

*First Person:
The Night Obama Won*

Why Poetry is Dead

*Riding in Buses
with Heretics*

*What's wrong with a
Men's Collective?*

tharunka

UNSW STUDENT PUBLICATION • ISSUE 1 • VOLUME 55

**0-WEEK
ISSUE**



tharunka

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Tharunka is published periodically by Arc @ UNSW. The views expressed herein are not necessarily the views of Arc, the Representative Council or the Tharunka editing team.

Tharunka acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which the University now stands.



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Dear UNSW,

Welcome to Tharunka '09. If you're looking for an indication of the magazine's direction this year, the sign on our office door says it all:

"Journalism is not a profession or a trade. It is a cheap catch-all for fuckoffs and nerfits - a false doorway to the backside of life, a filthy piss-hidden little hole hailed off by the building inspector, but just deep enough for a nino to curl up from the sidewalk and masturbate like a chimp in a zoo-cage."
- Hunter S. Thompson

We, the Editorial Team have a few things we want to achieve. We want to abuse, engage and infuriate. We want to inspire fervent agreement, vehement disagreement and at least one complaint from a state or federal politician. Tharunka should be like the best kind of pub conversation - loud but with quick bits, clever but with moments of inspired stupidity, and always with the potential to cross that critical threshold of obnoxiousness where you just can't resist joining in.

This first edition, though we say it ourselves, is excellent. We have a perverted gynaecologist on page 24 and some serious 0-week commentary on page 6. On page 20 Bart Cummings investigates the (non) oppression of white men, while Tom Lin shares his first hand experience of the Obama victory on page 12. We are also very proud to present the first issue of 'Tharunka Now', a brand-new news supplement bringing you the very best in secrets, scams and scandals from around campus.

Thank you for visiting Tharunka. We hope that you enjoy your stay and that you return for many future visits. Hunter blew his brains out in '65, so it's just us now.

With love,

Tharunka Editorial
2009.

White Smile, Black Soul

THARUNKA,

Every time I reach for the toothpaste, an awful picture comes into my mind. I see a white rabbit sitting on a laboratory bench, its nose twitching and its eyes wide and anxious. A man in a lab coat injects a substance into its pink cornea. The rabbit wants to shriek but it can't. It shrieks inside, in the furious pounding of its little heart.

The next day, the man in the lab coat inspects the rabbit's eye. It is swollen and burnt, the mixture wasn't quite right. The stinging, pain and confusion in the little creature's head becomes a single mark on the man's clipboard.

This torture is called the "Draize test" and rabbits are ideal because they don't have eyelids.

Be aware of which products you buy. Is the back of your toothpaste tube silent on the issue?

EMILY MARGO

Library Etiquette A Thing Of The Past?

THARUNKA,

Last academic year I was appalled at the conduct of students in our two campus libraries. I found it impossible to study in peace and quiet. Every time I sat down and went to the trouble of opening my books and plugging in my laptop, a pack of directionless youths with ipods and sexual rumours would occupy nearby seats and begin to use the study area as a place for inane conversation and half-constipated eruptions of laughter. As if they knew they shouldn't be making noise but just couldn't contain themselves. I wish they would asphyxiate on their half-baked manners and die.

JONTY DE VILLIERS

Seasonal Syllogism

THARUNKA,

I am an alumnus with a Masters in Science and am currently working as a labourer in a box factory.

I think there should be a new public holiday on 23rd June to replace Christmas as our winter solstice celebration. This would correct the bipolar situation of depressing winters and euphoric summers.

Also I would like to adopt the Zodiac calendar which places the Earth in her position in the solar system throughout the year relative to celestial markers on the ecliptic. The year zero could be reset to the year Man first walked on the Moon.

I have written to the premier Nathan Rees and would appreciate any support from UNSW Science students.

SIMON WOTHERSPOON, M.Sc

Summer Syllogism

THARUNKA,

In the bible, hell is as hot as fire.
In reality, Australia is as hot as fire.
Therefore, Australia is hell on earth.
Is Australia full of satans ?

Yours full of heat and fire,
JANE WALLACE

Student Politics Turns To Gaza

THARUNKA,

On 20 January, the UNSW Student Representative Council (SRC) disgracefully voted down a motion condemning Israel's war crimes in Gaza moved by myself and fellow Postgraduate Councillor Craig Johnson.

We condemn Israel's three-week bombardment of the Gaza Strip, which has resulted in over 1400 deaths and thousands of injuries.

The SRC should be made accountable for its actions which for the most part are rarely relayed to the vast majority of students despite affecting them.

The President of the SRC, member of the Labor students Charishma Kaliyanda, shamefully tried to prevent the UNSW Muslim students from entering the room for the purpose of observing the meeting. When the Muslim students were allowed inside the meeting, students representing the Australasian Union of Jewish Students and a few SRC members spoke against the motion, attempting to intimidate the SRC by arguing that if a vote was cast in favour of supporting the people of Gaza, it would be tantamount to anti-Semitism and advocating the bashing of Jewish students.

This was nothing more than fear-mongering and manipulation of genuine anti-racist sentiment to stop any effort to condemn Israel's war crimes in Gaza.

The Labor students struck out portions of the motion that supported taking immediate cross-campus action and building a citywide student campaign to call for an end to the invasion and blockade of Gaza. Even the watered-down, amended motion was finally voted down!

We condemn the SRC councillors who voted against the motion.

We demand that the UNSW SRC show its support for the Palestinian people and Arab and Muslim students at UNSW by organizing and funding a Palestinian Solidarity Week, which will start from 30 March (Palestinian Land day) to 3 April.

ANH PHAM

Postgraduate Student Rep. Councillor
Member of Socialist Alliance
(petition attached, with 74 signatures)

Ed – Tharunka was at this meeting and noted two things. First, that it was conducted in an open, diplomatic and democratic manner by the SRC President. And second, that the Socialist Alliance is as deeply passionate and committed as it is lacking in civility.

For the record, far from turning Muslim students away at the door, Charishma personally invited the UNSW Islamic Society to attend the meeting and have its perspective heard. Its delegates, and those from AUJS, were equally sincere, informed and practical about Gaza's relevance to UNSW students.

Tharunka supports student protest and the principles of the Socialist Alliance. Just don't shout it in our faces, please.

**Please find the SRC President's response overleaf.*



Anh Pham has covered campus with posters of his letter. The contents have deeply concerned at least one international student who now believes our SRC President may be racist. The President replies to him, and other concerned students, below.

DEAR CHARLES,

I thank you very much for both your concern and interest in the matter that has been brought to your attention. I agree that if I had no knowledge of what had occurred and had just read what was written on those posters, I would be quite concerned also. I would like to set the record straight as I believe what was written in that petition regarding the events of the most recent SRC meeting manipulate the truth and blatantly defame me.

Firstly, neither I nor any member of the UNSW SRC attempted to block access to anyone based on apparent race or religion, and I find that accusation to be quite insulting. As both Councillors Anh Pham and Craig Johnson are quite aware (since they were standing right next to me), UNSW student identification was requested from all of those who were not SRC members or who had not been expressly invited to attend. Given that this was a meeting of the UNSW SRC, I do not see how this was unreasonable.

Contrary to the assertion that I stopped "UNSW Muslim students" from observing the meeting, I in fact invited representatives from both the UNSW Islamic Society (ISOC) and the Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS) to attend, observe and speak at the SRC meeting regarding the motion that was on hand. Accusations of intimidation on the part of either these invited representatives or members of the SRC are ludicrous. The only intimidatory behaviour I observed was perpetrated by one of the uninvited observers, who repeatedly shouted "bullshit" and "disgusting" as an SRC Councillor attempted to speak.

The SRC is comprised of generally progressive students of different political affiliations. Obviously the conflict in Gaza is a sensitive issue, but a motion was not passed as there was not consensus (of at least a simple majority of the SRC) on an adequate course of action that involved and was relevant to UNSW students. It does not mean that we have "chosen a side" or are unsympathetic to the Palestinian people. Voting against a motion that may incite anti-semitism does not indicate a person's opinion or standpoint on the broader issue of Gaza.

Your ideas of organising an open debate about the issue or organising a Palestinian Awareness Week are interesting – and were not included in the original motion submitted by Councillor Anh Pham. I'd suggest that you or anyone else interested in pursuing such courses of action contact our Ethnic Affairs Department (ethnic@arc.unsw.edu.au). The Ethnic Affairs Officers would be more than happy to work with interested students. The UNSW SRC seeks to represent and support all UNSW students – allegations such as those made on the petitions only undermine the work we attempt to do and foster ill feeling between sections of our university community and their student representatives. This is inexcusable as it prevents students who may be experiencing racism or discrimination from getting help and support where it is available.

I demand an immediate and public apology from the authors of the petition for falsely accusing me of racist and obstructive behaviour. Such accusations are outright lies that harmfully misrepresent what occurred at the 20th January meeting of the SRC.

If you have further questions or comments about this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would also like to invite you, or any other UNSW student who is interested, to the February meeting of the SRC – to be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday 17th February in Training Room 2 (Level 1) of the Blockhouse at the Kensington campus of UNSW.

Kind Regards,

CHARISHMA KALIYANDA
2009 SRC President

PRICE ATTACK

That's right - we've **TORN UP**
the **Geneva Convention** and
launched a **UNILATERAL**
attack on **PRICES!**



Our prices are being **SHELLED** by cluster munitions,
POUNDED by air strikes and we are testing **EXPERIMENTAL**
DIME WEAPONS which cause **CANCER** in survivors!

No school, aid convoy or UN refugee camp is safe from our



PRICE ATTACK

Rush in to

today!

UTTER BASTARD STILL RICH

In spite of the ongoing financial crisis, an utter bastard is still quite rich. We met him in his plush inner city apartment, wearing his usual self-satisfied smile that tells everyone he meets how much better than them he is. He explained in great detail how rich he still is and how little the market collapse has affected his wealth. Rather than showing humility, he seemed to have become even more smug and insufferable in the face of the world's financial difficulties. Having retained most of his wealth, the fact that he had sufficient resources and market know-how to weather such a storm made him feel smugger than ever about his own superiority. "Thank God I was smart enough to invest wisely!" he said, in a way that made people want to break his nose. ■

Racist unsure who to support in ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict.

Mark Damian, racist and bigot, has always shown a keen interest in international affairs. However, the latest outbreak of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has left him lost for words as both sides represent things he hates and opposes. "On the one hand, you have a horde of Muslims launching bombs because they believe in a false prophet. They are evil and a threat to all good white Christians everywhere."

On the other hand, the Jewish state is also anathema to Mark. "There's already a cabal of Jews controlling the banking industry. But now they've got a home base from which to destroy us through interbreeding, multiculturalism and manipulation of the international economy. These people are evil and a threat to all good white Christians everywhere."

This dilemma has Mark stumped. "It's very difficult," he sighed. "Maybe they'll descend into a mutually destructive cycle of violence, retaliation and death - that seems to be working pretty well so far."

MAN SMUGGLER BOMB IN ARS Flying now completely unbearable

Middle East Peace Achieved by Student Representative Council resolution

Decades of complicated, intractable conflict came to an end yesterday, after the SRC passed a resolution condemning Israeli policies and calling for peace and dialogue in the region. Response to the forceful denunciation and calls for Israel to respect international law was swift and decisive, as the government in Tel Aviv declared an immediate end to hostilities and withdrew its troops from the Palestinian territories.

Equally moved was Hamas, the terrorist organisation committed to

the destruction of Israel. Hamas unilaterally announced that it would lay down its arms and embrace peaceful coexistence with the Jewish state, adding "sorry about all those rockets". Syrian, Iranian and Lebanese leaders joined the chorus of peace and brotherly love declaring that no longer would they oppose the Jewish state's existence. Full trade relations are expected to begin by next week, whilst regional disarmament should be completed by April.

GAY MAN: QUITE WELL ADJUSTED

On Thomas Alderson's twentieth birthday, the North Sydney student came to terms with something he had known in his heart for all his life. He was gay. Upon acknowledging this life-changing truth about his identity, Thomas decided to go down the road to the 24 hour McDonalds for a late dinner.

As the student of Commerce and Law explained: "Normally I get a Happy Meal, but it seemed kind of like a special day so I got a fillet'o'fish instead."

When Thomas shared the news with his family their reaction was neither positive nor negative. When contacted by *Tharunka* his mother, Helene Alderson, said: "He's a pretty good boy. It doesn't really matter to us whether he's gay or straight, just so long as he finishes his degree."

His father, Steven, concurred: "Tom's sexuality is quite...hmm, yes. Has anyone taken in the washing?"

After a short period of confusion and personal agitation, Thomas found that his life looked very much the same as it had been before. He continued to work, study and relax with friends, often frequenting the local establishment and sometimes visiting a more upmarket bar in the city when he had the cash.

