THARUNKA
UNSW'S STUDENT MAGAZINE / MAY 2017

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CONTENT WARNING

THIS ISSUE DEALS WITH THEMES OF:

- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
- SEXUAL ASSAULT
- TRANSPHOBIC VIOLENCE
- SUICIDE
Letters From the Editors

“Brittney, I just had a look at your profile... Studying Law..... Why am I not surprised. Let me guess. Human rights activist, Sarah Hanson-Young lover, Labor voter. Probably a lesbian (not that there’s anything wrong with that). One thing, you are a bloody good sort. Shame !”

I received this message in June 2014 from a man named Mitchell Walton. Mitchell Walton is a middle-aged father of two who disagreed with my assertion that asylum seekers are not, despite what politicians want you to believe, “illegal”. My reactions at the time: Amusing. Weird. Offensive. At-least-he-didn’t-threaten-to-rape-me. This is why I need feminism.

I’ll keep this editorial short: if I attempted to express my every thought on women, you’d be holding a very, very large novel in your hands, rather than this humble student rag.

I hope this autonomous issue is a symbol of solidarity. The women featured in these pages are talented. Their work matters, and we will celebrate it. They will be given a platform. And if none are sad that their work isn’t included in a Women’s issue, about women’s issues, as expressed by women: we don’t give a fuck.

“Women belong in all places where decisions are made … It shouldn’t be that women are the exception.”

This quote from Ruth Bader Ginsberg reflects everything wrong with decision making in Australia. In 2017, you’d expect we wouldn’t still need to challenge governments cuts to essential women’s services, that abortion access wouldn’t still be an issue, and that it would be obvious that cuts to higher education will especially harm women-identifying students; you’d expect to have female leaders making the decisions that affect women. Yet in 2017, women’s refugees continue to be underfunded, announcements were made that the vital services provided by Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia will be privatised, abortion clinics are still places of intimidation and harassment by conservative protesters, and the budget will include a $2.8 million cut to the higher education sector, including lowering the HECS repayment threshold and further increasing the financial inequality between men and women in Australia.

At UNSW, we have seen some significant steps towards addressing gender disparity on campus thanks to the work of unwavering advocates. The new ELISE consent module was uploaded for Semester 1 and will be further expanded for future students, and groundbreaking consent training is finally being delivered in colleges. These moves mark a major cultural shift, however, we cannot be complacent. When the Respect. Now. Always. Survey data is released on 1 August, we will hold the university accountable to the results and push for the accessible reporting procedures and specialised support services we need for there to be a successful change.

2017 has been a year to rise up and express our rage. It’s a year so far marked with protests – Women’s March Sydney, the International Women’s Day March, No Profit from Rape, and a counter protest to The Day of the Unborn Child, just to name a few. We need to grab ‘em by the discourse and challenge the social norms that remove women from decision making.

It has also been a year to focus on sisterhood and valuing women regardless of their differences. It is skill-sharing, supporting each other, and listening to the voices of the women too often silenced that will be the reasons for our success. This issue of Tharunka is focused on women’s experiences – the experiences that we fight against and fight to defend. I hope you are as inspired reading it as I am.
CW. Transphobia, violence.

I dedicate this issue’s cover design to all the women and allies that took to the streets to resist and fight against oppressive and controlling powers. From the thousands of women in Poland who shut down whole cities by going on strike and rallying, successfully pressuring their government to drop a total abortion ban, to the millions of people from all over the world that took over their cities for the women’s marches this year, especially the people who attended black lives matter marches, queer rallies and many more.

The recorded murder rates of transgender women, mostly of colour, are still rising every year, with at least 8 recorded in the US just in the first few months of 2017. It is more important than ever to understand the diverse and unique experiences of every woman, especially those that are in the intersection of multiple repressed groups!

As James Brown put it, “This is a man’s world.” And it’s only becoming more evident despite our growth with women’s and gender rights, with a backlash through movements that strive to stay down this progress.

It’s evident in the way the wage gap is still very real, but often very much denied. It’s evident when workplace quotas are seen as threats to “individual merit.” It’s evident in the way masculinised women are lambasted, the way feminised men are ridiculed, conforming feminised women are begrudgingly accepted, and non-conforming queer identities are completely rejected. It’s even evident in the implicit dynamics of the most common everyday interactions, as we parade through streets for freedom over our own bodies, while simultaneously judging those who dare to pose “indecently” on Instagram.

It’s a war, it’s an arms race, to be the most judgemental and also the least judged.

But as I sit here, going through this issue’s selection of writing and artwork from women and non-conforming individuals, I’m in awe of all the different stories, dreams, and sheer strengths that come through. And though it may currently be a ‘man’s world’, we can only also recognise that it wouldn’t be nothing, nothing without a woman or a girl.

Dear Agony Ibis,

Whenever we have class discussions in this one tute, there are two or three boys who often talk over me when I’m in the middle or answering a question. How do I deal with this?

Yours Sincerely,

Frustrated girl

Dear Frustrated girl,

Ah, my fave: when your explanation is interrupted by someone who can explain it oh-so-much better by virtue of him having a dick and deeper voice. Didn’t you know that you really just need to “stand up for yourself more” because, you know, it’s an ibis eat ibis world out there, right???

There are a couple of things you can do with men who suffer from an ego-competency mismatch. You could take the “respectful” route. To do so, you could take the respectful route. To do so, you can replace your face with that super-charming-I’m-very-likeable-even-though-I’m-a-girl smile you usually reserve for your homophobic grandparents and say, “Excuse me, could you please let me finish my sentence?”

The other, potentially more effective and acceptable-by-the-standards-of-the-patriarchy strategy is to sneakily let your tutor know that you feel you’re being talked over. You could even talk to the boys in person to let them know how you feel.

Of course, all of this involves being a big girl and navigating the situation with delicacy and a heightened emotional intelligence (because women are good at that).

In my personal, ibis, opinion, you should just pour bin juice over their heads while you explain that their opinions are not as important as their ego tells them.

Birds of a feather flock together. girl.

Yours in solidarity,

Agony Ibis
Debating...

As a small-statured woman who can’t put up much of a fight, I’m unable to walk the streets alone at night, catch a taxi by myself or leave my drink unattended at a bar without feeling nervous. And I have every reason to be.

We are taught how to avoid being raped, but not about the importance of consent. Our limited sexual education, along with heavy doses of porn, reinforces this view.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, four in five sexual assault victims are female, with a staggering 93% of offenders being male. Of concern is the fact that only around 17% of reported sexual offences result in a conviction. Young women, women of colour, women with disabilities and LGBTQ-identifying people experience sexual violence at significantly higher rates than the rest of the population.

It seems like every other day there’s a new headline about a woman getting sexually assaulted. Close to home, a Dutch backpacker was attacked in a Surry Hills laneway in early April of this year. And we all remember Brock Turner, who infamously escaped lengthy jail time for sexually assaulting an unconscious woman.

Rape Culture

BY LARA ROBERTSON

Complacency and the Case of the Disappearing Man

BY ELLA CANNON

Why Theory Isn’t Everything:

You know the type: he’s happy to discuss the weekly readings with you for your gender studies class, but as soon as you go to answer the tutor’s question, he’s the first one to speak over you. He’s a proud feminist, and any girl with slightly hairy thighs is his weakness, but his unerring belief in political correctness makes it hard to see. He’s an ally. He’s a friend. He’s a policeman.

