified to talk about Indigenous issues than Indigenous people? No one. And yet our voices continue to be unheard and undervalued. It is time we were included in the conversation.

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FEATURES

KIRA CLARK

Tell us about yourself.

My name is Kira Clark and I am studying social work/criminology. I'm interested in music, photography and one of my greatest passions is to help people achieve the most they can.

What inspired you to come to university?

I am the first in my family to go to university and I wanted the challenge. I was admitted to a law degree last year through the Nura Gilli pre-law program, which consisted of 4 weeks of classes and testing during the end of 2014.

What do you plan to do once you finish university?

I plan to be a social worker for the NSW police, potentially work within the ABS with crime statistics. I would also like to become a policy advisor.

MATTHEW CHARD-TRINDALL

Tell us about yourself.

My name is Matthew Chard and I am a proud Kamilaroi and Yuin man. I am currently in my first year at UNSW, studying a bachelor of law and arts. I am currently majoring in Indigenous studies and minoring in politics. My interests include but are not limited to human rights, specifically for indigenous tenants, law, advocating for social justice and Australians and communities, and volunteering amongst community organisations.

What inspired you to come to university?

The reason I decided to go to university was because I wanted to become the first person in my family to go to university. I was lucky enough to get into law this year through the UNSW Indigenous Pre – Programs.

What do you plan to do once you finish university?

Once I finish university I would want to get admitted as a lawyer and hopefully work in a law firm. I would also like to work for Legal Aid or the Aboriginal legal service.

What inspired you to come to university?

The thought of going to university and the prospect of becoming a lawyer really inspired me because it meant that I would one day be in a position to help the vulnerable members of society. I would also be able to voice the concerns of Indigenous communities and peoples within the legal system.

MEET SOME OF UNSW'S INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

RYAN AHEARNE

Tell us about yourself.

Ryan Ahearne, Bachelor of Arts/Education Major in Theatre and Performance Studies and Minor in English. I am a proud Wiradjuri man born and raised in Sydney. My family was from Cowra before they moved to the city.

I am passionate about my subjects as they encouraged me to complete high school. My passions lie strongly with the Indigenous issues my fellow brothers and sisters face, near and far, in all communities. Education is an opportunity for me to tackle these issues. Sport, fitness and health are hobbies outside of university that I enjoy.

What inspired you to come to university?

Being the first in my family to complete the HSC, I had a wealth of support from my mob, which alone inspired me to do whatever possible to challenge myself. When I completed the HSC I had no direction or motivation to study tertiary education or seek employment. Thankfully, a teacher enticed me to enroll in university and pursue a career in education. Being turn down by the first university I applied for, I contacted Nura Gili at UNSW, which I'd never heard of before.

Cheryl Ah See heard my story and just said to me, 'We'll take you in bub, so I have her to thank for getting me into university. I'm very grateful because my life has changed since being at university, and the opportunities have been endless. Four years later I'm one semester away

What do you plan to do once you finish university?

An obstacle I face almost everyday is the racial profiling of Indigenous people, and sadly it happens too frequently at university amongst intelligent-minded peers. 'You don't look Indigenous' - the challenge in this is changing the perception that non-Indigenous people have of Indigenous people. I have a supportive Indigenous community at Nura Gili and a resilient mindset to thank for ease of mind when dealing with these moments daily.

What are some of the challenges you have faced as an Indigenous student at university?

from completing my degree, which is a huge dynamic from high school, where I was ready to drop out of school without trying. I have Aunty Fay Carol to thank for encouraging me to stay in school and pull my head in.

I am currently seeking out what opportunities are out there for postgraduate education students, so I can see where I can give back to Indigenous communities. Hopefully, I can secure a job in a school with a high Indigenous population, where I can work closely with Indigenous communities and provide the support I received for students struggling through school.

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THARUNKA

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

W / WORDS

A / ART

P / PHOTO

OPEN LETTER TO VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear Professor Ian Jacobs,

Nura Gili is regarded as a leader of Indigenous Higher Education in Australia. We as students take pride in the fact that Nura Gili staff and its Director are dedicated to being research and teaching intensive. As students of Nura Gili, we know that the Director and staff place value on research and education, while engaging, supporting and inspiring Indigenous students. It cannot be denied that Nura Gili is a unit that is culturally and educationally unique. This is why we believe that it is essential that the Nura Gili Director is Indigenous.