A few colleagues at his part time job in a Mosman café may have displayed some latent homophobia. However it was hard to tell as they had never really been friends anyway. As Thomas observed: "They just kind of grunted when I told them. We didn't really hang out before, and we didn't really hang out afterwards either. So I don't really know if there was a difference or not."

Towards the end of our interview Thomas became visibly impatient, fidgeting and casting frequent glances in the direction of his watch. He attributed this state of mind to the fact that he had promised to go to the beach with his housemate, Andrew, who joined us towards the end of our discussion.

When asked whether his relationship with Thomas had been altered, Andrew gave the matter some consideration before replying "Um, not really. Hey, do you know if we're gonna be in time for the bus?"

Said Thomas: "Let's get lunch first."

Youse imigrants need to speak english!!!!

It makes me real mad when I here people talking foreign languages on the bus and in the streets ur in Australia speak english so we can all understadn you. I'm not racist or nothin but, id say its very easy to learn to speak english I mean I learned it as a baby, so imigrants should learn it to so they dont have to use they're wog langauges in Australia.

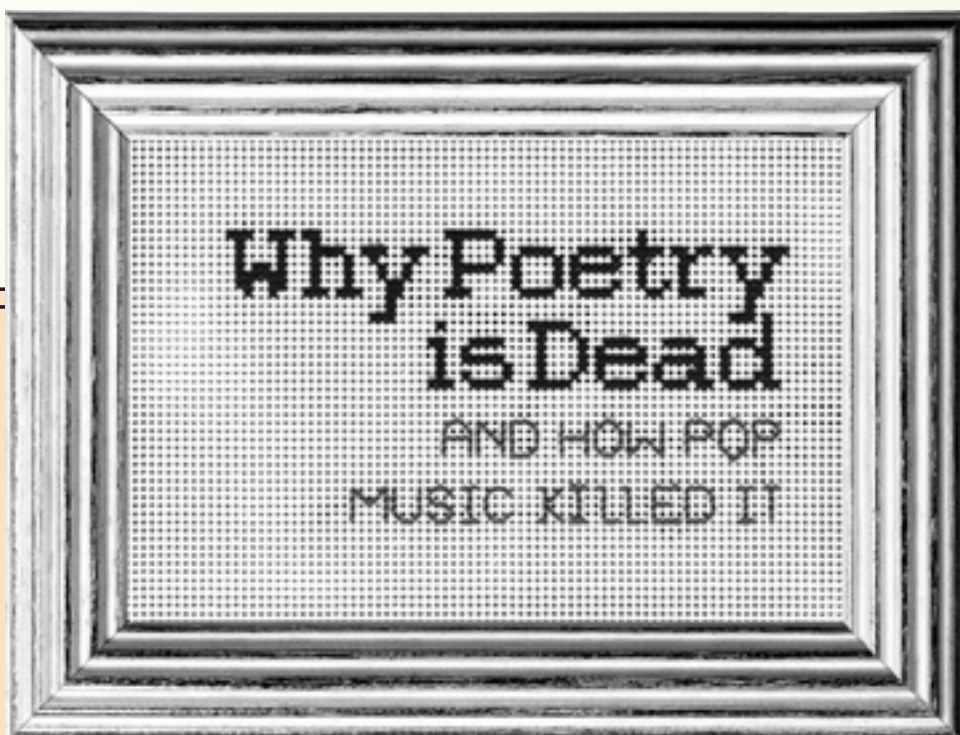
BIG PACKAGE STIMULATES eager Australian economy

After a long period of teasing and building tension, the Australian parliament finally gave it up yesterday, much to the relief and excitement of an Australian public begging for deep and long-lasting stimulus.

The much needed stimulation comes after a period of sluggish and limp activity, during which the economy found itself too busy, stressed or sick to become fully excited. This package is expected to be big and impressive enough that Australia will become aroused to new heights of economic activity. Business heads are swollen with excitement at the prospect of getting the package into their hands, anticipating that it will supply sufficient fluidity to lubricate the wheels of industry.

Indeed, experts are hoping that the package will have enough strength to deliver the goods and reach deep enough to satisfy everyone's needs. The package will focus particularly on targeting vulnerable areas, activating these sensitive spots and using a multiplier effect to increase the amount of stimulation reaching through all parts of the nation.

However, given the demanding task at hand, advisors have warned parliament against shooting its load prematurely. They say that it will need to be flexible in its approach if it hopes for the package to penetrate everywhere it is needed, and that stamina will be important if this stimulus is going to get the economy up and keep it up for as long as necessary.



WORDS SU MIN LIM
IMAGE ELLIOTT BRYCE FOULKES

I love poetry. Adorning the entrance to my kitchen is a picture of William Butler Yeats, looking especially skinny and intellectual. I've even written some of it, although I would never engage in the emotionally masturbative humiliation of publishing it here.

I also love pop music. Love love *love* it. The desktops, cars and cupboards of my friends and relatives are littered with unsolicited mix CDs. In times of personal crisis I post questions on the Belle and Sebastian Q&A page. There are more songs than people that have made me cry.

The trouble is that I am not supposed to like these things equally. Poetry is high art. People win Nobel Prizes for writing it. Pop music is low art. People end up in on *Australian Idol* for making it. So why do I find more craft, energy and inventiveness in my mp3s than in contemporary verse?

A note of clarification here. Before you dismiss me with a single derisive reference to the Pussycat Dolls/Ashlee Simpson/Shannon Noll, I am *not* claiming that all pop music is high art, or even art. As with most creative endeavours, and perhaps the bulk of human endeavour in general, the vast majority is formulaic, derivative dross. Yet it doesn't take that much searching and researching to find occasions of genuine originality and talent.

Take Scottish rockers Franz Ferdinand. In their 2004 debut single, what a lovely indolent simile it is when lead singer Alex Kapranos half whispers, half moans into the microphone: *Words are poisoned darts of pleasure*. In their next album, Kapranos imagines a reincarnated Christ stealing champagne and being punched in the face so as to make the point that we're all hedonistic sinners and should lay off judging each other. It's heavy stuff.



Or just take a look at these lyrical fragments, salvaged at random from the C drive of my computer:

*It's just a formality
Why must I explain
It's just a nod to mortality
Before you get on a plane*

Look with curious eyes on your raggedy way

*Put your dirty angel face
Between my legs and knicker lace*

*The future's looking colourful
it's the colour of blood, chaos and corruption of a happy sort*

*Your teeth are black with wine
as you place those lips on mine.
The moon hangs heavy and forbidden high
on the night of our lives.*

*If love is a bolt from the blue
then what is that bolt but a glorified screw?*

Sex, death, loneliness and pun-based humour - what more do you want? The lyrical snippets above are by Kapranos, Andrew Bird, Alison Goldfrapp, Stuart Murdoch and Glenn Richards. All of them are undoubtedly pop musicians, marketed to a mass audience as entertainment rather than scholarship. They are also really, really *good*. They take on the big themes and manipulate the tools of language and music with flair, fervour and wit.

Now let's have a look at contemporary poetry. Stephen Fry, a British writer, actor, and all-round smarty pants, recently published a book called 'The Ode Less Travelled'. He believes that much of today's verse has degenerated into 'a lifeless trickle of the inwardly personal and the rhetorically listless.' Aspiring poets are not taught to value form, technique and virtuosity. Instead, they are told to simply 'express themselves' without regard for the sheer hard work of crafting language. Far too often, the result is what Fry politely describes as 'arse dribble'.

Fry does not explicitly quote any contemporary poets, possibly to avoid hurting feelings, but includes several 'poems' of his own to show you what he means. Following his lead, I gave myself about ninety seconds to compose the following:

Indetermination

*sheer drop cliff
my sadness
it rises*

*so small
yet omniscient and
i find your scent*

*walk tall - !
do i know
lined and undermined*

by you.

Look at this pointless nonsense. Lack of punctuation and random line breaks do not a poem make. And yet we've all seen this, haven't we? It does not take much effort to imagine how this fatuous puddle of self indulgence might find its way to publication, and be presented to readers as real live modern verse.

Fry is at pains to point out he is not opposed to free verse in itself, and that e e cummings, Ezra Pound, Allen Ginsberg etc bring him astonishment and pleasure. His objection is to the use of free verse as laziness - an 'anything goes' attitude which dismisses the relationship between form and content, meaning and metre.



And that's where pop music comes in. A song has *shape*. It has a rhythmic pattern repeating across verses. It employs rhyme or assonance. It is structured according to verse and chorus, demanding that the songwriter bring each stanza to a cyclical conclusion. The exact nature of these structural constraints is not important. What matters is that there are boundaries - boundaries that can be extended, subverted or broken if necessary, but boundaries which impose creative discipline on the songwriter.

The other thing about pop music is that it's, well, popular. American academic Camille Paglia describes her university experience: "When I was in college in the 1960s, poetry was booming...At Harpur College [the State University of New York at Binghamton] I saw a huge number of major poets read. They were like rock stars." Today, rock stars are like rock stars. Very few people engage in poetry with the same degree of fervour and immediacy. There is no living, jostling community of poets the way there are indie kids or ravers. Good poets aren't celebrated and bad poets continue to write bad poetry with impunity, because there's no one listening.

Arguably this isn't all the poets' fault. Poetry and pop both compete for the same cultural space, and musicians have a natural advantage - they simply have more tools at their disposal. A poem, like a song, is a brief, intense experience. It doesn't shade an issue or thread an argument the way prose does; at its best it lights up what one friend describes as 'a filament of emotion'. Music, however, speaks an emotional shorthand which just can't be captured in words. There are bits of your brain that literally light up on a PET scanner when you listen to a tune. As another friend would have it: 'Some things are so stupid they cannot be said, only sung'.

And yet I don't think the poets should get off that easily. Poets also have tools unique to their medium. A poem is a deeply private experience. You can read one all by yourself without worrying about how uncool you look. You can write one all by yourself without the mediation of audio equipment, elaborate instrumentation or Steve who plays the drums. Poets have the luxury of focusing on words and words alone, without the trappings of melody and the rest of it which can be a distraction as much as a blessing. If Camille Paglia is telling the truth, audiences used to respond to the uniqueness of poetry. They would respond again if they had a good enough reason.

*Contributions to the Tharunka
poetry section should be sent to
tharunka09@gmail.com*



Isn't it a bit weak to deride the state of modern poetry without including any of my own? Well, I'm sorry. As Belle and Sebastian might tell you:

*I'm not as sad as Dostoyevsky
I'm not as clever as Mark Twain
I'll only buy a book for the way it looks
And then I stick it on the shelf again.*

Being stuck on the shelf, or languishing in the inner pages of an unread magazine, seems to be the fate of most poetry these days. This does not mean that Art with a capital A is dead, that the 21st century is bereft of beauty, the bleak expanses of our modern age blah blah blah. I am sure there is still excellent poetry out there and talented people writing it. But I stick by my claim that poetry as a collective has lost its potency, its cultural force. The real deal is at the Metro, the Hopetoun, the Enmore, and it's armed with guitars.

So where to from here?

This is my prediction. Admittedly it is highly subjective, personal and lacking in any sort of empirical survey or proof - but then both poetry and pop music tell you to speak from the heart, so there we are. I think that pop music will flourish while poetry continues its slow descent into irrelevance. Franz, Belle, Augie et al offer cleverness, sincerity and craft. Poetry, on the other hand, is degenerating into a terminal sticky mess of wankery and sloth. We will go on reading Yeats and the rest of the old crowd, but fewer and fewer new voices will emerge. Sooner or later we will be forced to admit that poetry is over, deader than Dostoyevsky, and that there is no one with the skill or the nerve to salvage it.

Absolutely no-one.

No-one at all.

Well, go on then. Prove me wrong.

Chinese Whispers



WORDS ELVA WU & SEAN LAWSON
IMAGE STEPHANIE WILSON

One quarter of UNSW students are international students, and from figures for June 2008, 24% of those international students are from mainland China. This is the single largest group of foreign students, and most of them say they lack adequate opportunities to speak English on campus. The situation is worsening as this population soars, to the extent that many Chinese students arrive and find themselves surrounded by their own language and wonder whether the Australian experience at UNSW is worth it. "I feel there is little difference from the life I had in China, except that I study in English more often. I am not sure why I should pay big bucks to come here and speak Chinese most of the time," says Julia Chen, a Chinese student who arrived in Australia 3 months ago and is now studying a master's degree in professional accounting.

Learning a language to proficiency or fluency – as opposed to just knowing a few words – is extremely difficult. The problem is not will or ability to learn English, it is a lack of interaction with local students. Foreign students want to improve their English and develop it, but without opportunities to practise through interaction with native speakers, it is extremely difficult to build confidence and proficiency.

Although they are interested in the local culture many international students find it difficult to make friends and socialise with local students, who can seem very closed-off and difficult to interact with. This problem is common to universities all over the world and quite natural, when one considers how entrenched in existing social networks local students are. It is a challenge foreign students must endeavour to overcome.