Equality is frightening for those in power when it means your privilege must be dismantled. Complacency starts to seem so much easier than understanding others’ views of the world, especially when there are self-serving reasons to not understand. With every inaction of the disappearing man, a segment of privilege remains. Men need to recognise their current positions are based on privilege, not merit.

Appropriately, society has progressed enough for men to realise that they must acknowledge their privilege, but not enough for them to actually act upon it.
I haven’t had a period in almost two years.

Most people (my mother, close friends and even health professionals) look at me in horror when I say that. As though I’ve been pregnant for two years? Or that something is wrong, and I’ve not received medical attention to remedy the situation? Because not having a period is like, totally unnatural and weird and gross and—why are we talking about periods—I thought this was taboo.

The idea that women of childbearing age must have periods, and therefore, if they do not menstruate they are “unnatural,” is, quite frankly a load of baloney. For me, the only “unnatural” part of that theory is that other people would judge a woman for her choices about her reproductive health.

There are plenty of reasons as to why women may not have periods: it may be for health reasons (like me), because they are transgender, or maybe because they choose not to (also like me). There is no hierarchy of reasons; women do not need to justify why they may not have a period, or why they might change their experience of menstruation using medicine. And yet I feel as though I have to provide a valid excuse to people when they give me that quizzical look as if to say, “explain yourself.”

My experience of menstruation has not been pleasant. Painful cramps have been a constant feature, as has endometriosis (but that’s another story). Medical issues aside, I found my periods to be inconvenient and uncomfortable. And expensive. #tampontax

After having my endometriosis surgically removed, my general practitioner suggested I try a contraceptive that would make my period less frequent. The thinking is that the fewer periods I have, the less likely it is that the endometriosis will return (and need to be surgically removed again). Following some discussion with my general practitioner, I had an implant (also known as the “rod”) inserted into my left upper arm. The process was quick and was performed by my general practitioner at her surgery.

My general practitioner explained to me that different women have different experiences with the implant (as with all contraceptives): some women would have heavier and more painful periods (in which case, the implant is probably not suited to them); some women have lighter and less frequent periods, some women’s periods stay the same, and some women have no period at all. I consider myself to be a lucky member of that latter group (thank you, modern medicine).

I haven’t had a period in 23 months. In that time I have saved hundreds of dollars on sanitary products, painkillers and other related items (i.e. Toblerones). I have also saved myself the time, iron depletion, pain and inconvenience of having periods.

I want to be clear that my experience of menstruation is individual and unique; not all women dislike menstruating and not all women find it painful. Those experiences are valid and important. I am not advocating for even more stigma around periods. Rather, like many of my female-identifying peers, want to challenge the idea that to menstruate is to be “woman”. Because the converse of that is that those who do not menstruate are not “woman” enough. And that’s bloody wrong.
Twelve months ago, I decided I would never go to college.

Whilst Hollywood had spent years assuming that college life would be full of football games and a capella groups, the news was telling a vastly different story.

Fast forward to this February, and something had changed. As I set up my new room and glanced out of my window at the other Kensington Colleges, I wondered what exactly had changed. To find out, I interviewed four women involved in the new and old of the Kensington Colleges (TKC) to find out what, if anything, had shifted behind closed doors.

My fellow Basser residents, Tess Roden and Josie Bloomfield shared similar presumptions initially. “I thought it was going to be a lot more… boys trying to take advantage,” first year resident Tess said. Josie, a second year and an O-Week Co-convenor this year, believed initially. “I thought it was going to be a lot more intense. You’ve got a huge feminist network behind you, and guys that come to college with maybe a different reputation.

“.We know that there are a lot of young people who are scared of being subjected to this (sexual assault and harassment),” Josie continued. “I don’t think what happens when they come forward or are scared about what’s going to happen,” she said.

“New gendered violence training was introduced in 2017 and policies and events will continue to be re-evaluated to ensure they facilitate a safe and positive environment for all residents,” she said.

Whilst I recognise that policy has indeed been changed, I had to wonder whether deeper cultural issues within the college system could be uprooted. Less than a month into my time at TKC, a friend’s sister warned her against staying with me, after her own experience at college seven years ago.

Bloomfield wholeheartedly disagrees with this perception.

“We're still going to have to stand up, but it's easy and the guys are really receptive,” Cragh added that there are “misconceptions about the women in college – that the women are somewhat subjected to a lot of stuff they tolerate or put up with.”

Evidently, there was a supportive network for women in the college system, but was there what many media outlets have referred to as a “boys culture”?

“I certainly don’t think Baxter College ‘breeds’ a boys’ culture,” Merritt said.

“I know the men and women living in Baxter understand that behaviour which threatens or disempowers any group within society is unacceptable and not in line with the identity and core values of our community.”

Bloomfield labelled the media representation as “really unfair” for women in college, stating that it “doesn’t give us recognition that we can stand up for ourselves” and that the “really empowering environment” has made her a “much stronger feminist.”

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Not long after I spoke to Ms Cragh, I was invited to a focus group concerning the Gendered Misconduct e-learning module set to be rolled out to UNSW Residential Colleges next year. Amongst residents from Baxter, Basser and UNSW Hall, I observed as the discussion focused on what such a module needed to prioritise and the tone that should be set. Trigger warnings, content on microaggressions and consent, and an outline of the processes and consequences of reporting a sexual assault were all points of conversation.

As Cragh often puts it, college is a weird environment. You’re putting young men and women in an intimate environment. For many, it’s the first time they’ve experienced such a setting. I don’t see college to be a breeding ground for gendered violence and sexism. Rather, it is a microcosm of our society, and it is naive to think such complex issues can be eradicated completely.

Whilst acknowledging events of the past and reflecting on their occurrence is vital, it is equally as important to think about the future. In a year’s time, I can only hope that future potential residents are reading articles concerning a successfully introduced e-learning module and telling positive stories about woman’s experiences of and in college.

With a Director of Residential Colleges who is determined to ensure the safety of women within their home, self-reflective student executives such as Lauren Merritt who are striving to recognize and learn from past failings, and a network of empowered female residents like Tess and Josie within the college itself, I think the future of UNSW colleges for women is in safe hands.
SPOTLIGHT ON

Wendy Bacon

Wendy Bacon is many things. Her website’s bio references her times as an academic, investigative journalist, political activist and former Tharunka editor (which included jail-time in the name of anti-censorship). Late last year, she was arrested at a WestConnex protest, and this April, she co-curated the exhibition, Tharunka to THOR – Journalism, Politics and Art 1970–1973.

We asked her about her memories of UNSW, activism and being a woman in the 70s.

WHAT WAS BEING A STUDENT LIKE DURING THE 60S AND 70S?

During the 1960s and 70s, most students studied full-time, except in the holidays when we worked to save money. Accommodation was also still pretty cheap so many students moved out of home and lived in share houses. Of course, I can’t speak for the experience of all students but for many students, university life outside classes was just as important, even more important than the actual courses we were doing.