UNSW is dedicated to continuously improving Indigenous students' access to service and degree completions, as well as providing the opportunities for our Indigenous staff to build their careers. As Indigenous students, we know that the success of outstanding Indigenous retention rates and intake (*which continue to increase*) comes down to the knowledge, experiences, support and excellent standard of our staff. Once again, this is why we believe the Nura Gili Director should be Indigenous. An Indigenous Director would work towards strengthening commitment to Indigenous students and communities. An Indigenous Director would ensure that the proportion of Indigenous staff and graduation rates for Indigenous students continue to rise.

We also know that it is important for Indigenous students to have an Indigenous Director as the core leader of their unit. It means the person representing them is someone they can trust, respect and be open with. It is empowering and necessary for the growth of young Indigenous leaders. Self-empowerment and Indigenous leadership is incredibly influential for younger generations. Most importantly, the Director needs to be someone with a deep understanding of Indigenous culture. They must have the deepest understanding of Indigenous peoples and culture and show that they are an embodiment of this.

Sincerely,

The Indigenous Collective

LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITOR



BRIDGET CAMA
/ GUEST EDITOR
INDIGENOUS OFFICER 2016

The UNSW Indigenous collective have had an interesting year so far – from defending the fact that this continent was invaded, to fighting racism and paternalism, to attending the National Indigenous Uni Games (NITESG) in Brisbane.

Our students continue to be successful, active members of the Indigenous, UNSW and wider community, achieving beyond expectations. This year, we aimed to make UNSW a more culturally aware and appropriate campus for Indigenous staff and students. We also wanted to ensure that our students have access to support services, and have their voices heard and listened to.

It is fair to say that these have been achieved at some point in the year. These may be small achievements, but every small change adds up. I am hugely proud of collective members this

year for stepping up, giving voice to issues and engaging in an active collective.

This edition of Tharunka represents only a section of the inspiring students we are fortunate enough to have in our collective. I would like to welcome you to this year's Indigenous Edition of Tharunka. I am sure you will find it insightful, challenging and inspiring.

Thank you to the contributors for your hard work and for bringing First Nations' voices to this edition, and also to the amazingly talented editorial team for your endless and outstanding work.



CARLA ZUNIGA-NAVARRO
/ EDITOR

With the Indigenous issue of Tharunka, the editorial team acknowledges the Indigenous claim to the land on which we have the privilege to study, to learn and to grow in ourselves, and acknowledges that this land was never ceded but stolen.

We pay homage to all Indigenous Elders, past, present and future.

The editorial team thanks Bridget Cama (*SRC Indigenous Officer*) for helping us create this issue, and for giving us the opportunity to reflect on the diverse and talented Indigenous community within UNSW. We celebrate their unique talents in the pages of this issue.

We are a well-funded project in mid-year support and generally will have no cover the funds or staff and our community involvement project. If you are interested in finding a community placement, please email www.arc@unsw.edu.au

Local to us

As well as contributing to an Aboriginal community Wajama Murr has an amazing life-changing effect on its volunteers. Their experiences working alongside other Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and connecting with Indigenous cultures and issues in Australia has an overarching contribution to reconciliation in our country. Fostering these connections and learning experiences is vital for the development of UNSW students who, in the future, will work to end Indigenous disadvantage and create a more equitable Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities are respected and celebrated.

Each year about 20 Wajama Murr volunteers are welcomed into a regional Aboriginal community. This year, we are overjoyed to have been invited to return to Bwagcolmar (Palm Island, Queensland, where we will participate in an exchange of culture and perspectives and undertake a number of community-development projects as determined by the community. For example, on our previous visit to Bwagcolmar, volunteers repainted the PCTC, built an art-wall and attended the Palm Island Indigenous Festival.

Across Australia

Wajama Murr, in the language of the Bidjigal people of the Eora nation, means 'return to path'. We are an ARC @ UNSW volunteer program run in collaboration with Nura Gili, the Centre for Indigenous programs. In the spirit of cultural education and practical reconciliation, we give a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students the opportunity to spend time volunteering both locally and



Tharunka would like to acknowledge the country,
culture and spirit of the Gadigal and Bedegal peoples
on whose land the University of NSW was built upon.
We pay our respects to their knowledge, their wisdom
and their Elders, past, present and future.
Further, we extend our respect to all Indigenous staff
and students in the UNSW community.
The land upon which UNSW Kensington campus is
situated was traditionally a meeting place and
of learning.
We have no doubt that this land continues to provide
a place of warmth and inspiration for students today,
who continue to learn on the same land which was
cared for by First Nations peoples for over sixty
thousand years.
We recognise this is and always will be,
Aboriginal land.

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UNSW STUDENT MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2016 / INDIGENOUS

THARUNKA