However, this challenge becomes nearly insurmountable in situations such as that of many Chinese students, where there are large groups concentrated in the same classes and often few other people. In such a situation it's quite natural to speak in your first language, awkward for everyone to communicate in a second language instead. Such segregation always, and unavoidably, results in diminished English usage.

UNSW is a multicultural campus, and prides itself on its openness to other cultures. Additionally it relies very heavily on the financial contributions of international students, especially in certain disciplines like Finance. Concentration by discipline and country of origin presents a huge problem. If the UNSW experience is not a good one, that income will be lost, and UNSW's image will suffer. It is in everyone's interests for the experiences of groups like Chinese international students to be improved. If this doesn't happen, instead of being an open and internationally-minded University, we will come to be seen as a place that rips off and segregates foreign students. ■

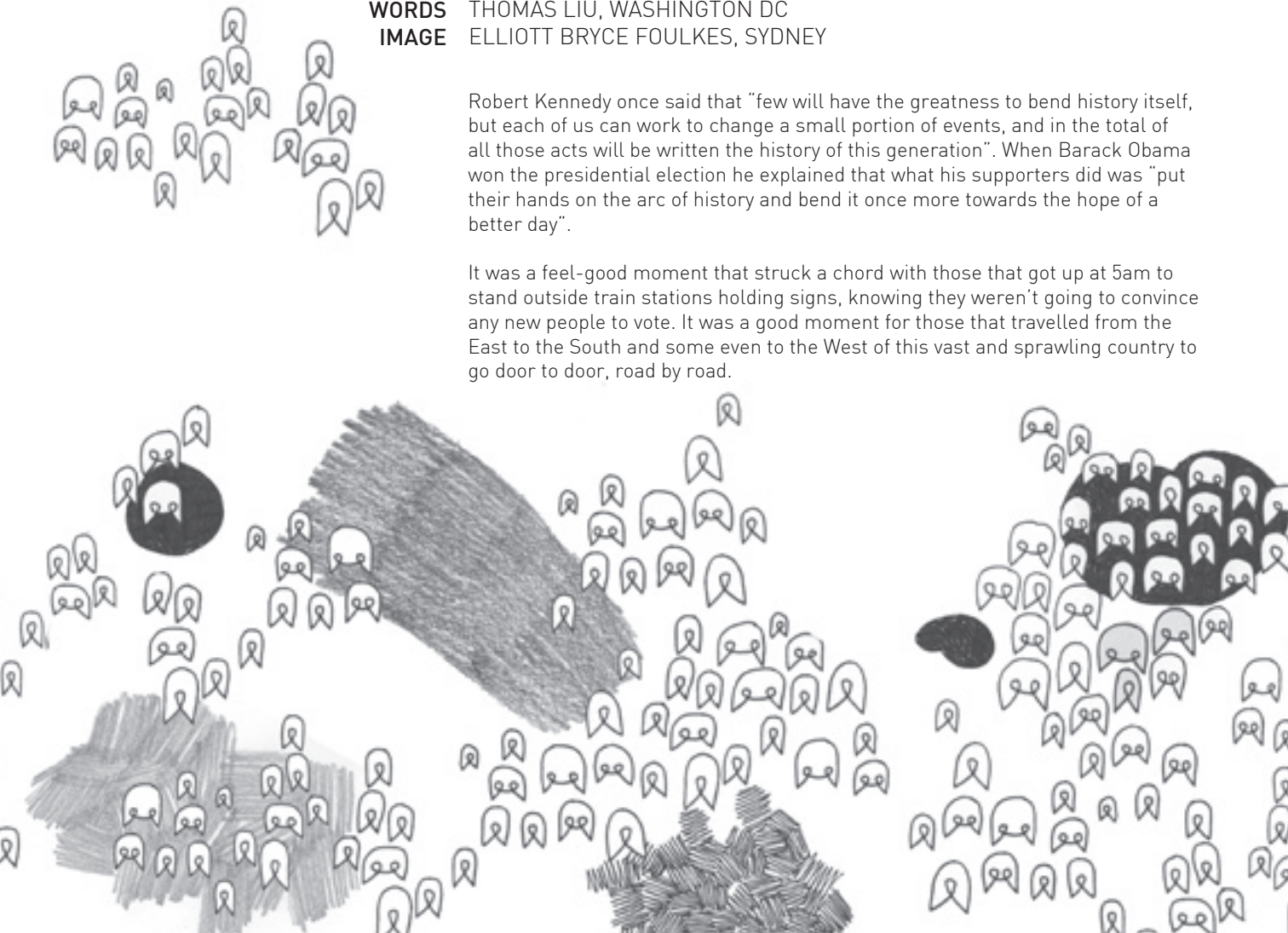
THE NIGHT OBAMA WAS ELECTED

*Our man in Washington DC reports on his experiences
volunteering for the Obama campaign.*

WORDS THOMAS LIU, WASHINGTON DC
IMAGE ELLIOTT BRYCE FOULKES, SYDNEY

Robert Kennedy once said that “few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation”. When Barack Obama won the presidential election he explained that what his supporters did was “put their hands on the arc of history and bend it once more towards the hope of a better day”.

It was a feel-good moment that struck a chord with those that got up at 5am to stand outside train stations holding signs, knowing they weren’t going to convince any new people to vote. It was a good moment for those that travelled from the East to the South and some even to the West of this vast and sprawling country to go door to door, road by road.



THE CAMPAIGN

The work was not glamorous nor did it feel terribly rewarding at the time but somehow the man at the centre of it all managed to convince us that it really was our victory. It really was “Yes, we can”.

For my part I will remember joining the campaign in the last weeks for their final push in Virginia. Far from the image I had of energetic volunteers bouncing from one voter to the next the reality I saw was of tired, sometimes hungover, college students dragging themselves out of bed on a Saturday to board a bus bound for the Virginian suburbs.

This ritual went on for about a month and each weekend seemed a little more futile than the last. More and more voters had made up their minds, the number of yard signs indicated the concreteness of their preferences. The dialogue with voters was also at a minimum. There were no passionate exchanges with undecided voters about the merits of the candidate’s health care plan or the irresponsibility of the choice of Sarah Palin. There was just none of it. Instead, the simple underlying message, which as an Australian I found exceedingly odd, was to just go vote.

Coming from a country where voting in elections is a given, the idea that the real battle was just getting bodies to voting booths will always remain puzzling to me. But there we were in suburban Virginia “getting out the vote”, not knowing if it would really make a difference.

A still more puzzling campaign tool was the phone banking. This was was not hundreds of volunteers on phones in a cramped office. Phone banking in this technological age involves dozens of people sitting in someone’s apartment pulling phone numbers of potential voters off the campaign website and cold-calling one after another.

Unable to rid myself of my still-Australian accent or assume a convincing enough American one the experience for me was a window into American life. I soon became well acquainted with the famed Southern Charm as well as the phrase “honey, I can’t understand whatchu sayin”.

ELECTION NIGHT

Election Night snuck up on everyone very quickly. Though the polls showed handsome leads for Obama going in, the lingering cynicism and pessimism and other-negative-isms created a tense atmosphere of wait and see.

The Georgetown University College Democrats had taken over a public lounge on campus to watch the returns and though the result of the election would not be known until at least 11:00pm Eastern Time, people began streaming in around 5:00pm. Academically, it wasn’t a very productive day.

So the night began in earnest and though history will likely forget the profundity of this, I will remember the moment when Connecticut was the first state to be projected for Obama. It was a moment that came and passed quickly but in that instant it all suddenly felt real for the first time. I realised that whatever happens next would be forever frozen in the rock of reality.

What actually took place and the sequence in which it happened still took even some of the greatest optimists by surprise. With many in the audience remembering the grueling drama of the 2000 election no one would have been too surprised if the final election result dragged on. But it didn’t.

One after another the early polling states broke for Obama and then something happened that was truly really unexpected. Ohio went blue easily, then Pennsylvania, then Florida and finally Virginia. The same Virginia, to our south, that was on the receiving end of much of our attention and hope.

It meant much to see Virginia go from a state that went for Bush by 8 percent in 2004 to an Obama state by 6 percent for more than just the obvious reason of the time and effort we invested in campaigning there. For the college students watching the returns it also signified the changing tectonics of an America they will one day inherit.

Virginia was no longer just another part of the Republican South. Its own complex dichotomy between northern and southern Virginia reflected broader tensions and if demographics should become destiny, then these cosmopolitan college students would have much to look forward to.

But before we could look with confidence into the uncharted future we had to wait for 11:00pm. While everyone expected Obama to win handily in the West, the irrationality of superstition intruded, as it often does at times before great euphoria, to make everyone anxious about predicting or cursing the final result.



It all came down to 11:00pm and one state. An epic campaign that stretched from the icy roads of Iowa to the sunny beaches of South Carolina to the Joe-the-Plumber suburbs of Ohio would end in California. As soon as its polls closed at 11:00pm the state would be projected, with its 55 electoral votes, for Barack Obama. With the states already in the Obama column, the senator would edge past the magic number of 270 and become the President-elect of the United States.

When the hour came close the crowd's impatience was evident from the countdown that started at 59 minutes past. When "one" finally came around, time seemed to stop and restart and everybody was captured in the space between patience and frenzy. And once time stopped, the elated chanting began.

THE STORMING OF THE WHITE HOUSE

I soon became well acquainted with the famed Southern Charm as well as the phrase "*honey, I can't understand whatchu sayin.*"

Given the moment, chanting the old campaign slogans did not seem enough to capture the mood. So it was a relief when, just as the question of "what next" started to be asked, someone yelled, pointing in random directions, "to the White House!"

Empowered by a renewed belief in the possible and the confidence that comes with that, the crowd of Georgetown students drifted from the lounge to the streets. We were soon joined by throngs of residents from the city. It was particularly moving to see the pride and joy that some of DC's 60%-plus African-American residents felt.

America has always seen itself as a country with an unparalleled ability to renew itself. To renew its founding and future dream. The election of a man who is black to serve as his country's Head of State in a city that for so long has been known as an 'Oreo' felt like much more than just an exercise in democracy. It was a rebuke of the cynicism felt by blacks and whites for so long. Those who believed that yesterday's wounds would only be fresher tomorrow.

The march on the White House that night which brought together on the same streets so many strands of Washington's unique society illustrated vividly that sense of renewal. The sense that America could be as good as its promise. That the dream Martin Luther King spoke about forty years ago may actually be realised in our lifetime.

What may unfortunately be forgotten when history recalls the night of the election is this very feeling that washed over the crowds. They will write about the election of the first black president. They will remember the victory speech at Grant Park. A speech in which he saluted his vanquished rival and congratulated his supporters for having the greatness to bend history itself.

For me, as a member of the crowd that marched on the White House, I will remember it for something else. I will remember that when a few people began to sing the national anthem everyone joined in. Only what was sung was not *The Star Spangled Banner*. I will forever remember standing outside the gates of the White House on the night of November 4, 2008, moved as I have never been before, singing with thousands of others, in one voice, *La Marseillaise*. Thinking that perhaps the arc of history has indeed been bent and now we come full circle.



NBAMA

CHANGE WE CAN'T BELIEVE IN

WORDS MATT KWAN

Barack Obama, recently inaugurated as the new President of the United States, has been hailed as a Christ-like saviour. Elected on a ridiculous and ultimately meaningless platform of 'change', he has swept most Americans and the inhabitants of the globe in general off their feet. However, he has gone backwards in time, hiring all manner of Clinton-era figures.

A quick search on Wikipedia shows that there are a significant number of Clinton hacks in key positions of the Obama administration, from CIA director Leon Panetta to Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner. The latter will help lead the country out of a recession caused in large part by Clinton's own policies. To top it all off, Obama has chosen Bill Clinton's wife, Hillary Clinton, to take the reins in leading the nation through all manner of foreign crises as the Secretary of State. So much for change!

All this got me thinking about whether other hype about Obama is really justified. For instance he is often trumpeted as some sort of icon for African-American people and much mention is made of his late Kenyan father. However after his parents' divorce he only saw his father once more. Little mention is made of the fact that he was raised by his (white) late mother and her parents. It is even rumoured that his late maternal grandfather was a relative of Dick Cheney.

Far from growing up in the ghetto, he benefited from attending Hawaii's finest private school, paid for by his late grandmother who evidently earned big bucks as a Bank of Hawaii vice-president. Jimmy Carter liked to talk about how poor he used to be, because he was. Whilst Barack Obama is black, much of his youth and childhood were no different to that of many white people.

People often say Obama will bring forth compassion because he is a nice bloke. Sure, he used to fight for civil rights during the brief period he worked as a lawyer, and once worked for a community organisation; but he also has a mean streak. Mercilessly attacking and mocking Sarah Palin for her inexperience was best left to his vice-president Joe Biden, a gaffe-prone individual who has plenty of experience making fun of people, whether intentional or not. But no, Obama got stuck in to her despite, at that time, being much less experienced than the Alaskan governor.