This was the time of widespread university revolt both around Australia and in Europe and North America. Students were fighting for a role in shaping university courses and for many students, university life outside classes was just as important, even more important than the actual courses we were doing.

During the 1960s. We broke through that barrier, including students and non-students, worked on Tharunka. We resisted censorship and self-censorship and there was an exciting sense of discovery and freedom that I rarely experienced in my life as a journalist.

I can’t remember too many bad moments at UNSW. Maybe bad memories fade! I did lose my Commonwealth Scholarship for a doctorate after I went to prison briefly a second time. But looking back, I don’t regret that because that event pushed me towards my activism in the Green Ban period and towards journalism, which really was my vocation.

DURING YOUR EDITORSHIP OF THARUNKA, YOU PUBLISHED CONTROVERSIAL MATERIAL THAT WAS SUBJECT TO SIGNIFICANT DEBATE AND ENDED UP WITH YOU BEING CONVICED FOR EXHIBITING AN OBSCENE PUBLICATION. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS TODAY’S MOST PRESSING ISSUE ABOUT FREEDOM OF SPEECH?

It’s hard to say what is the most pressing issue but it is definitely not sexual censorship, which is not to say I would not like to see more genuine openness in the discussion of sexual matters, rather than commercial pornography, which, as we argued back in the early 1970s, objectifies women.

For me, the most pressing issue is defamation. The recent Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) report on press freedoms noted defamation has a chilling effect, with publishers backing down because of commercial pressure. It’s also a threat to community groups and to individuals publishing on social media.

Also, there are many Federal and State laws that have come in as part of anti-terrorism legislation that have frightening powers to detain journalists and others, and therefore act in ways that intimidate people from asking legitimate questions.

Commercial secrecy and surveillance and collection of metadata are other huge problems. Self-censorship was a huge issue in the 1960s. We broke through that barrier, but there is now an enormous amount of self-censorship.

DO YOU THINK THAT YOUR VIEWS HAVE CHANGED OVER TIME AT ALL? HOW SO?

Back in the late 1960s, I became a social anarchist. This was not individual anarchism, but within a tradition of social anarchism that promoted ideas of cooperation, collaboration and genuine forms of representation. I was opposed to capitalism but never a supporter of authoritarian communism or socialist states. I did not vote and was not at all involved in electoral politics.

That changed over the years and, like many radicals, I became more issues-oriented in my politics. For example, I am extremely concerned about the punitive and brutal treatment of ‘vulnerable asylum seekers.’

I also began to believe that it was important to have a progressive voice in politics, especially as the Labor party moved in that direction.

These days I am not a member, but I generally support the Greens. For example, I have campaigned for Greens MP Jenny Leong and Jamie Parker in the seats of Newtown and Balmain in state politics.

I am still a strong opponent of censorship, but I believe that there have been attempts to disguise campaigns underpinned by intent to encourage racism as free speech battles.

The campaign around 13c is a case in point.

IN YOUR CAREER AS AN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST, UNCOVERING CORRUPTION AND ENSURING JUSTICE HAS BEEN A DRIVING FACTOR. WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT, AND WHAT DOES THE CURRENT CLIMATE MEAN FOR BOTH MAINSTREAM AND STUDENT MEDIA?

In journalism terms, I do feel proud of my role in exposing a lot of NSW corruption in the 1980s. At that time, I was a full-time Fairfax employee. I also feel proud of the many achievements of journalists that I taught in my 20 years at UTs, some of who have become outstanding reporters and others of whom work in quieter but important ways in local and specialist media.

I’m proud of the work I did with students in producing big collaborative projects, such as one on the role of PR in journalism that we did at Cradoc. Those projects were done through the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism that sadly has just been closed by UTs.

The biggest challenge to the mainstream media is finding the resources for journalists to continue to be employed to do serious journalism in the public interest.

We need to look beyond the big commercial companies and we need to defend the ABC and SBS, both of which have been weakened by governments as outlets for journalism and other forms of culture.

There is a serious crisis in the production of the sort of information that people need to be active and critical citizens in a democracy. Fairfax recently announced 25% further job cuts. I am worried about the Fairfax mastheads going altogether. They still do produce worthwhile journalism that holds the powerful accountable but it is in diminished quantities. I am worried that many journalists will be lost to journalism. Strike action was the only option left.

There is a danger for young journalists that they can work in exploitative conditions and produce ‘click bait’ and ‘public relations’ content rather than journalism. I urge anyone who is interested in using journalism in the public interest to continue to always seek activity that is worthwhile. I hope that younger journalists can find some solutions.

Student media need to find ways to engage students in issues that affect them – to grab their attention in a much more crowded media sphere than existed in the 1970s.
YOU WERE INVOLVED IN STUDENT ACTIVISM IN THE 60S AND 70S, AND IT SEEMS THAT WITH THE ELECTION OF TRUMP AND GENERAL TUMULTUOUS POLITICAL TIMES, ACTIVISM IS MAKING A COMEBACK. ANY ADVICE FOR STUDENTS WHO CARE ABOUT THE WORLD THEY LIVE IN?

I am very wary of giving advice to younger people who really must make their own decisions. I have a lot to learn from them. My own Australian generation has been a lucky one. We need to contribute back as much as we can.

My only advice is that all of us, whatever our age, should organise and take action. Even if we look simply at the issue of climate change, it is critical that we do not stand by and simply let a fossil fuel economy continue. I am heartened by the divestment campaign at UNSW and other universities.

There are signs that radical social activism is on the rise. We need to think of new imaginative ways to challenge power structures. Rallies or marches can work but they can also be very predictable and ritualistic.

I also believe that the personal is political. For me, that means we need to look at the ways in which our own individual situations can be connected to broader issues and structures. I also believe that when we are involved in social activism, we should try to act in the ways that are consistent with the sort of society we want to live in. If we are going to act against inequality, sexism, injustice and environmental degradation, we have to take some risks. When I have taken risks, I have been fortunate to have support. Find any small way you can to support those who are taking risks.

Cunt is a Christian word.
Short and ugly and blunt. Cunt?

Cate, smut, shunt, stink, crack, Now aren’t you glad to see the aat! No wonder you hide in shame.
You lose, you sit, you hole.

To think that races have lived
Who admired that portal of life.
That care and concern of all women
That heart-deep longing of men.

Who print and worship
The upright stuff and hidden mouth.
That brought us all into the world.
The dirty image?

Stay at home all your Christian cunts,
Away from all possible danger.
Hail! Hide! Men are passing by.
In the Hall. Dangerous, Man.
Thank God they’re gone. And
You are safe and virgin still.

For everyone knows Jesus has a special reward
For cunts untouched by masculine hands.
Oh yes! Oh yes! A special reward
Before the next world. Sooner.

Never have to worry.
Never have to fear.
No man’s lack will force you now.
Your virginity is safe. Safe?
Safe even if you buy for it.
Crawl for it.
Whip for it.
Jesus was your shepherd
And you were his sheep.
You might as well love Jesus.
There won’t be anyone else now.
And He’ll take you home with him later.

Thirty years later.

In the meantime... yes, same meantime... ‘Thirtys years or more?’
You can occupy yourself
Knitting and feeling your body dry out.

A dry cunt is a safe cunt.
For breakfast you can eat loneliness
And at lunch... loneliness.
And dinner is the big meal. All
The loneliness you can stuff down.
And no worries! For there’ll be plenty left over.

Cunt is a Christian word.

Thinking instead of fleshly pleasures
And who now have been brought to ecstasy
Five thousand times.
But you have been saved from that.
Saved.
But soon you will realize
That you have been getting fisted all along.
For there is no cock as big and rough.
As the one your church has thrust in you.
God’s great steel penis
Which feels like a dentist’s drill
And always draws blood.
Has been creeping at you all along.
A little foreplay
Before the real thing.

Now you’ve got thirty years of dry fucking.
Dry, painful, please don’t do it any more fucking.
For your God is a quitter
And the whole nice girls
Hopefully when they get a little older.
He loses control
When he feels there under Him.
And knows that now they’re fifty.
He’s the only one for them.
So now you are going to get all the pain.
And none of the joy.

Of kissing...
Popular media has always portrayed an idea of how women should act and be. In this second wave of feminism, portrayals of women adopt the idea of individuality and somehow twist it into an ugly, patriarchal device. Women are explicitly shown as things males can attain. Countless articles tell us we should be free, individualistic, weird and helpful to males, quietly shaping us into manic pixie dream girls.

Nathan Rabin’s definition of a manic pixie dream girl (MPDG) as a “bubbly creature that exists solely to … teach broodingly soulful young men to embrace life and its infinite mysteries and adventures” puts a label on this particular characterisation of females in media. 

Paper Towns, a 2009 John Green novel, depicts Margo Roth Spiegelman as a girl who deserves “quiet reverence”. If a name like Margo Roth Spiegelman deserves to be spoken in full all the time, surely my own three syllable name pales in comparison.

Between 2005 and 2010, the MPDG saw a surge of popularity. We were faced with quirky, mysterious, beautiful girls who were there to help the male protagonists figure out life’s meaning. Seeing this inundation of boys who idolised girls affected my mind more than I cared to admit. I’d spend countless hours dreaming of inane ways to execute this trope in my personal life.

In my quest to become an abstract idea, I indulged in excessive drinking and reckless spontaneity. Becoming adventurous and unpredictable was getting out of control, making for strange and uncomfortable friendships, and the abandonment of my female friendships. In my mind, I wouldn’t be like other girls if there were no other girls around to compare myself to.

Maintaining this persona was exhausting and damaging. I attracted the wrong sort of crowd; boys saw me as a thing, rather than a person. Ultimately, I had lost sight of who I was. It was time to become someone else.

The significant lack of Asian – or more specifically, female Asian – representation in mainstream media is no secret. So, in the rare instances where we are given a voice and image that actively rejects stereotypes, I grab it with two hands. Hell I’d grab on with all four limbs and never let go. Perhaps, in a way, Tina Cohen-Chang and Lane Kim became my own versions of a manic pixie dream girl.

These two women burst onto the small screens as supporting characters with enough personality and story arcs to become their show’s protagonist. Tina Cohen-Chang from the musical dramedy Glee craved attention and sought to make sense of her Asian identity. Lane Kim from Gilmore Girls had to negotiate the cultural expectations of her strict Korean mother versus the American society she lived in. Both actively rejected the portrayal of Asians as nerdy, infertile and submissive. They were perhaps the strongest female characters on television, with punchy lines like “I’m a powerful woman, and my growing feminism will cut you in half like the righteous blade of equality.”

Importantly, Tina and Lane’s story arcs very much depended upon their acceptance of their Asian identity. As Tina Cohen dyed her hair blue to gain attention, I dyed the ends of my hair red to “stand out”. I questioned how my identity was intertwined with my heritage.

My perception of being Asian in Australia was the product of negative stereotypes portrayed in popular media. Just as I was figuring out this dynamic between the media and self, these two characters provided answers I didn’t know I was searching for. Looking back now, Tina’s take-charge and Lane’s passion for rock music showed that your heritage shouldn’t be the only defining characteristic of your personality.

Did I set out to emulate these vastly different characters in my impressionable teenage years? No. I took the limited representation of Asian female-ness and applied them to my life. Each identity and trope was tried on and then peeled off to my liking. These periods of self-experimentation allowed me to understand depictions of women in popular media. Most importantly, people in real life are more multifaceted than on the small screen.

Signing off,

Your Friendly-Well-Adjusted-Occasional-Manic-Pixie-Always-Asian-Dream-Girl

BY CATHY TAN

The Manic Pixie Dream Girl and Me

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A “PERIOD SKIPPER”
Seven Things That Women Must Remember

In today's modern age, women are constantly striving to prove themselves, running the race with men to be independent and ambitious. But there are some duties that are just better done by us women! Restore that grace and humility that makes us truly unique, and follow these seven things that women should do but don't do anymore.

1) MAINTAINING ONESELF
As a woman, your most valuable asset is your looks. Don't let society fool you -- your Doctorate in astrophysics will only get you so far in achieving a fulfilling and successful life. Instead, channel that unwarranted effort into a simple daily regime of waning, plucking, moisturising, or setting yourself on fire if you're in the mood to feel particularly hot and dangerous.

2) CURSING IN PUBLIC
You must be elegant, classy and maintain your composure, no matter how upset you are. In fact, just don't say words in general. You won't please anyone by revealing you have emotion, and don't risk upsetting him by speaking your opinions. A polite nod and coy laugh will suffice in any situation.

3) MAKING HIS PLATE
As a heterosexual, cisgender woman, it is your duty to first and foremost prove your love to your man. And there is no better way to express your gratitude and unfaltering servitude than fixing him his plate! Don't limit yourself to doing so just once a day -- be on-hand 24/7 with a prepared plate of his favourite food.

4) COMPLIMENTING MEN
As a woman, your most valuable asset is your looks. Don't let society fool you -- your Doctorate in astrophysics will only get you so far in achieving a fulfilling and successful life. Instead, channel that unwarranted effort into a simple daily regime of waning, plucking, moisturising, or setting yourself on fire if you're in the mood to feel particularly hot and dangerous.

5) DO NOT EXPRESS BOREDOM
7) SPEAK YOUR MIND!
Despite what we mentioned earlier about not expressing boredom, we all know that women are genetically superior at gossip and catfights.

Throughout my life in Pakistan, the US and Australia, the discussion of one's self identity has been a prominent topic in the media and among our school and university peers. I've often heard stories about people struggling with their sexual identity, gender identity and even cultural identity. However, in my 22 years, I have yet to meet another person who's struggled with their faith or religious identity. Even the people who have admitted to leaving a religion often talk about the experience as if it was a trouble-free process, requiring little time and effort.

Personally, my decision to leave Islam was among the most strenuous decisions I've ever made in my life. I am still recall the countless hours spent studying the religion, its history and its core text to decipher whether I found Islam to be truly as righteous, rational and correct as its ardent believers claimed it to be.

As an adolescent, the claimed existence of “fake texts” and “propaganda media” didn't hinder my journey of reflection and reason. My journey started at a young age. My first step was probably when I was twelve years old and was diagnosed with epilepsy. My parents initial reaction was to tell me to “pray to God to forgive me for my sins and cure me of this ailment.” My immediate response to this statement was to ask, “If God is the one who will take away my epilepsy, is He also not the one who gave it to me, through His action or inaction?”