Compare this to his vanquished opponent, John McCain, who seems more like a genuinely nice man. He never resorted to making fun of Joe Biden. His smiles are awkward but genuine. Obama grins like he's posing for school photographs. McCain's concession speech was gallant – he spoke like a man of honour. Obama talks like a cult leader whipping up extremist fervour – listening to an Obama speech is an emotional assault.

Speaking of speeches, Obama is often compared favourably to his predecessor, George W. Bush. Whilst Bush was not the most eloquent of men, his verbal fumbles at least prevented him from being able to lie convincingly. This is in stark contrast to Bill Clinton, who could probably convince people to believe he was black if he wanted to. With Bush, we knew where he stood – he couldn't sound vague without appearing to be stupid. Obama, ever the good salesman; can and does sell vagueness as intelligence.

Obama is often compared to John F. Kennedy, a president who promised to save the world, but instead, neglected civil rights reform, tried to invade Cuba and escalated the Vietnam War. One can only hope that Obama will not repeat one of the least successful post-war presidencies.

One thing Obama does share with Kennedy, though, is a love of self-promotion. Obama loves publicity, loves it when people love him, and loves himself. The evidence is clear. He has written two books about himself – most people are content with one.

That makes him a dangerous man to lead the most powerful nation on earth. A president of the United States (or any other nation) must think of his country before his legacy Obama does the opposite.

America and the world already face dark times on the road ahead. A strong will and a clear head are necessary. Obama may be charismatic but his charm masks an inner cunning and unhealthy motives. He has the makings of a demagogue. Where other presidents, like George W. Bush, have made tough decisions with the knowledge they would be unpopular, Obama seems more likely to take the populist route. Time will tell whether the American people were right to entrust him with the responsibility of leadership, but the signs are ominous.



Coloured Shirts in History

BLACKSHIRTS

The Blackshirts were an Italian fascist group established in 1919. They were led by Benito Mussolini and consisted largely of disgruntled former soldiers turned paramilitaries. Besides killing their opponents, they also engaged in tactics such as gang rape and torture. They served as an inspiration for Adolf Hitler's Brownshirts in Nazi Germany.

BLUESHIRTS

The Blueshirts were some of the most enthusiastic supporters of Generalissimo Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War. These *Camisas Azules* were members of the fascist Falangist Party, and in their zealous enthusiasm for supporting the Franquist cause, they lost nearly half their pre-war members including their leader. Their enthusiasm extended to participation in the vengeful atrocities committed by Franco's troops.

GOLDSHIRTS

The Goldshirts, or *Camisas Doradas* as they were known, were a Mexican fascist group which achieved some prominence during the 1930s. Policies included the immediate deportation of all ethnic Chinese and Jews. The Goldshirts were also involved in violent confrontations with the Mexican Communist Party.

BROWNSHIRTS

Hitler's Brownshirts were perhaps the most notorious fascist paramilitary organisation of the twentieth century. In German they were known as the SA – the *Sturmabteilung* (stormtroopers). Victims included Jews, socialist groups and sympathisers, and their ability to control the streets by dominating through fear and sheer numbers was instrumental to the rise of the Nazis. Mottos included "Terror must be broken by terror" and "All opposition must be stamped to the ground."

**Due to lack of funding, this coloured shirt is depicted without colour.*

BRICK REPEAT PATTERN

HET WATTS



UNSW

Anthropology 101

WORDS KYLE MACGREGOR

You will find here a guide to the inhabitants of UNSW and its multifarious species. Let us observe why clichés are not only funny, but true.

THE FIRST YEAR

We were all once First Years. Don't ever forget that you too were once mere amoebas in the primordial pool of UNSW

How to identify them: The First Year is characterised by the 7 mile stare much like that of Vietnam Veterans - everything here traumatises them, especially the people (yes there are over 40,000 Students at UNSW not the 45 you had in Year 12).

Where you may encounter them: The Unibar, where they can be heard describing how they drank 8 beers at Schoolies and passed out and woke up with a tattoo of a panda on their arse.

Interaction: Like the US Defence Force, UNSW has a strict "don't ask don't tell" policy when it comes to dating first Years. They are impressionable easy pickings after all - why do you think so many people do first year courses as Arts electives?

THE MATURE AGED STUDENT

If you joined that group on Facebook called 'No one cares what you have to say or ask put your hand down and sit the fuck down' well this group was invented for Mature Aged Students and anyone who has come across them knows why.

How to Identify Them: This species, like most others, has a pack mentality. They can usually be found outside the Library doing shit like learning (pffft) and talking about their recent divorce.

Where you may encounter them: Every single lecture or tute you are required to attend but don't.

Interaction: Although it may sound strange, these people are the best to seek out when one is required to do tutorial presentations.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The best of UNSW abroad since UNSW Asia became insolvent.

How to Identify them: Loud annoying American accents accompanied by dumb questions and observations about Australia, kokeshi dolls, more expensive accessories than you could possibly dream of, suits, and a willingness to hold hands with people in public whose only link or shared experience is that they come from a similar geographic region of the Globe.

Where you may encounter them: Coogee, where they enjoy local interpretations of fine international foods such as Gelato.

Interaction: International Relations or Global Studies students may find interest in quizzing them about every single detail about what evil corporation either originates from or is raping and pillaging their home country.

ARTS STUDENTS

The cultural elite of UNSW, we speak in metaphor, smoke a lot of pot, read books that the Simpsons parodied back in 1994, and aspire to employment in the fast-paced, high-paying world of library maintenance.

How to Identify Us: Think Pseudo Indie, think cardigans, coffee, Malboro reds, imitation apathy, slothful appearance and toilet-wall slander composed in verse.

Where you may encounter us: Mathews building, Morven Brown Building, the bookstore and anywhere one can recite poetry to doves.

Interaction: What's your knowledge of the poetry of Wang Wei? Nil? Thought so....

ENGINEERING STUDENTS

They build bridges and solar panels and, in private, large sex toys.

How to identify them: Remember that great big muscley bloke you saw at the Big Day Out a few weeks ago wearing the Australian Flag as a Cape? That wasn't Batman - it was an Engineering Student from UNSW.

Where you may Encounter them: The Surf and Ski club, anywhere there are mind-altering substances and election-day handing out for the Liberal Party.

Interaction: Sobriety is a rarity; these kids are wild and should be treated as such. Think of that lion in the Zoo or the Crocodiles at the Reptile Park. Just remember - once you indulge in their behavior you become one of them....that or a Tafe Student.



WORDS LAURENA BASUTU
IMAGE MITCH SPIDER

In recent months British buses have hit the streets in the first ever national atheist advertising campaign sporting slogans such as "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life". This action, according to Ariane Sherine (comedienne and journalist for the Guardian in London), was designed to "counter religious advertising" which has been known to promise the non-Christian "all eternity in torment in hell", whilst being incinerated in "a lake of fire". A similar atheist campaign has spread to other countries and was proposed to advertising company 'APN Outdoor' by the Australian Atheist foundation (AAF). \$16000 was provided for the bus ads, various slogans were provided, but the idea was knocked back. No reason was cited for this refusal.

The APN's refusal to run the atheist ads throws many questions into the boxing ring that is the religion debate, and casts a shadow over the idea of free speech. As Australia does not have a comprehensive Human Rights and Opportunities Act, it must be up to society to decide whether APN superseded the public's right to offend and be offended by the ads. However, all Australian states do have anti vilification laws which prohibit public acts of vilification, verbal abuse and hatred, on a range of grounds including race and religion. These laws state that it is unlawful to, by a public act, to incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or group of persons on the ground of their race, homosexuality, HIV/AIDS status, transgender status, or religion. Therefore APN could argue that it was safe guarding itself from legal action by avoiding statements that may exhibit a form of serious contempt towards Christians and other formal religions.

For me this argument does not hold any credence, must society step all over freedom of speech because there is a chance that 'someone' might be offended? I believe that APN Outdoor

acted outside its bounds as a private organisation by censoring the ads. Why can't the Atheist Foundation of Australia be allowed the equal opportunity to espouse their own beliefs if buses in Adelaide can swish by bearing the sign "John 3:16" surreptitiously reminding the huddled masses that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". The same passenger being confronted with Christianity can therefore also be asked to "celebrate reason" and "sleep in on Sunday mornings". They should be allowed to know, as Richard Nicholls puts it, that "there is an alternative to religion that is rational and worthy of thought".

Although religion is an important part of the Australian landscape and its opinions cannot be ignored, atheism is also a significant part of the social terrain and

Riding in Buses with Heretics

THE ATHEIST BUS CAMPAIGN
GETS REJECTED IN AUSTRALIA

The same passenger
being confronted with
Christianity can
therefore also be
asked to “celebrate
reason” and “sleep in
on Sunday mornings”



perhaps they too would like the opportunity to proselytise. The AAF admits that it seeks to promote its own morals and identity by using the same sensationalist preaching that is practiced by the monotheistic. It, too, is trying to gather a flock, to herd the lost lambs onto the path of righteousness and lead them to the promised land (wherever that may be).

The AAF has a point. Maybe a little competition in spiritual advertising is a good thing. Surely the foundations of conventional religion are secure enough to withstand the questioning of inquiring minds. So imagine if the ads were to be run. How would the situation unfold? The ads are slapped on the sides of buses everywhere, and perhaps a massive backlash from religious leaders would ensue. At the same time, a certain sector of the public would respond in favour of the ads, both religious and atheist “because you have to respect others choices blah blah blah”. The divide in opinion would spark a renewed interest in scientific theories which either prove or disprove the existence of a God. Though the debate would be stimulating, it would end one of two ways. The public would either ignore it, or inundate the Independent Advertising Standards Bureau with complaints, and just like those ‘longer lasting sex’ ads the plug would be pulled. So perhaps APN Outdoor did us a service and saved us a lot of pointless hassle.

Beyond the issues of censorship and freedom of speech, these ads bring forward another issue – the idea that religions should be subject to critical examination like other ideas. Richard Robinson argues in ‘An Atheist’s Values’ that “Religion is gravely infected with intellectual dishonesty... [that] in religion it is particularly easy to escape notice, because of the common assumption that all honesty flows from religion.” But who cares about truth if no one is hurt? Why not join a church? Why not revel in the comfort and security that knowing that somewhere out there you have what Bertrand Russell calls in ‘Why I am Not a Christian’, “a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles.” Our beliefs offer us a safe haven, a place to go when we are afraid, and if going to Sunday mass, praying to Allah, practicing atheism or prostrating ourselves to our ancestors’ spirits offers a sense of personal security, then that’s okay.

In the end, the controversy surrounding the AAF’s ads has no significance, they will probably never see the light of day. The real issue here is freedom of speech and ultimately our right to choose. These are the basic rights of the individual. APN outdoor has stripped us of this opportunity and presented atheism as somehow illegitimate, and has therefore undermined the notion that everyone can believe in whoever or whatever they want, whenever they want to. ●

(Dave)
the
Agony
Aunt

Dave the Agony Aunt fields questions from students and celebrities alike, answering questions on life, love and getting by on campus.

Dear Auntie,

I'm just about to be inaugurated as the 44th President of the United States of America, and have no idea what to do with this mess of a country. It feels like just yesterday I was the Fresh Prince of Bel Air, getting up to no good, and now I have to deal with climate change, war in the Middle East and a recession in my 'hood. I know you usually only write advice for students, but please give me some hope to believe in!

- BARACK OBAMA, Struggling

Dear Barack

Suck it up. We were all Barracking for you in November, and now it's time to deliver. Being a good President is all about confidence and making your problems seem smaller than your successes. Forget about crazy scientific notions like "climate change" - pffft! Just grab a bucket of KFC, kick back with the new puppy you promised your kids (we all remember!) and just in case anyone doubts your abilities, change your answering machine recording to 'Yes We Can!'



Dear Auntie,

I'm an Asian-Australian who went to a private school in Sydney. My parents really want me to do well when I start my commerce degree here, but I'm worried I won't fit in. What can you do when you feel so different?

- LILY WONG, Anxious

Dear Lily,

It's hard not being like anyone else in your degree. Try to bond over common experiences; if you just put yourself out there you may find lots of people who would love to join you for an afternoon of Easyway followed by a late night of Dance Dance Revolution. Just enjoy your O-week, Lily!

Dear Auntie,

I'm in a conundrum. I've just started uni and my girlfriend is in high school. I am now that creepy guy hanging by the school gates, avoiding the lollipop lady as I wait to pick her up. Should I move up the age bracket, or can love break this boundary?