My parents stood in silence; they were clearly angered and agitated by the question, yet at the same time had no response for me, because they themselves didn't know the answer.

Worried about healing the religious community, they set in motion a campaign of “fake texts” and “propaganda media” to offer a solution to my ailment. My parents accused me of being a disgrace to their faith and ridiculed me in public.

I disagree with a human life's submission to a deity, all based on the mere hope that He exists and will reward them in the afterlife.
Why Feminists Need to Accept Conservative Women

Earlier this year, I was added to the UNSW Women’s Collective Facebook group, I was not interested to see that the UNSW Law Society had created a Women’s Collective group especially for law students. Initially, I was looking forward to being a part of these groups and engaging in discussions about feminism and women’s issues. I saw these online spaces as a safe place for conversations and learning between group members. I was therefore shocked when one of my friends was unfairly attacked after she posted something to the group.

My friend posted a satirical video about spelling errors made when women had asked questions, on online forums such as Yahoo Answers, concerning whether they could hold a diverse range of political views within feminist spaces. Sometimes people make mistakes. It frustrates me when women say they don’t identify as a feminist but I can also understand, to some extent, why some women might feel this way. If female spaces continue to be exclusive, judgmental and unwilling to respond to problematic behaviour with empathy, then I can only see more women becoming essential of the movement.

Control is important to me. I have it in every area of my life: at work, at uni, the clothes I wear — it’s all measured, all considered. My skin does not allow me the same control. It’s angry, passionate and erratic.

Without the red, my skin is an off-white colour. Makeup tells me to call it “base”, “porcelain”, “light”. My skin is none of these things. It is not strong like a bone, it is not smooth like porcelain and it does not glow like a light. In fact, its whiteness makes all the red glow, like little neon pox marks.

For as long as I have been a woman, my skin has looked more like a weathered rock than a smooth stone. Speckled with sores and scars, uneven and undulating, I am forced to wear my stress. Every assignment, every test brings with a series of deep wounds on my cheeks, and, for good measure, a bloody chin.

I cover it.

Every morning, an hour before I leave my room, I smear thick, pale paint all over it. It sinks into my pores and worsens the situation but I need some control over what I look like.

I am writing this immediately after hopping out of the shower. My feet are still wet and they are making little puddles on the carpet around me. I still have vaguely flesh coloured cream under my fingernails. My skin is still red and raw.

But for the first time, in a long while, I think, “That’s okay.”

When I first moved to university, I tried to starve the demon out. After hearing the chorus of “experts” tell me to change my diet and favour more greens, I figured “Why not?” Finally, I had financial independence and a little more time, so what was the harm?

The harm was that as I tirelessly endeavoured to become the smooth shiny girl in my class, I forgot about things that were more important. I forgot that whilst a tin of tuna a day is good for your skin, only eating a tin of tuna a day is disastrous for your body. I forgot that whilst exercising is good for your skin, it burns, and your scars deepen.

My body withered, my skin worsened and I was ill.

I’d wait til he slept beside me before putting on off and freeing my skin of its mask.

When we ate together, if I craved something sweet, I’d be reprimanded. If I wanted something meaty, I’d be reprimanded. If I wanted some bread, I’d be reprimanded. If I wanted something of substance, I’d be reprimanded.

“Don’t you want to be beautiful?” he asked me.

Of course I did, who doesn’t? I would bow my head and comply, but inside I was being rubbed raw. He left me for another woman, a thinner, cleaner, updated model. He left me the way people update their phones, or profile pictures.

He left me for better. I was left as angry and as passionate and as erratic as my skin. I pushed myself to the academic extreme, focusing on every minute detail of every assignment. If I was stressed, I was going to fucking feel it, no matter how much everyone else could see that on my cheeks. Once.uni.stopped, I hurled myself into work. Doing 40-50 hour weeks in a kitchen, sweating out of every single pore.

And boy, did I eat. I ate for joy, and it tasted so good. As I sit and write this now, I am eating a Tim Tam. One of many that has been consumed today as a valiant motivator for a Public Law assignment. Time will tell if they are working, and goodness knows I will be wearing this tomorrow, but hell be damned if that stops me from feeling strong and powerful.

The scars on my face are not a spectacle. This is not some Guy Debord level of entertainment for the masses to participate in. We seek up product; we biblically adhere to YouTube teachings, for what? My skin does not glow like a light. It’s whiteness makes all the red glow, like little neon pox marks.

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My skin isn’t a mask. It’s a symbol of my past. It shows that I stress when I want to study to my limits. It shows that I am alive. It shows that I sweat when I am hard at work. It shows that I stress when I want to study to my limits. It shows that I am alive. It shows that I sweat when I am hard at work. It shows that I stress when I want to study to my limits. It shows that I am alive. It shows that I sweat when I am hard at work. It shows that I stress when I want to study to my limits. It shows that I am alive. It shows that I sweat when I am hard at work. It shows that I stress when I want to study to my limits. It shows that I am alive. It shows that I sweat when I am hard at work. It shows that I stress when I want to study to my limits. It shows that I am alive. It shows that I sweat when I am hard at work. It shows that I stress when I want to study to my limits. It shows that I am alive. It shows that I sweat when I am hard at work. It shows that I stress when I want to study to my limits. It shows that I am alive. It shows that I sweat when I am hard at work. It shows that I stress when I want to study to my limits. It shows that I am alive. It shows that I sweat when I am hard at work. It shows that I stress when I want to study to my limits. It shows that I am alive. It shows that I sweat when I am hard at work.

If anyone thinks this makes me less of a beautiful person, that is their loss. I feel no remorse.
How do you tell the truth?
When those words, heard out loud,
Are enough to bring back the pain,
To live it over and over again,
And the unending refrain is already stuck in your head,
But to speak it would be to make it all too real.
This way the hurt is contained,
A distant echo in the past.
And if you can forget it then maybe it never happened?

Maybe it never happened.
It’s your word against his.
It’s a case with no witness.
And of course he is innocent until proven guilty.
So tell me why should anyone believe the truth.
Attention-seeker, havoc-wreaker.
Your allegations ruin lives, your fabrications of a crime
That only a monster would commit.
No human, with a heart and a pulse.
Could conceive of an act so illicit.
Surely such a violation could only be the action of someone
Psychotic.
And he is just a boy.
Whose future you are trying to destroy.
To which you can only reply
Why is his future worth more than mine?
My future now marred by PTSD.
Where I cannot trust those who sleep beside me.
The feeling of invasion still not quite a memory.
So I will not apologise.
For the boy who saw my body as his right.
Who heard a “no thank you” as playing hard to get.
Who saw a short dress as an invitation.
Let’s address the question of provocation.

How do you tell the truth when it’s your fault?
When you were asking for it with that smile and that skirt.
When you’re a slut, a whore, a flirt.
Stupid bitch let herself get hurt.
Too drunk to assert a “no.”
Unable to say “let go.”
Don’t you know you owe it?
He bought it with the glass you are holding and he will take his payment.
Keep your legs together next time if you want to save it.

What were you wearing?
Why weren’t you more careful?
How much did you drink?
Why didn’t you think?

How do you tell the truth to a world that isn’t on your side?
A world that defends your offender.
A world that paints it as your shame, that makes it your burden.
That gives you the responsibility of protecting yourself.
Against a threat it takes none in removing.

And if a tree falls in a forest with no one there to hear it.
If a girl cries out in the night and everyone feigns deafness.
How long must the silence last before we all forget this?
Whether the court finds it necessary or finds it desirable, giving these terms their plain English meaning – the facts in that case are, of course, distinguishable from the facts in this case: necessary that which is indispensable; desirable worthy to be desired, and whether the court finds it necessary or finds it desirable, a relevant relationship existed and the physical altercation did take place and domestic violence was committed; the necessity or desirability must be predicated upon a finding that there exists a need to, protect the aggrieved from domestic violence; but whether the court finds it necessary or finds it desirable, it may also be necessary or desirable to make an order in order to protect: having regard; He said he lost his glasses too when she punched him.

Whether the court finds it necessary or finds it desirable, her husband had denied punching her, they have been to a family therapist three times, they had seen a psychologist and she adds “I can’t stop him.” he had yet to see an individual therapist – he was still on a waiting list. Whether the court finds it necessary or finds it desirable, the law requires perpetrators of violence be held accountable, making protection orders, applying the principle, the principle of paramount importance that the safety, the protection, the wellbeing of people who fear domestic violence is necessary or desirable. However, a court will not likely find it necessary or desirable to make a protection order. I do not intend to punish the respondent. 

Necessary or Desirable.

(1) A court may make a protection order against a person (the respondent) for the benefit of another person (the aggrieved) if the court is satisfied that–
(a) a relevant relationship exists between the aggrieved and the respondent; and
(b) the respondent has committed domestic violence against the aggrieved; and
(c) the protection order is necessary or desirable to protect the aggrieved from domestic violence.

– Section 37(1)(C) of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 (QLD)
HBO’s Big Little Lies Tells A Lot Of Truths For Women

Based on Liane Moriarty’s 2014 novel of the same name, HBO’s 2017 mini-series, Big Little Lies, has been widely (and rightly) praised for its depictions of violence against women. With Moriarty recently announcing that she is exploring ways of continuing the series, it is opportune time to expose just why the show has been so pertinent.

To start, BLL chose just how ordinary violence is, in the lives of many women. From the domestic abuse suffered by Celeste at the hands of her husband Perry, to the revelation that Jane’s was conceived in rape, to the schoolyard bullying of Amabella, the violence suffered by the women in Monterey is a constant theme throughout the series.

BLL shows this violence with uncompromising honesty. We see the red marks on Amabella’s neck and the force with which Celeste is hit. The scenes of seemingly harmless family fun with the twins often involve violence. Celeste’s children play with toy guns, only to stop misbehaving when their father pretends to shoot them, and to fire imaginary shots at their mother as their father holds her down. These acts have a much darker undertow when you consider the very real domestic violence that occurs in those same family rooms.

It is no surprise when Amabella’s bully turns out to be Max, Perry and Celeste’s son. This is a stark reminder that the cycle of violence is difficult to break, even when those caught in it may not have been victims themselves. Max has been conditioned to see violence against women as normal. The fact that he is just six when he starts perpetrating it himself shows that those harmed by domestic violence extend far beyond the immediate victims.

Despite this violence, BLL is ultimately an empowering series for women. It is made by women, to tell the stories of women. As dark as the subject matter is, it needs to be talked about repeatedly, until people start getting the message that violence against women is real and omnipresent. BLL does this, in a masterful and in-depth depiction of both the suffering and strengths of women.

Warning: Contains spoilers
CP: Domestic violence

Lacey was – at least for six months – my entire life source. So consequently, upon her dumping me, that life source was gone. And now, I am prepared to die.

Currently, I am surviving off remnants of her. Glimpses on campus. The smell of her still in some of my sweaters. Running on fumes, I am.

How do I know I will die? Well, when we were together, there was this constant ticking in my head. Like a clock that’s far too loud. But it wasn’t a clock. It was my heart. And that ticking went away when she died.

It’s fine. I’m not too torn up about it. I’ve been enveloped by a sort of calm. Like I’ve been knocked really hard in the head and everything has gone silent and distant and is moving in slow motion. I’m already dead. Mostly. A half ghost. Half death is only moderately painful, and I imagine any discomfort will vanish with complete death. It’s not so bad, see?

I only worry about breaking the news in the right way for each person. I have written a few goodbye notes:

Dear Mom,
If you’re reading this note, I’m dead. Please don’t cry. It makes your eye-liner run and that always reminds me of this lady from a horror movie. I wasn’t supposed to watch. But I did anyway. And I don’t want you to look like a woman from a horror movie. Especially at my funeral. Because you’ll be smiling.

Dear Lacey,
You’ve killed me.

I’m not sure how to sign off Lacey’s letter. I considered putting in a few swear words. But I’d like to be a bit more tasteful, you know. It’s actually intended on completing. Imminent death.

Compile these songs to make the ultimate playlist for my funeral

• Compile these songs to make the ultimate playlist for my funeral
• Get a makeover to show Lacey what she’ll be missing out on in the afterlife

This might be the only to-do list I’ve ever actually intended on completing. Imminent death has filled me with a sort of pre-morthern motivation. I also have to plan my last words. So far the best line I’ve come up with is “Fake pockets in women’s clothing are sexist.” I’m sure women will appreciate that. The only thing worse than fake pockets is that corn silk-queue disaster of a hair transplant on Donald Trump’s head. How so many people could consider walking drier apricot a “nice man” is beyond me.

But then again, people always seem nice when you don’t properly know them. For example, Lacey seemed nice. But then she murdered me. And to be honest, the murdering part hurts more than the actual dying.

And die it will. I’ll miss Cat, sure. And maybe Mum and Dad. But one thing’s for certain: when I’m dead, I won’t be missing assignments or taxes or sensationalised news or social media or fake pockets. And I definitely, most certainly, one hundred per cent, will not be missing Lacey.

In any case, if I ever get terribly lonely, there’s always the ghost option.
M, Versailles

Those days of Autumn yet to come, Nascent talk on the train out of town. Golden gates, a palace, Marie-Antoinette's slippers, and a gown. The gentle beat of rain, tum-tum-tum-tum, Shuffling through crowds, hall of mirrors, mirage. In the grounds, the garden at Marlenbad, The manicured green dream Robbe-Grillet had.

Swans glissent past on the still grey lake, The nooks and crannies that you and I make, Come to light, freely, Over a slightly stale baguette and Franprix tabouli. From our reverie we need not awake, Many more seasons and places and views, Walks to remember in a faraway mood.

S, Èze

After the ballet and the trip to Monaco, The bus ride that curved round and round Craggled cliffs, the sheer sea without a sound, The second last morning in tandem flow. Sunlight venturing on sandstone Narrow and inclining, Click-click of cameras, upwards and winding, Wherever our feet, minds, eyes roam. It’s hotter and brighter this high in the sky, At our table for two; coffee time. In the morning we talk about moons An augury of all things in the universe that loom. No sugar, but a splash of milk. Lastly, we buy matching slips in silk.