- STEVEN DAVIS, Perplexed

Dear Steven,

Steve, at the Tharunka office we have a computer that enables us to check the records of those who write to us. From what we see, you are a mature age student. Very mature. I know they say that if there's grass on the wicket it's time to play cricket. However, just like Pink Floyd, the only advice I feel comfortable giving is "leave them kids alone"! The HSC is a hard time for any schoolgirl and there is no place for you to go poking around in her assessment block.

Dear Auntie,

I'm about to start third year and have had both my assessment marks and interactions with other arts students plagued by my lack of political correctness. I don't want to start respecting people with different backgrounds and beliefs, but what else can I do?

- DARREN SMITH, Confused

Dear Darren,

Political correctness at uni is about as useful as Heath Ledger's alarm clock. The heteronormative, phallogenic, GLBT(IQ) and racial lines on which we arts students must tread are as confusing as they are contradictory. I would suggest that you frame your ignorance in self-referential meta-satire; maybe write something offensive for Tharunka to channel your energies? They'll let you get away with anything that way.

WHY NOT A *Men's* COLLECTIVE?

WORDS BART CUMMINGS
TYPE ELLIOTT BRYCE FOULKES

"There is clear and incontrovertible evidence that all through the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first, men have been suffering uniquely and severely."

STEVE BIDDULPH
Manhood

"...one writer has declared that it is masculine for a woman to be melancholy."

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT
A Vindication of the Rights of Woman

It's tempting, as a man, to retreat into the company of other men. Barry Williams, recent and controversial appointee as Australian Men's Health Ambassador, leads a retreat that has well and truly drawn up the bridges. Against women, against the world. He is President of the Lone Fathers' Association, whose main lobbying points include compulsory pre-nuptial agreements to protect husbands from the ravages of their greedy wives, as well as ongoing denial of the fact that domestic violence harms women more than men. Male solidarity has also consumed Ian Wilson, former President of the Australian Men's Party. In 2001 he gave an interview with this publication asserting that feminism is "evil" because it doesn't pay enough attention to men. We males aren't all that charitable when you put us together in one room.

All of this, the idea of men's rights and a men's movement, started long ago but got a shove of headway in 1991 when the American poet Robert Bly wrote *Iron John*, a call to arms for (mainly white heterosexual) men to rediscover pride in "male grandeur". Three years later his book was reinterpreted with infectious enthusiasm by Tasmanian family counsellor, now best-selling author, Steven Biddulph. The result, *Manhood*, invites me (white, straight, male) to consider myself a long-suffering victim of societal oppression; even worse, my victimhood has been callously ignored by a society hypnotised by the voices of the feminist movement. My deep masculinity has been suppressed, I've been made to feel ashamed of my gender, and I have lost touch with my inner Wild Man. This terrible injustice is hurting me as well as the people around me and it has to end, so the argument goes.

physical anger at a higher rate than women. Still, with such high indicators of emotional dysfunction among men, it's worth hearing a popular theory purporting to explain it all.

Biddulph's argument is that our culture pressures men to fit unsuitable moulds. In particular we are told to be protectors and providers, and therefore that our private emotional troubles are secondary in importance to the women and children we are meant to prioritise. So we feel isolated, and we put on tough guy masks to cover our secret pain. Not to play into Biddulph's hands here, but suck it up dude! What he describes is called adulthood – putting other people's needs before your own is part of growing up, and everybody of all genders does it, not just our dutiful male breadwinners.

Where he gets into interesting territory is in diagnosing men's emotional dysfunction as the product of father-hunger. He tells us that boys need love and attention from their fathers in order to develop self-esteem. Their mothers are not enough. Boys do not respect their mothers or female teachers in the same way that they respect men; they want to imitate men, and they won't respond to the discipline or disapproval of women. Without the discipline, guidance and approval of male role models and fathers, boys grow into insecure, angry, dysfunctional men.

Intuitively this theory resonates with me. Boys want to learn how to manage the delicate balance between impulse and restraint in a way that will encourage others to respect and accept them, and older men who have worked it out already are the best to teach them the modes, manners and behaviours that will achieve that.

The attraction of this is real; but its suitability is dubious. Why should role models for young men be exclusively male? There is no good reason to worry about boys who happen to want to imitate the women in their lives whom they respect. The name for Biddulph's theory is prejudice. And it has been mythologised by the story-tellers in our culture to the point where we take it as intuitively true without question: popular male novelists do it (Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections*) as well as female (E. Annie Proulx, *The Shipping News*). If it weren't for a last-minute reconciliation with his father, Luke Skywalker would have been converted to the Dark Side. Repetition, repetition, repetition...does not make it true. Men troubled by a poor relationship with their father aren't entitled to blame their misbehaviour on father-hunger; and it is inadvisable to attempt to recover self-esteem by turning away from women and seeking out older men for guidance and comfort. Most of the older men I know have pretty bad advice anyway.

Let's not, however, be unfair to Biddulph; it's true that good fathers are good. And at some points Biddulph's cheerful generalizations sharpen into something approaching real psychological insight: particularly on the question of male sexuality he has hit the nail on the head. In our collective opinions, the innate inclination of all men is to sexually objectify women; men are untrustworthy because they

The trouble with *Manhood* is not that it exaggerates male suffering. The real problem is that celebrating male grandeur is not a solution – it is just frightening. The "Wild Man" should most certainly be kept in his cage. Discovering one's "deep masculinity" may work for some men, but not everyone can twist a beer top off with his forearm. Many men would rather discover their natural selves without needing to meet some laughable checklist of masculine qualities. And most importantly of all, *Manhood*, the men's movement, and gender based movements in general always carry the inbuilt social cost of dividing the sexes against one another. Feminism is stalling and the men's movement is an embarrassing rabble of bigots; we should be moving away from gender divisions altogether.

But let's return to *Manhood*, my own first encounter with the men's movement. Biddulph tells us that men are suffering. And he is right – in 2005, suicide accounted for the deaths of 20% of Australian men between the ages of 20-34; for every man who goes ahead with the deed there must be thousands suffering in silence. Overall, men have committed suicide at roughly four times the rate of women since at least 1995. In 2008, men comprised a staggering 93% of our national prison population. And men are quite poor at relationships – of all divorce applications in 2007, the wife initiated the split by a ratio of roughly three to two. But are we suffering uniquely? No, Steven – the suicide *attempt* rate shows that women are just as unhappy as men but tend to use less fatal methods (wrist-slashing is interrupted quite frequently); women outstrip men by 5% in reported cases of affective disorder (depression, anxiety, etc.). The difference seems to be that men, possibly out of a keener sense of disappointed entitlement, react to the obstacles of life with

just want to sleep with you. On top of that insult, it is said that men are so easy to please. Women are complex sexual creatures - but men? They learn at high school camp how to reach orgasm in 30 seconds; don't worry about them. So they say.

No doubt there are men who would laugh reading this. Men whose heroes include Jean Claude Van Damme and Dr. Sir Les Patterson. But let's go beyond the macho minority: there are many adequately libidinous men who are nevertheless able to switch off their rapacity in order to treat others with respect. At any rate, women are no more immune to flickers of inappropriate desire than are men. And on the question of sexual expression, it may strike some as surprising to hear this but not every ejaculation signifies an orgasm. Treating male sexuality as just as diverse between individuals as it is for women, and just as complicated, would be a mature first step toward erasing the need for books like Biddulph's.

It pays to be careful about assigning too much importance to characteristics labeled "male". The "wild man" and "deep masculinity" theories seem powerful, but under close inspection fall away like a loose pair of pants. What else are they built upon if not that old bugbear - the popular belief that men and women are separated by innate, inevitable personality differences? Do these differences exist? Science has uncovered some minor statistical tendencies across large populations. But nothing that can help us predict the behaviour of the individual men and women in our lives. Biddulph, when I combed through his book for a definition of what is masculine, comes up with this: "It follows no stereotypes, and is different for each man. Yet it still relates to the core aspects of being male - the chemistry, the nature and the complementarity to women that is inbuilt in being male in every cell of your body." Men and women are "complementary", like pieces of Lego. God forbid if you don't happen to fit.

I'd rather not pursue this old question because the science isn't conclusive yet and the assertions are a bit tired now. But it's intriguing that so many men and women remain so instinctively attracted to the idea of innate difference. Secure identities, secure place - discovering your own natural identity is pretty hard work, and involves a lot of trial and error along the way. The "differences" theory gives us ready-made boxes to fit into. Maybe some of us are just a bit lazy. Or afraid of what we would find.

But this doesn't mean that men should become more "feminine", a popular but misguided idea; it strikes me as odd to exchange one gender stereotype for a sort of belated mixture of two. Here is a realization I've come to recently: gender isn't or shouldn't really be that big a deal to our identities. It brings in its train a cluster of traditional roles and manners which an individual can happily customize, but that's a cultural matter. Biologically, it amounts to a few physical differences of the same significance as whether you are an innie or an outie. That might be incredibly important to some (perhaps haters of navel lint) but not to most and not to me. If I weren't male I reckon I'd be pretty much the same person.

Should we have exclusive male groups? They just seem to foster hatred and division. The Australian Men's Party. The Lone Father's Association. Should there be a men's collective? Gathered in large woman-less groups, rampaging men brawl and smash glass in public on Australia Day, every year. Let's not release the wild man, please. So what about the women's collective? I think it's a retreat and a resignation from the battle, to be honest. It too is isolationist. Time to face the reality that our enemy isn't the other gender, it's the tacitness of the assumptions that construct gender in the first place. ■

HYPOTHETICALLY SPEAKING

A gynaecologist becomes sexually aroused while performing pap smears. He has never molested anyone and there is no prospect of him doing so in the future. The quality of his work does not suffer and his patients are completely unaware. Has he done anything wrong, and should he be censured?

Jessica Bommer

It's easy to get emotional about this kind of thing – hands up anyone who isn't squeaming! This scenario has the potential to elicit either moral outrage or passionate libertarian chest-beating. It does so by considering relationships of power and subordination: both the professional-client relationship, and the state's control over the citizen.

So let's approach it rationally. The issue can be separated into two principal elements: the morality of the gynaecologist's arousal and the question of whether he/she should be censured.

MORALITY VS RIGHTS

Firstly, take the idea of human rights. The gynaecologist's and patient's rights are in conflict. The gynaecologist has a right to behave in ways that do not directly harm others. The patient has an inherent right to dignity of the person (see Article 1, 5 in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The gynaecologist violates this right by sexually exploiting the patient. Her lack of awareness is inconsequential as it is the behaviour of the gynaecologist that is in question.

Furthermore, the doctor-patient relationship is recognised to be one in which specific rights and obligations arise. The vulnerable party (the patient) relies on the controlling party (the gynaecologist) to derive from the exchange only those rights that the patient has agreed to - the right to apply his clinical skills, and payment for professional services. It's doubtful that the patient has agreed to provide her body as a source of arousal, and she would likely be traumatised if she knew.

We expect more from professionals. Those who enjoy relative power are expected to conduct themselves with integrity and to set a moral example. Their work has an ethical component. We have a right to expect that they refrain from abusing their status for personal gain, be it financial, emotional, or sexual. To enjoy sexual gratification at the expense of a client who is dependent on one's professional integrity is morally wrong.

However, as a citizen of the state the gynecologist expects that certain freedoms be protected. This includes the freedom to behave in any way that is not contrary to the law.

CENSURE – THE LEGAL QUESTION

We regard the legal system as an institutionalised mechanism of morality, and the law tends to be the first port of call in questions of moral censure. However, the law is limited in its ability to punish inappropriate thoughts and feelings.

In the vast majority of offences, an action must have been executed before it can be punished. Thoughts in themselves cannot constitute a crime. Conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism is one exception because of the gravity of damage that may occur, but the gynaecologist case does not seem to cross that threshold.

So the true difficulty lies in censuring the gynaecologist's behaviour without infringing disproportionately on his freedom to think and feel.

CENSURE - PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

Controlling moral discrepancies doesn't have to be a legal issue. It's often possible to institutionalise various disincentives and barriers to entry for those likely to harm the integrity of their profession.

We can require those seeking high responsibility professional positions to undergo psychological testing. We can maintain workplace codes of conduct to encourage behavioural self-censure. The costs of undertaking these precautions would not be disproportionate to the potential damage were it to go uncensored.

In the absence of these checks and balances, the ideal form of censure would be for the gynaecologist to self-censure by removing himself from the situation - perhaps by investing in a new specialisation, or seeking psychiatric help.

Often we are cautious to judge behaviour as morally repugnant if we feel it cannot be controlled – it leaves us feeling exposed. Nobody wants a return to a puritanical “dark age” where sexual desire is frowned upon and denied. But neither is it acceptable for society to cultivate a perversion in which the powerful use and exploit their subordinates for hidden sexual agendas.

And besides, I know you squeamed...

Anh Tran Nam

(Here's hoping the medical faculty won't de-enroll me...)