S, Kolumbusplatz

I’ve chosen another January night Since dark madness and winter are our recurring thing, After all, that was when you and I took wings The shared taxi on New Year’s Eve – our chariot without a knight. Times and planes later at your snowy doorstep, It was expected – this talk added to the conference to make sure there was a token “anti-feminist” speaker on the day? I was expecting to attend a talk that I would critique, and I couldn’t help but feel guilty for my own inaction. Crispin’s own life is quite remarkable: unable to afford university, she worked at the Planned Parenthood health care and sex education centre in Mid-West, conservative America, and in her spare time, widely read political texts and created the popular online literary journal, Bookslut. Although her book is not autobiographical, I felt like she was drawing on this range of experiences. To quickly summarise, Crispin is arguing for a new, feminist revolution, “Where women do not simply knock on the doors of churches, of governments of capitalist market-places and politely ask for admittance, but create their own religious systems, governments, and economies.”

This excerpt from the book’s Introduction was part of what Crispin read aloud at the All About Women conference held in March. I was sceptical – was this talk added to the conference to make sure there was a token “anti-feminist” speaker on the day? I was expecting to attend a talk that I would critique, and I couldn’t help but feel guilty for my own inaction. Crispin’s own life is quite remarkable: unable to afford university, she worked at the Planned Parenthood health care and sex education centre in Mid-West, conservative America, and in her spare time, widely read political texts and created the popular online literary journal, Bookslut. Although her book is not autobiographical, I felt like she was drawing on this range of experiences. In spite of Crispin’s eloquent critique of our current systems of oppression, I was still left thinking: “What does “taking action” really mean? Can people so quickly abandon their good intentions, even if she was still working within “the system”? I don’t think Crispin – what does it mean practically to create a new feminist revolution? What can an individual actually do at this moment in time? The one questioner that stayed in my mind was a woman working for one of the four major banks who asked how she could stop the prominent “boys club” culture in her workplace. Crispin didn’t seem to give her any immediate advice but made the sweeping statement that she should just stop working for big capitalist organisations. Regardless of one’s political beliefs, I think this is a case of “easier said than done,” leading me to my main critique of Crispin’s book. Perhaps, what is most frustrating about Crispin’s work is that she seems content with not giving us any solutions. In part, this is not a straightforward path. It will take time. Perhaps, what is most frustrating about Crispin’s work is that she seems content with not giving us any solutions. In part, this is not a straightforward path. It will take time. Perhaps, what is most frustrating about Crispin’s work is that she seems content with not giving us any solutions. In part, this is not a straightforward path. It will take time.
“THIS IS FICTION. PART FACT. PART FICTION”

A Review of the Redlands Konica Minolta Art Prize

At The National Art School Gallery in Darlinghurst, until 20 May, the Redlands Konica Minolta Art Prize, and the corresponding exhibition, has its focus on building the collaboration between an emerging artist and established artist. For this review, I looked at the collaboration between two female art collectives: Barbara Cleveland and Get to Work.

As I’m told by a montage of moving lips on a screen, Barbara Cleveland’s work was driven by an interest in complicating the relationship between the artist and the audience. And that it does. In a hectic video of words and letters, spoken and spelt, we get to witness a myriad of fragments from Eugene Choi’s This Moment (2016). In the work, the artist and audience are cocreated characters, Cleveland, in the piece Performing Barbara Cleveland (2017). The work is a collage of performances that raise questions about authorship, piecing together textual meaning in the piece (e.g. the logo of their work: 2017), remaking Get to Work’s, use of mixed textual meaning and the aesthetic of the piece (

“THIS IS FICTION. PART FACT. PART FICTION” appears above Barbara Cleveland’s Performing Barbara Cleveland (2017), cementing Get to Work’s, use of mixed textual meaning and the aesthetic of the piece (e.g. a league of their own: 2017). “ORIGINAL” and “AUTHENTIC” dazzle on the silver badge at the top of the Get to Work cards, ironically undermining what we see as art, and the meanings that are being created for us. Each one of us sees what we want to see, ignoring what doesn’t work within the boundaries of our individual sense of truth and fiction.

In (a.l.o.t.o) a league of their own, Get to Work appear larger than life sport cards, reminiscent of trading cards. The characters interact with sports, standing with dominant stances, avoiding or commanding the gaze of the audience. I don’t know where to look so I watch the interactive players on the screens. Do I watch the balls that keep coming into the picture, or the players running towards them back to where they come from?

They look so bored and unsatisfied with my attention.

This masculinity is amplified by Get to Work’s piece for the exhibition: Barbara Cleveland and Get to Work have a working relationship as mentor and mentee respectively, and the exploration of history and memory through the body are apparent in the aesthetics of their exhibition, as both collectives play with text and manipulate it to generate meaning.

Gilay all!
The SRC has been very busy for these past few weeks.

We have pushed for the complete overhaul of UNSW’s response to, and prevention of, sexual assault and harassment on campus, implementation of a specialised policy of conduct, and access to specialised reporting and specialised response and support services. These services make sure that students know all their options for reporting and support, and feel supported and safe on campus.

By the time this report is published, the results from the Australian Human Rights Commission survey into this issue should be published, or just about to be published. It is important once this results come out that the pressure is kept up to keep universities accountable, and make sure action takes place long term. We, as the SRC, are committed to doing this and welcome any suggestions or questions you might have about this area. We are committed to making everyone safe at UNSW.

The SRC has also been involved in the recent campaigns against Australia’s refugee policy, in particular the campaign to Free Saeed, a refugee facing deportation due to a technicality on his application form, and who faces persecution in his home country. You can get involved with this and other campaigns to support the rights of refugees by contacting the SRC or coming along to collective meetings.

And lastly, as you probably will have seen, Light Rail construction and route diversions that began in March have meant that 891 queues have stretched throughout campus, leaving students and staff to wait unacceptable times just to get to and from UNSW.

The SRC has been gathering the signatures and experiences of students waiting in these queues. Your stories have caught the attention of the media and State MPs, and we have met with the Shadow Transport Minister to call on the Transport Minister to increase the number of bus services and investigate whether the Light Rail will actually be beneficial once it is constructed.

As always, drop me a line at vpstudent@arc.unsw.edu.au to find out more, get involved with our collectives, or just come and say hi when you see us around campus and at our monthly meetups!

We’ve had some great progress with our Tristanatter campaign, with the University announcing changes including start-up loans for eligible students. At the same time, many issues remain unresolved, and new issues have arisen about some of the proposed workarounds. That’s why we’re teaming up with student faculty reps, clubs and societies and colleges this month, to make sure everyone has the right info about the current status of the trimester plans, and to ensure facility-specific (and constituent-specific) issues are brought to the fore in our campaign.

UNSW hosted the NSW National Day of Action on 11 May, with students converging from across the country to make their opposition to harmful attacks on students known and declare their support for a free and fair education for all. It’s important to continue having as many keen beans as possible making sure their voices are heard! We’ll also continue highlighting many of the specific issues facing UNSW this year, including trimesters, staff cuts and the Government’s cuts to the Kingsford Legal Centre on campus.

As always, you can get involved with our amazing work both on and off campus by coming along to our weekly Collective meetings (small education@arc.unsw.edu.au, or by checking out our stalls over at the Library Lawn or the Quad (we’re out there almost every day!). If there’s an issue you’d like to champion or a problem you’re facing with the Uni, let me know at education@arc.unsw.edu.au and I’ll be in touch!
Hey everyone!