Before I go on to defend the gynae's kinky tastes, let's lay down the rules. The hypothetical reads "there is no prospect" of the gynae molesting any patient in the future and that the "quality of his work does not suffer". To me, this means that there is a zero probability that the gynae will commit some form of sexual assault on a patient or non-patient, and that the gynae's care remains professional – he performs the same number of pap smears for the same duration and at the same degree of effectiveness as he would if he did not experience any sexual gratification from the act.

Basically, what I've described above is that the gynae's sexual preferences, whilst excited through his line of work, ultimately do not affect the way the gynae performs his job as far as the patient is concerned. I would argue that there is little harm being caused in this scenario – as long as the doctor provides the care described above, he is respecting the bodily integrity of the patient and the pap smear can't really be thought of as a non-consensual sexual act – the primary aim is a medical test, and the sexual gratification is incidental.

The invasiveness of a pap smear can confuse the ethical question, so let's use a slightly modified hypothetical – I go to a newsagent every day to buy a newspaper, and the guy behind the counter experiences sexual arousal from selling me the newspaper, but he keeps this sexual feeling private and does not overtly direct any sexual energy towards me.

First, although I would prefer to know, it is the right of the newsagent to have whatever sexual preferences he has and not to disclose them as long as he does his job professionally. It's just none of my business what gets him off, as long as I get my newspaper just like I would from anyone else and don't experience any physical or emotional harm. Sure, I like most people, would like control over and knowledge of who is sexually aroused by me and in what circumstances, but this is hardly a right – just a preference.

Secondly, if these preferences were somehow revealed to a superior, I think it would be wrong to allocate the newsagent to a different job or to fire him, effectively punishing him for

a sexual preference that ultimately doesn't interfere with the performance of his job.

Third, even in terms of a more virtue ethics-type standpoint, there's not much of a case to be made that the secret sexual experience of the newspaper guy is a malicious one. I think most would agree that sexual preference is not the result of conscious decision by an individual. People do not have control over a complex interplay of environmental and cultural factors that result in them being attracted to tall guys, large breasts, lead guitarists, people of the same gender, cheating wives, or feet – it just is and we don't ask for it.

Having said all of that, the way this hypothetical translates in real life is a lot more problematic when you remove the certainty of these conditions – in real life, there is never a zero probability of an individual refraining from something like sexual assault and it is impossible to monitor whether the gynae's practices remain unaffected by his sexual arousal.

(Here's the bit where the med faculty re-enrolls me).

I think there are many situations where we can afford to give people the benefit of the doubt if they have committed not to let their sexual preferences interfere with their work – the newsagent scenario above, for example. Things get a lot trickier when we deal with professional relationships where there are distinct power imbalances. Patients rarely have the same medical training that their doctors do, and so they trust their doctors to examine their bodies in appropriate ways.

Although it offends the ideal of "innocent until proven guilty", I would argue that these high-risk situations warrant us to make the trade off: in order to protect safety of the vulnerable (students, patients), we should somewhat limit the job options of individual teachers and doctors who are at an increased risk of committing sexual assault.

Hypothetical gynae who gets off on pap smears but remains professional – go for it! Gynaes in real life who get off on pap smears – a call to the AMA!

A gynaecologist becomes sexually aroused while performing pap smears. He has never molested anyone and there is no prospect of him doing so in the future. The quality of his work does not suffer and his patients are completely unaware. Has he done anything wrong, and should he be censured?

SPEAKING HYPOTHETICALLY



Dr Lurk

Dear Dr Lurk,

My husband and I love each other very much, and we have decided to have a child this year. I am embarrassed to say it, but every time we go to make love he's just not in the mood. He seems distant these days. He doesn't laugh like he used to at his favourite show on TV, *Deal Or No Deal*. He even said the other day that he could see why people commit suicide. I think he might be suffering from clinical depression. Can you give me some advice?

SUSANNE

Dear Susanne,

The reason there's no baby-gravy on offer, my dear, is that your husband has a textbook case of pornography addiction.

Been wondering where all the Kleenex has gone? It's not depression, heaven forbid! If he looks sad, it's because his windows media player is slow. How can he laugh at the television when he is stifling the paroxysms of self-abuse, every time you leave the room?

What you need to do is collect all the pornography you can find, confiscate it, and bring it to me for urgent examination. If you can't find any pornography, then he has hidden it well. You should then buy some from the local newsagency where he shops. Bring it to me, and I will use it to formulate my professional psychoanalysis.

After that, get him to come in and see me in the office. Say that he's overdue for his weekly testicle examination. I will commence treatment promptly.

In sincerity

Dr Gordon Lurk, Professional Doctor

Doctor,

I recently shaved my eyebrows for a chess club fundraiser and have become increasingly concerned. It has been two weeks now and my eyebrows have not grown back. On hot days, sheets of perspiration flow uninterrupted down my forehead into my eyeballs. What can I do?

PETER, B Engineering

Dear Peter,

Thank you for consulting me with this legitimate medical condition.

Every year around O-week I treat many shaven brows, and find that they tend to grow back coarser and more stubborn than ever. Your case is a fascinating exception.

Young man, I suspect that your brow has failed to thrive for one reason and one reason only. And I have a single question that will surely clinch the diagnosis: do you ride a bicycle? I would bet my bottom dollar, better yet, I would bet my bottom, that you DO indeed ride a bicycle. How do I know, you ask? Well, I suspect that your balding brow is related to hair loss experienced by young men all over campus, in another part of the anatomy: the legs. And when you ask these men: "Young man, what has become of the hair on your legs", their answer is always: "Oh...I'm a cyclist".

Peter, I am a scientist and I will now explain why you've lost your brow, and why these other young men have lost their masculinity. We all know that the bicycle seat is an unforgiving taskmaster. What we don't know is that on long rides the seat can become so far wedged into the anus that it begins to massage the prostate gland. This massage releases the toxic chemical testosterone, which we now know is the mortal enemy of the hair follicle. Why else would I need a comb-over? And that is why cyclists experience this mysterious balding disease. The cure? 6 months of refraining from inserting anything into the prostate region, except under strict supervision in my private doctor's office.

Yours in sincerity,

Dr Lurk

BELLAMY'S BAROMETER

JESS BELLAMY

The Barometer is back for another year because The Bellamy is back for another year, spending more time studying my very lucrative Arts degree, just waiting to nose my way into hundreds of waiting jobs in the even more lucrative "19th and 20th Century Irish Literature" Industry. Until I'm head-hunted though, here for your entertainment and disgust is a regular installment of Bellamy's Barometer.

I look forward to another year of discussing similar topics of grave interest; things with psychological and political and philosophical resonance, things like Lindsay Lohan's new eating disorder, nougat, and why I hate public transport.

HOT

Melted cheese

My housemate did something really nice the other day. We were cleaning the house in preparation for our TOTALLY ROCKIN' OUT AUSTRALIA DAY PARTY(!!!1!) and my other flatmate who is diabetic needed to stop and eat something to prevent passing out, whereas I needed to stop and eat something to prevent turning into Hungry Princess Bitchface. So my kind anonymous housemate, let's just call her Waroline Callace, made us a plate of 'quick nachos', also known as a bowl of guacamole and some corn chips with melted cheese on them. Yeah I know, it was delish.

Now I don't know about you guys, but I would eat grilled cheese on cardboard if I ran out of bread, crackers, amusingly-sized melba toast or rice thingymajigs. I have an embarrassing obsession with the stuff. Now that I'm old and musty, cheese has replaced shortbread biscuits as the sort of food my Mum used to need to hide from me as a kid if she didn't want me to sit there, eating them solidly until I had to lie down and sob for the next four hours. I still feel a repressed pang of longing whenever I see a packet of Glengarry shortbread. Rest assured that the week I spent in Scotland over New Years was a very challenging and delicious experience.

Anyway, these nachos were amazing and then when we finished eating the corn chips, we ate the little globs

of melted cheese that had dripped all over the plate, like piggy little dishwashers. And that just set the scene for a fun and patriotic Australia Day of eating, drinking and soaking in our own filth, to be outlined further below.

NOT

Falling asleep in the daytime while drunk

And here I shall continue on my little odyssey, quickly becoming quite a blatant attempt to basically tell you what I did on the weekend. We had our Australia Day party on Australia Day and decided to kick it off at noon so that everyone would be out of there by dinnertime and we could sober up for work the next day.

Things were going to plan. People got drunk by 2pm and were gradually being trundled home by their loved ones. Those of us who lived there, instead of being good hosts, had taken residence in one of two blow-up pools where we mixed two excellent things - glass and bare feet - by drinking lots of alcohol while stewing in increasingly champagne-filled water. Slowly, one by one, we staggered out, to have drunken showers and then "totally just lie down for ten minutes". And then suddenly, we were asleep in Waroline's room, totally dead to the world for two hours of potential partytime, and all because we were drunk and stupid and maybe had exerted ourselves too much from the continuous lifting of mugs

of cider up to our mouth and drinking from them.

And here is where our cunning plan had failed. Daytime drinking, for all you impressionable first years, is an AMAZING thing to do if you stay awake for the gradual sobering process, allow yourself to be hungover between the sleeping hours of midnight and morning, and then wake up, fresh as a daisy, unaware of the World War III you liver has been subjected to overnight.

We had broken two of the cardinal rules of life:

Thou shalt not nap after 6pm if thou dost not want to feel like crap when thou wakest

Thou especially shalt not do this if thou art drunk to start with, thou dumbass.

We woke up hungry, sober and smack bang in the middle of a raging hangover. It was awful; we sat in front of the TV watching the people who didn't sleep playing Wii (surprisingly un-fun), ate our body weight in pizza and paddlepops and then lay prostrate on the couch, groaning for the next two hours.

It was a hard, cold process and it will stay with me as a guide for even longer than this damn Australian flag 'temporary' tattoo that I stuck on my leg and now can't seem to scrub off. Learn well, first years. Let my ongoing grievous mistakes be your opportunity for a life lesson.



WORDS STACEY ELLA
IMAGE ELLIOTT BRYCE FOULKES

CLEAVAGE WITH CLOUT

Objectification or empowerment really depends on the situation. When a woman purposely uses her sexuality with the knowledge of what she is doing then, yes, it can be empowering.

Picture the scene. Julia Gillard attends a press conference to announce new industrial relations reforms. She is wearing patent leather five inch stilettos and has enough décolletage on display to rival any swimsuit model. The outfit certainly draws attention, but who takes notice of the reforms? This is, of course, a hypothetical. Gillard is a professional who would no more appear in such an outfit than the Prime Minister. Such an overt display of sexuality would not only be inappropriate in context, but would also lead to the further sexual objectification of Gillard. I say 'further' because she has already been categorised based on her appearance.

There are concerns in the media that our over-sexualised Western society has falsely packaged objectification as empowerment. Women who dress in a sexually provocative manner are accused of degrading rather than empowering themselves. I can't help but wonder if those who hold such views are aware that self-objectification actually refers to "a preoccupation with others' perspectives of one's body". Do they recognize that the difference between self-objectification and self-empowerment is entirely internal?

Using our sexuality is entertaining and empowering. A night out wouldn't be quite as fun without the power to jump queues and enter clubs free of charge and, once inside, extract free drinks; a flirtatious smile can take you a long way. Whether it amounts to objectification or empowerment really depends on the situation. When a woman purposely uses her sexuality with the knowledge of what she is doing then, yes, it is empowering.

The term 'objectification' has experienced something of a revival in recent years. In *Female Chauvinist Pigs* Ariel Levy describes the rise of 'raunch culture': "All the things that feminism once reviled are currently being embraced

by young women as supposed symbols of personal empowerment and sexual liberation...bimbos are back." She argues that the freedom to be provocative or promiscuous is not freedom enough, and that women who exploit their sexuality to such a degree do so from a perspective more chauvinistic than men have ever been.

Levy's argument is persuasive to an extent. But she limits herself to people and incidents that illustrate her theory, without discussing individuals who have escaped this reductive dichotomy. Madonna rates only a minor mention – a damaging omission, considering that she mesmerised a generation of young women by combining sexuality with real-world power. How is wearing hot pants demeaning? How does dressing or acting in a sexually provocative manner diminish a woman's intelligence?

Sexual power is not necessarily oppressive and certainly does not diminish intellectual capacity. Many feminists regard 'raunch culture' as deliberately ironic and yes, even empowering. UNSW's Professor Catharine Lumby thinks it's simplistic to assume that all raunch culture replicates oppressive stereotypes, arguing instead that different women express their sexuality in different ways. "What bothers me about Ariel Levy is it's as though she is suggesting everything has become worse. But women now have more diversity and choice in how they choose to represent their sexuality than ever before."

Catharine Lumby was invited to sit on a panel celebrating the Sydney launch of Levy's book but declined on the grounds that the arguments about sexual objectification do not correspond with her own experience and perception. "I am a feminist who thinks there is a pleasure in voyeurism, which isn't just a male pleasure... there are women who want to exhibit themselves and who want to be watched."

Levy is not the first to explore these themes, and there are echoes of radical feminist Andrea Dworkin in her writing, one of whose arguments is that women need male approval to survive within their own skins, which they solicit through sex. Given the vast amount of time, energy and disposable income so many women invest in achieving and maintaining sexual attractiveness, Dworkin does have a point – but why is this necessarily directed towards men? A large part of this display of sexuality is self expression that has little to do with male approval.

Women in the twenty-first century continue to deal with the problem of how far they can go in displaying or expressing their sexuality. Wanting to feel feminine or sexually empowered is contentious, and is seen as 'selling out' to some sort of bimbo stereotype. But why should a woman have to choose between using her intelligence and expressing her sexuality? The problem is not displays of overt sexuality, but the narrow and outdated perspective from which society continues to view women. ■

Physics

The central debate in Physics is whether Sir Isaac Newton or Albert Einstein's theories about the universe are correct. Albert Einstein's *Theory of Relativity* has remained popular due to its inclusive nature, although critics complain that it is unable to distinguish right from wrong. This is probably why he invented the atom bomb.

Famously, Newton **conceived of the earth as a falling apple**. Although this idea was later discredited, it is likely that you will experiment on apples in early classes in your course as a tribute to this original thinker.

Law

The story of Australian Federation is surprisingly little known. This is because the Australian nation was founded by **direct commandment from God** and not by a war. Henry Parkes, the Father of Federation, climbed Mount Kosciuszko in 1901 where he was to receive the Australian Constitution on a tablet from God. He then carved his initials in a tree. These carvings remain an important source of constitutional authority to this day.

Shortly, Australians will enjoy a **charter of rights** delivered in exactly the same manner.

English

Australia is unique among English-speaking countries in having no tradition of English Literature. Henry Lawson tried to start one in the late 1800s but before he could he was **expelled from the country for chucking**. Nonetheless, numerous great writers have visited these shores, including Robert Louis Stevenson and Helen Demidenko.

Engineering

The major breakthrough in the history of Engineering that you need to know about was the construction of the **Eiffel Tower**. No-one had ever thought of using iron as a building material before Gustave Eiffel. The story of Eiffel is even more inspirational because Gustave came from humble origins. An odorous recluse, after the French tradition, he was known to spend his time working for the poor and tending to his sick cousin. It was probably in the course of the attention he paid to his cousin that he contracted malaria himself. The entire Eiffel Tower was built by Eiffel, single-handedly, in a malarial fit.

GUIDE FOR COMMENCING STUDENTS

USEFUL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
FOR YOUR COURSE

TOM BOWES

Biology

Modern Biology would not be what it is today if a great debate held in 1860 had gone the other way. The debate pitted Charles Darwin – a little known maverick at the time against the Oxford Bishop ‘Soapy’ Sam Wilberforce.

Darwin’s perverse ideas about the species seem strange to us now, but they struck a chord among English countryfolk who knew little of the world outside their villages and indeed in many cases did not possess a passport.

While Darwin’s name lives on among Pagan-identifying scientists and revivalist cults, it is Wilberforce whose contribution to modern science and ethics is greatly celebrated. It is for this reason that the citizens of Sydney decided to name a pleasant new Hawkesbury settlement after him in 1810.

Commerce

You will soon learn in commerce that people from the period between the two world wars¹ were idiots. They called the First World War ‘The Great War’ and believed that it was the ‘War To End All Wars’. Before the words had even left their lips, of course, Europe was **conflagrating** again. They made exactly the same mistake with the ‘Great Depression’. Now, it is easy to see that the so-called Great Depression was perfectly ordinary and predictable; depressions such as these come about every 80 years exactly (this is known as the **economic cycle**).

History

Key Dates in History

1914 – Australian settlers discover Turkey. Turkey is declared *terra nullius* because it has no organised system of Government.

Other names that Australians considered for the land now known as Turkey:
Galah, Dingbat, Drongo, Arseclown, Goose, Silly-Bugger.

1975

This is the date where it is said that Australia really became a nation. A great **monarchist** by the name of Sir John Kerr and a great **republican** named – somewhat improbably – Edward Gough Whitlam engaged in an elaborate ‘race to the Queen.’

1983

In this year the 1975 victory of EG Whitlam was reinforced by a sailboat called *Australia II* which crushed an insurrection by American radicals on board the yacht *Liberty*.



PRESIDENT

Charishma Kaliyanda

Greetings to all new and returning UNSW students – welcome to the start of a new University year! If this is your first taste of university, it won't take you long to discover the benefits of the diverse community that UNSW has to offer. The complete freedom of uni life means you're not stuck to a rigid schedule and, for me, making the best use of your time means being as involved in the university community as possible!

The downside of having so much freedom is that negotiating the ins and outs of university is mostly left to you – which is where your Student Representative Council comes in. The SRC seeks to protect and foster the interests of students at UNSW. We represent all UNSW students and occupy Level 1 East of the Blockhouse.

It can be easy to improve the world, in small ways or large, if we work together, are organised and find our common goals. Your Student Representative Council is where the action is – so come and visit our stalls during O-Week to find out what we're up to!

WELFARE OFFICER

Matthew Ward

The Welfare Department runs campaigns on welfare within the University, the government and the greater community. This year the Welfare Department will be running a Free Breakfast on Library Lawn 9-11 on Wednesday mornings, as well as taking part in a national campaign for better student income

support which is currently set at 40% below the poverty line, and responding to recommendations made in the Bradley Review of Higher Education.

Perhaps most exciting of all is the soon to be opened Welfare Room. If you have no money for lunch it has food, if you don't own an iron or forgot to iron your work shirt this morning we have one of those too. Got an interview and need a suit? Come in and borrow one. It's also one of the few places on campus with a microwave.

We have collective meetings on Wednesday afternoon in the Blockhouse from 3-4pm.

INDIGENOUS STUDENT OFFICER

Warren Roberts

It is now another year at UNSW, and if it's your first year I welcome you to the best university in Australia. This year is going to be full of excitement, of games, discussions, and entertainment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture. This year there will be more performances of Indigenous Culture at the Library Lawn, the Round House, and the UniBar Beer Garden. Performances of many genres from: Hip Hop, Country, A Cappella, Traditional, and much more! There will be also some guest speakers from local and wider Indigenous communities from around Australia. And those of you who want to learn more about Indigenous Culture can attend the YARN Collective on Tuesdays at 5-6pm meetings at the stairs in the Round House. The YARN Collective provides an opportunity for students to ask questions of anything about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and it's also a great way to make new friends. Hope to see you there!

POSTGRADUATE OFFICER

Georgie Smith

Hi '09 Postgrads! This will be my last year here as I finish my Masters, so it's my final chance to meet as many of you as possible ;)

Joining me this year in representing postgrads are two new PG Representatives, Craig Johnson and Anh Pham. These guys are both passionate and committed to helping make UNSW the best place to study your masters or PhD. Craig is doing his research masters and Pham is doing his PhD. So between the 3 of us, we understand the range of postgrad experiences pretty well!

This year the PG Department will be continuing last year's successful Movie Nights (Wednesdays in odd-numbered weeks, 6pm start, PG Lounge, ground floor Blockhouse). We'll also be organising other social and educational events throughout the year, so keep an eye on this space.
postgrad@arc.unsw.edu.au.

STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES OFFICER

Marita Morgan

Studying at university is a challenging experience for anyone, but can be even more challenging for those of us with a disability. I know that the more resources available the more accessible and equitable university life can be.

As your representative I can advocate on your behalf, liaise with university administration, the government and the wider community. But I rely on your

participation and contact with us! So if you want to have your say about disability issues on campus, and explore ways to make studying more equitable then come along to a collective meeting or get online to join our e-list! Come by and check out the O-Week stall and get a copy of our handbook with tips on how to survive at university with a disability and find out what events/campaigns will be happening this year.

The only way we can improve and meet the challenges that confront us at university is by you getting involved! Together we can make UNSW a more disabled friendly campus.

WOMEN'S OFFICERS

Lucy Geddes & Jody Stith Earles

Greetings! Please come by our O-Week stall, pick up some woman-specific information, have a chat, and maybe even a bite to eat.

March is a particularly exciting month for us. There's a breakfast hosted by UNIFEM Australia on 6th March, and a rally on the 7th to celebrate International Women's Day. Later on, there's the Network of Women Students of Australia (NOWSA) Training Camp.

The Women's Department and Women's Collective are dedicated to the empowerment of the women of UNSW and we address a wide range of issues including (but not limited to) sexism, gender inequality, and discrimination on campus.

The Women's Room is a safe space, open to all female identifying people. We have a wide selection of literature and a cosy atmosphere in which you can just chill out and relax. The room is open from 9-5 Monday to Friday.

QUEER/GLBT OFFICERS

Vicki, Jocelyn & Rory

Heya all! We're the Queer Officers (or Quofficers) for 2009. We're here to advocate for and look out for all queer students at UNSW. As part of that, we look after the Queerspace.

The Queerspace is located in room 920 (level 9) of the Chemical Sciences Building (Map ref F10). The 'space

exists for all queer and/or gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans* students on campus as a place to talk, organise activities and generally just hang out. Everyone's welcome, you don't need to identify as anything to attend, and privacy will always be respected. The Queer Collective meets every week in the 'space, on Thursdays between 3 and 5pm.

Mardi Gras is of course coming up (Saturday 7th March). We've been involved in organising the Cross-Campus Student Float this year, and it'd be great to see lots of UNSW students marching.

www.queer.unsw.edu.au
queer@arc.unsw.edu.au

ENVIRONMENT OFFICERS

Alex Surace & Clare Silcock

The Environment Department is interested in forging new and exciting relationships with a diverse range of individuals, clubs, societies, faculties, departments and organisations both internal and external to UNSW. We currently meet at 12pm-1pm Mondays in the Quad (look for our banner and circle of friends) to discuss ways to get involved in a range of on and off campus initiatives, campaigns and to share our knowledge about the Environment. Our new website is www.envirocollective.unsw.edu.au with loads of up-to-date information about what we're up to and how you can get involved.
environment@arc.unsw.edu.au

COFA OFFICERS

Bronwyn, Rivka, Natasha, Jess, Marcel, Louisa & Andrew

Hello and welcome to the very new and shiny SRC @ COFA! We are a newly created SRC which works to meet the needs of students in the COFA community and campus. We are run as a wing of the main Arc SRC and have officer positions in every department including education, environment, womyn's, indigenous, disability, post-grad, zine editors, queer and cultural officers. This is very exciting for COFA and a chance for the SRC here to really build up again. The SRC @ COFA has big plans for 2009 including campaigns, exhibitions, outings, gardening, lectures and so much more. Our two annual

SRC run exhibitions are a wonderful opportunity for anyone from COFA to get involved in the SRC by submitting a work or just sharing a glass of wine at the openings!

Not all the positions have been filled for 2009 and we would love to have new office bearers. Drop into the Arc office and say Hi. It's time to get into it!

ANTI-RACISM OFFICERS

Aaron Chan & Celeste White

Hey guys! Just a quick intro to the Ethnocultural Department – our main aim is to ensure that UNSW is a safe and welcoming place for students of all cultural, religious, ethnic and national backgrounds. To make this happen, we organise fun and educational events and activities year-round. Stay tuned for Harmony Week which is to be held in Week 3 and will include all sorts of fun activities!

We also run the Cultural Diversity Collective (CDC) which is a weekly social forum where a variety of ethnocultural issues are discussed and debated. To get involved, catch us at the weekly meetings every Monday from 1-2pm at the Library Lawn!

E-mail to Aaron Chan at a.chan@arc.unsw.edu.au or Celeste White at c.white@arc.unsw.edu.au. We are also free for discussions on Thursdays from 2-3pm and 4-5pm.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OFFICER

Sakshi Seghal

Hi to all and a warm welcome to all the new students joining us this year! Angelicia and myself, Sakshi Seghal will be your International Student Officers for the year 2009. We are looking forward to engaging with many students and helping with events organised in and out of University for UNSW students.

The Annual International Festival will happen again this year after the rousing success of 2008, and in order to be a more effective voice, we hope to strengthen the bonds and communication with other universities' international student representatives on issues such as public transport concession and fairer accommodation.



Slumdog Millionaire

SEAN LAWSON

Slumdog Millionaire is a little like *City of God* and takes some inspiration from various Indian movies most of us have never seen. However this is not stereotypical 'Bollywood' with the random dancing and high-pitched singing (how do Hindi language singers hit those insanely high notes?). It's not a good foreign film, it's just good.

Slumdog Millionaire centres on the titular slumdog Jamal, a Bombay slum kid turned call-centre tea boy, who wins a shitload of rupees on the Indian equivalent of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. Naturally in a country of caste systems and massive poverty, people think the poor uneducated dude cheated. It turns out that through sheer coincidence all the questions are related to episodes of his life experience. The police interrogation over his 'cheating' sets up a neat flashback structure for telling the story as he recounts how he knew each answer.