It’s Zack, your SRC General Secretary, and I’m back for another issue of Tharunka! While everyone on the SRC has been incredibly busy on a number of different campaigns, there are a couple of prominent ones that I’ve been most involved in. The first is the “Fix the 891” campaign that I started and have been running. Firstly, thank you to everyone that has signed the petition. To those that haven’t, it’s at Arc Reception. In addition to the petition that will be presented, I made contact with the State MP for the area, Ron Hornby, who, in conjunction with the the Shadow Minister for Transport, made representations to the Minister for Transport and NSW Transport on our behalf. This also saw our campaign receiving media coverage in Buzzfeed, the Sydney Morning Herald, ABC, Southern Courier, Daily Telegraph and Tharunka. Following the work of our campaign, the NSW Minister for Transport has claimed that additional bus services have been added. As we have seen little to no impact of these claimed increased services, we will be ramping up pressure on this issue.

In addition to this campaign to increase bus services, there has been increasing concern that this problem will only get worse following the introduction of the light rail. The latest EMM report on the light rail project has stated that the light rail will actually decrease speed and capacity of service. In upcoming consultations with NSW Transport, I will ensure that these concerns are raised and hopefully addressed.

Please keep in mind that the SRC also includes a number of equity spaces at the university. In addition to the collective meetings run in these rooms, the rooms are also free and open to be used by anyone. Some spaces such as the Women’s, Ethno-Cultural, International and Queer are autonomous. However others, such as the Welfare and Disabilities space, are open to everyone. Beyond just bringing a place to relax, they include a fully functioning kitchen and access to essential items. They can be accessed just behind the big sign directing people to them on the middle of Basses Steps, a bit further up the steps from the entrance to the colleges.

To keep up to date with all the other amazing stuff we are working on at the moment, check out our Facebook page and website!

This month, our collective has been concerned with refugees and their treatment. We attended the Palm Sunday refugee rally and the massive turnout shows us that most Australians care about refugees too.

This month has also been a chance to do your part and help in a hands on way at Villawood to stop the government from deporting Saeed, a refugee whose return to his home country will place him in imminent danger. The SRC did a photo petition to get the word out about Saeed’s situation and it’s amazing to see all the faces that were involved in it and their messages of solidarity.

If you care about issues like these, please join the Ethno-Cultural Collective. Refugee week is coming up soon and we can use your help to make it a really big one in 2017.

The time is more urgent than ever to get involved with your local student activists and we are right here on campus! There’s fun stuff to look forward too as well, we are launching a zine and are taking off with a series of student-run lectures called PoC Sprak!

Hope to see you soon!

- Zack

Ethno-Cultural
Cindy El Sayed

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If you care about issues like these, please join the Ethno-Cultural Collective. Refugee week is coming up soon and we can use your help to make it a really big one in 2017.

The time is more urgent than ever to get involved with your local student activists and we are right here on campus! There’s fun stuff to look forward too as well, we are launching a zine and are taking off with a series of student-run lectures called PoC Sprak!

Hope to see you soon!

- Zack

Environment
Breana MacPherson-Rice

Take a stroll through the Mathews or Terraces food courts and you’ll see a new kid on the block: these are our trial food waste bins, and they are there for you to use!

Over my entire time studying, I have heard environmentally conscious students lamenting the lack of composting options on campus. It irked me too – it is so frustrating to think of all that organic matter going to landfill, or not being used to its best capacity.

Now there’s no need to stress over your food scraps. When you put your food waste into these new bins, they will be turned into high-quality compost off-site. This compost can then be used to grow new things – thereby restoring the cycling of nutrients back to the soil.

So what are the rules? Anything you can eat = into the food waste bins! Anything you can’t (packaging, cutlery, paper, etc) = into a red or yellow bin, please and thanks. If you contaminate the food waste bins even a little bit, this ruins the fun for everyone, and the whole bin goes to landfill. I’m relying on all of you reading this to help make this trial a success!

In other news, the 27th annual STUDENTS OF SUSTAINABILITY festival is just around the corner! From 30 June – 5 July, students, artists, activists, academics, workers, parents, children and more will converge in Newcastle for an incredible week of learning.

Everyone I have spoken to who has ever been to an SoS festival has testified that it changed their life a little bit! I can’t encourage you enough to come to http://studentsofssustainability.org and grab yourself a ticket – especially because this year, it is so close to us Sydney-siders. Hope to see you there!

Hi everyone!

The Queer Officers are back once again to report on our progress. This month, we’ve had a more consistent range of events, including our second monthly potluck (which occur on the first Monday of every month), the start of a recurring weekly Rupaul’s Drag Race screening, as well as more “QC goes to…” events, which saw us go out for a night on the town during the mid-semester break. Events, as well as both regular and autonomous meetings, continue to have great attendance, with members seeming to enjoy them thoroughly.

After vigorously preparing for our annual UNSW Queer Collective Big Gay Wedding 2017 for International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) for the past few months, we have finally launched the event and it was a blast. Our sincere thanks go out to everyone who was involved in the preparation process, as well as all the people who were there on the day to help out. Of course, we haven’t forgotten to thank all of you who came by to share the love with us, as well as enjoying our freebies and the little surprises we had prepared. We could not have asked for a better turn out.

As the semester is coming to a rapid end, we are very proud to say that our goal this year of promoting and raising awareness of the Collective has so far been very well executed and received. We will continue to try and have more events leading up to exams that are aimed towards de-stressing and helping students through those last few weeks. Furthermore, we have already started planning for next semester so keep your eyes peeled for more excitement of all kinds.

We hope you had a wonderful month and we will see you soon!
Welcome to April with the Welfare Collective! For the past month, we have been laying the foundation for our upcoming event, "Keen for Green" with the Environmental Collective. The day was held on 17 May, and was packed with heaps of fun, from workshops to a massive free lunch. We also showcased some great clubs and societies that operate within UNSW and work towards a more sustainable future.

The Welfare Collective is also investigating student crisis services on campus. At present, Arc and the SRC offer services such as Welfare Packs and Crisis Accommodation, but are we doing enough? It is important that students have access to more crisis services while studying. A national survey conducted by Headspace and the NUS found that a high majority of tertiary students stated that they were stressed, anxious, or depressed—and more than a third were contemplating self-harm or suicide. This isn’t good enough! We need to be offering additional services at UNSW to help combat this challenge. It is bad enough that universities across Australia have let it get this bad. If you or someone you know needs help, please contact UNSW Counselling and Psychological Services via email: counselling@unsw.edu.au or by phoning: +61 (2) 9385 5418.

The Welfare Collective’s free weekly Free Breakfast is still going strong with more and more students enjoying our delicious yogurt muesli cups and hot cross buns. As we move into the colder months, we are going to add free hot tea to warm you up in those boring lectures. We are also still in need of volunteers to help out with our Free Breakfast, so if you have any time to spare on Thursdays from 10am - 11am, we would love to see you there on the Library Lawn. Also, if you haven’t already, check out the Welfare Collective’s Facebook group for updates and events: https://www.facebook.com/groups/uscwelfare/