Without spoiling too much, the plot is basically that Jamal has had a very tough life and that India is a shit place to be poor. There's slum kids outwitting police and playing cricket, Hindu-Muslim riots, orphans, gangsters, lots of colour and chaos, and a sprawling energy which makes Mumbai feel huge, crazy, and all-absorbing.

Casting director Loveleen Tandan is credited as "co-director" and she made this movie brilliant. I doubt

even Danny Boyle could have made something so rich and genuine-feeling in this Mumbai setting without her. She was as a general creative bridge: making the slum location shoots happen, translating some dialogue into Hindi, casting street kids instead of middle-class English speaking child actors. As a result it feels more Indian and less like *Trainspotting* with Indian dudes. There's tragedy, but it's not preachy or a thinkpiece, and it's fun and captivating despite the blind kids and gangsters and poverty. Oh and there's a completely extraneous Bollywood dance number during the closing credits, just in case you were in any doubt about how you should feel upon leaving. ■

The Wrestler

THOM LOVEDAY

I'm supposed to be reviewing *The Wrestler*, but it's more important to talk about reports that Mickey Rourke enjoyed making the film so much that he's decided he wants to wrestle for real. Well, as real as professional wrestling gets anyway, which, if this movie is to be believed, is at least ridiculously painful. He's serious. The man wants to, and probably will, wrestle.

Most people don't remember Mickey, but he was big star in the 80s. He was a sex symbol. He was a beautiful man. Awful actor, but beautiful.

Chiseled jaw, masculine physique, Fabio beautiful. Unfortunately, like many beautiful people, he was also a dumbass. He turned down a number of big roles, most of which went to Tom Cruise for some reason (which confuses the hell out of me, because Mickey is massive, and Tom is like 5'3"), and then he made one of the most awesome decisions ever: "I'm the most beautiful man on the planet. I'm tired of acting. I want to become a pro-boxer like I dreamed about as a kid."

And so, the most beautiful man of 80s Hollywood spent the early nineties boxing. I'm guessing he was pretty bad, because by the time he appeared in *Spun* (2002) his face was a fucking mess. Gone were the good looks that carried his career.

But sometimes a little magic happens in the ring. Not only was his face beaten into an unrecognisable mess, apparently he had otherworldly acting skills beaten into him too.

These skills are shown perfectly in *The Wrestler*. In the ring he is a loud, tough, crowd pleasing lumbering behemoth. Outside the ring he is the opposite, a softly spoken fuckup whose only friends are wrestlers and a stripper.

Whilst the plot is predictable, the cinematography, the sound, and the performances are incredible. In fact, I'm not even sure that the predictability of the plot is a bad thing. It's like watching a train wreck for two hours; you can't look away. Early in the film, Ram (Mickey's character) is told that if he wrestles again, he'll die. His relationship with his daughter is non-existent, and he's in love with the stripper. You know where this is going, but this is a film about the journey, not the destination. It's like *The Goonies*: you know the kids are going to get the treasure, and the Fratellis are going to jail, but holy shit, did they really just play a piano made of skeletons? Did they really team up with a sword-wielding retard? Yes they did.

See this movie. At the very least, you can watch some pro-wrestling without feeling like white trash. ■

Joaquin Phoenix on
David Letterman

UNMISSABLE

<http://is.gd/jftw>

Got a hot link to suggest?
Email now.tips@gmail.com!

HOT

LINK OF THE WEEK

GUMTREE'S AD OF THE WEEK

circumcision

Address: Melbourne
Location: Melbourne
Date Listed: 18/11/2008

Hey guys. I am looking for people who are interested in getting circumcised. The method is quite simple and the results are great. I have a few people interested and some willing to help. Completely discreet. Feel free to ask a few questions or express your interest. young good looking 22 year old here to help you out.

[View poster's other ads](#) | [Watch this Ad](#) | [Print Ad](#) | [Email this Ad to friends](#)

There is nothing we could possibly add to this.

COMING UP IN THARUNKA NOW...

- Inner East Sperm Clinics call for healthy students amid crisis shortage.
- **ARMY: Recruiting on a UNSW coffee cup near you!**
- Campus Bible Study vs Satanist Society; What REALLY happened in Week 11!
- **Inside the Government INTERNET FILTER**

GARFIELD MINUS GARFIELD by Dan Walsh

– see more at garfieldminusgarfield.net

Garfield Minus Garfield is a site dedicated to removing Garfield from the Garfield comic strips in order to reveal the internal angst of a certain Mr. Jon Arbuckle. It is a journey deep into the mind of an isolated young Everyman as he fights a losing battle against loneliness and depression in a quiet American suburb.

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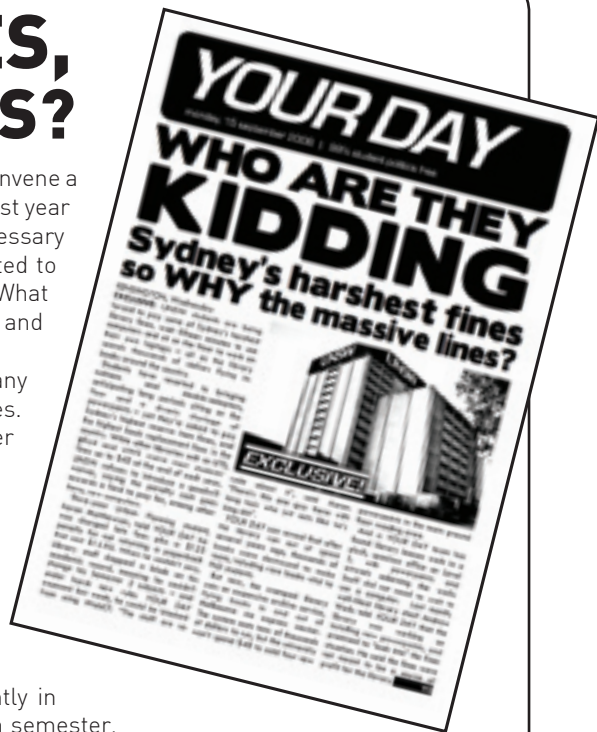


THEY FIXED THE LINES, WHAT ABOUT THE FINES?

Library chief Andrew Wells has told THARUNKA NOW that he will convene a working group to fix the UNSW Library fine structure, which students last year called "outrageous and punitive". While ominously warning that "unnecessary noise" from campus press could delay the review, Wells said he wanted to "come up with a system that's simpler – that students believe is fair. What fines should do is ensure that students use library resources fairly and responsibly."

Responding to criticism that UNSW had the highest fines of any Sydney university, Wells pointed out that it's "real easy not to get fines. Students can even call and renew most items from the collection over the phone."

He said rumours of fine revenue going into a University slush fund were "false and ... disingenuous". Wells admitted that fines currently accounted for hundreds of thousands of dollars in library revenue, but that the money was put "straight back into student services". He said the library never budgeted for the money in advance. He declined to comment on the specific proposals being considered to make fines fairer, but a source in the finance section of the library administration told TN that a rolling amnesty, similar to that currently in place at the University of Sydney where \$30 of fines are forgiven each semester, was under heavy consideration. Student advocates welcomed the news, saying the amnesty was another helpful element for students under financial stress. [TN]



CHAUFFEUR SHAME

UPPER CAMPUS, Tuesday

The UNSW Vice-Chancellor, Professor Fred Hilmer AO, and other top university executives enjoy daily use of a fleet of chauffeured luxury cars, THARUNKA NOW can exclusively reveal. The University has denied student rumours that Professor Hilmer utilises a 5-series BMW. Instead, as students take shelter from leaking roofs in buildings such as Morven Brown, the Vice-Chancellor is sheltered from the rain in an upmarket Holden Calais vehicle, with a paid driver ferrying him between his home and the University's Kensington campus. THARUNKA NOW has calculated

that the annual cost of a full-time driver and upkeep of a single Holden Calais could reach up to \$80,000, and highly-placed sources in the Vice-Chancellor's office stated that UNSW drivers were paid upwards of \$50,000 per year. According to Brian Evans of Prospect-based Better Roofing, \$80,000 could "easily" repair the most serious roof leaks in Morven Brown, "with plenty left over for a beer too". Third-year Urban Planning student, Jay Sidler, who lives near Professor Hilmer, told THARUNKA NOW that he'd be happy to "give the guy a lift", and that he would only ask "about ten bucks there and back" for such a service.

However, Sidler warned that his vehicle was "seriously ... an old bomb" and that "the seats aren't really screwed in right anymore". Sidler speculated that many students would be willing to give Professor Hilmer a lift, and it might "bring him closer" to the student population. Judy Brookman, the university's Communications Director, told THARUNKA NOW that UNSW has "a couple of drivers that primarily service the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, other senior members of the Executive Team and distinguished visitors to the University". She added that the practice is common in Australian universities, though several, like Canberra and Western Sydney, denied maintaining such a fleet in statements last week. The astonishing revelations of a luxury car fleet fly in the face of Professor Hilmer's well-publicised efforts to reduce executive pay at UNSW. The Sydney Morning Herald revealed that Hilmer cut pay across the executive team by nearly \$2 million after taking office in 2005. Hilmer was himself paid \$680,000 in 2007, the last year for which figures were available. ■



The new juice bar **invasion** around UNSW continues, despite information **flooding in** on the negative health effects of too much juice. After a mass of juice bars opened around the city around 2002, then closed in recent years as customers stayed away, many people – like fourth-year Arts student Julianne Healey – thought the fad had passed. But a resurgence of interest has caused two new juice bars to open near UNSW, and they're *realreadydoingbriskpre-semester* trade. Now, a special *THARUNKA NOW* investigation has revealed that juice

bar juice isn't all it's cracked up to be. Advertised as being "healthy because it's 100% real fruit", what juice bars leave out in their slick marketing materials is just what that statement means. *THARUNKA NOW* can reveal that Boost's **original size Breakie to Gogo juice** contains 73 grams of sugar – that's **18 teaspoons of sugar**. The majority of Boost smoothies contain almost as many calories as a Big Mac. In a statement, Boost said "Boost juices and smoothies are designed as a healthier fast food option", and

pointed to the low GI content of their products, saying that the high-fructose juices would "keep you fuller longer". But in a recent piece for online journal *Crikey*, nutritional author David Gillespie wrote "*The ... new position is that 'fructose may adversely effect plasma lipids'. That's doctor-speak for eating fructose may increase the amount of fat you have circulating in your bloodstream.*" The verdict is in, and juices are out. That's your TN **VERDICT**.

THE GREAT *Juice* BAR JOKE

The image shows two overlapping charts titled 'Facts & Figures'. The charts contain columns of data, likely representing nutritional information such as calories, sugar, and fat content for various products. The text is small and difficult to read, but the structure suggests a comparison of different items.

*tharunka***now**

ISSUE 1 VOLUME 55

BACKDOWN LIBRARY GOING FROM 'SHABBY TO SHINY'

JONATHAN TUNN

The UNSW Library has acceded to every single one of the student's demands for a better library – and has committed to reviewing its punitive and unfair fine structure, which has seen some students rack up fines of over \$500 over the summer holidays.

In an exclusive interview, the first granted to a university publication in recent times, library chief Andrew Wells told THARUNKA NOW that the library had "heeded students' calls" and was now spending more than \$7 million to upgrade student spaces and facilities.

The renovations and upgrades, which will include plush ottomans, barstools, reading pods with built-in lights and other modern conveniences, come after popular student paper YOUR DAY presented the library with a list of demands late last year. The demands were based on countless angry emails from UNSW students. Not only has the Library given into the demands, they have surpassed them.

According to Wells, books have been cleared out of Level 3 and 4 of the Library to make space for students. Level 3 will have an informal, social focus, while Level 4 will be geared towards more formal, quiet study. "What it's about is better seating, better facilities, better access to technology, and enabling students to work in a variety of ways", Wells said.

After his first visit to the Library on Monday, first-year Arts student Chris Brooks told THARUNKA NOW that the building looked "in pretty shabby shape in parts of it, so it's good they're fixing it up". Meanwhile, second-year Linguistics student Lauren Hodes said that "last year it totally sucked. You had to line up for ages to get a computer, and even when I brought in my laptop,

there's never any free powerpoints, so it was completely pointless, I never went in there. It rocks they're finally doing something".

He warned students to expect "some disruption" as renovation work that had proceeded throughout the summer holidays was finalised, but that most students would not be experiencing significant disruption past March. [TN]



WHAT WE DEMANDED

500 more seated spaces

10 group rooms

AV booth upgrades

Upgrade to lounge spaces on Level 3

1,000 more powerpoints

WHAT YOU'LL GET

900 more seated spaces, including plush couches

20 group rooms

8 new hi-tech media booths

New lounge and reading

Powerpoint upgrades
– numbers TBC