



# tharunka

UNSW STUDENT PUBLICATION ISSUE FOUR VOLUME 56



**MONEY**





# Editorial

Dear UNSW,

The theme of this issue is ‘Money’. It is therefore fitting that this editorial was written on Mother’s Day, an occasion calling for puns as obligatory as the chocolates, flowers and cards you were forced to buy. Much like your Mum, this edition of Tharunka is packed with wisdom, witticism and wry observation. Unlike your Mum, it’s quite thin. We’ve got James Fehon on people smuggling (is it really that bad?), Thomas George on working at Coles (it really is that bad) and Alexandra Brown on queer jokes (stay away). There is also other stuff including new articles by our wonderful regulars Wilfred Brandt and Kylar Loussikian.

This is the last edition for the semester, but please keep writing to us at [tharunka@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:tharunka@arc.unsw.edu.au).

We hope you’ve enjoyed reading as much as we enjoyed your mum.

## Tharunka Editorial

### Submit to Tharunka

**Maude Lebowski:** *Does the female form make you uncomfortable, Mr. Lebowski?*

**The Dude:** *Uh, is that what this is a picture of?*

**Maude Lebowski:** *In a sense, yes. My art has been commended as being strongly vaginal which bothers some men. The word itself makes some men uncomfortable. Vagina.*

**The Dude:** *Oh yeah?*

**Maude Lebowski:** *Yes, they don’t like hearing it and find it difficult to say whereas without batting an eye a man will refer to his dick or his rod or his Johnson.*

**The Dude:** *Johnson?*

From ‘The Big Lebowski’

Next issue of Tharunka will be a special and beautiful thing – the Womyn’s Edition! Brought to you by a unique\* collaboration between the Women’s Collective and the Tharunka team, the Womyn’s Edition will feature writing by female and female-identifying students across campus. All feminist-minded womyn are invited to contribute. Articles written in menstrual blood using a tampon for a pen will be particularly welcomed.\*\* If you’re interested in being involved but aren’t sure what to write about, email us. Deadlines TBA but keep an eye on <http://tharunka.unsw.edu.au> for updates.

\* Until next year.

\*\* Only about half of that is a joke.

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# tharunka

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

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# LetTERS

## The Gift that Keeps on Giving

To the Editors,

Everyone deserves an opinion, as well as the right to express it. But not all opinions are 'created equal', so to speak – in fact, some are crap. Case in point – the letter [Issue 3] from Rebecca Hynek, in which she attacks Tharunka and the UNSW Administration for their response to the apparent need for an Islamic prayer space. The words 'unbiased', 'rational' and 'logical' did not spring to mind. 'Emotional', 'contradictory', 'childish' and 'ridiculous' seemed much more fitting.

First let's clear something up – Islam is not a race, nor do its adherents come from only one country. Thus, no one is being 'racist' when they express their opinions on this issue. Ms Hynek herself is actually falling victim to her own stereotype – something along the lines of 'all Muslims are Middle Eastern', a statement which is easily belied by ISOC and its members. After this confident beginning, the letter proceeds with the statement that 'ISOC have put forward other possibilities.'

What?

Pardon me, but I thought ISOC was *asking* for a prayer space from the University. Here it sounds like ISOC is *demanding* a prayer space. Of course, that begs the question: by what right does ISOC *offer* 'possibilities' to UNSW? UNSW owns UNSW. ISOC are just another student society with as much right to demand access to facilities as the rest of us do – which is to say, none. We ask – it's called being politic, that strange mix of courtesy and diplomacy which, if you get it right, opens all sorts of doors. It is clear, though, that it has yet to open the door of the Scientia building for ISOC. They must be out of practice. But don't think it's over just yet – this is the sort of gift that just keeps giving.

How dare, HOW DARE Ms Hynek even try and make a connection between the apparent persecution of *anyone, anywhere*, and this dispute within the University. I find it offensive and self-centred that she thinks to compare the daily struggle most of the world endures trying under various forms of oppression with a minor argument between First World citizens enjoying all the benefits of modern civilisation. Even the statement concerning the apparent widespread 'persecution' of Muslims around the world is suspect – it is present, but hardly widespread, and almost insignificant compared to the state of Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Maybe we could tone down the hysteria. This tenuous connection is followed by a swipe at the Vice-Chancellor's earnings last year. Perhaps the most curious thing about this letter is that it finds so many targets for abuse. If the Vice-Chancellor feels like donating his salary to the building of a Mosque, he will – but until he does, you might have to kick start the fund yourself, Rebecca.

The final insult comes with the request that Tharunka retract the article in favour of the right to freedom of religion, thus denying the right to freedom of expression. I do not understand how Ms Hynek feels that anyone is being denied their right to hold religious beliefs – it is simply being disputed that we are obliged to actively help others practise their beliefs. By comparison, we also have the right to own property, but society is not expected to ensure everyone actually owns something – that is for the individual to decide.

Of course, it is obvious to even the most impartial observer that Tharunka and Su-Min Lim are accomplices in UNSW's secret plot to wage war on its own students – otherwise, why would they have published the story? Certainly not to promote the widespread discussion and debate ongoing in this very publication. On the other hand, perhaps ISOC

should be thanking Tharunka and its 'racist' editor for bringing this issue to the attention of readers – I certainly would never have heard of it otherwise.

The sad thing is that Tharunka is being attacked for giving ISOC exactly what it needs to push its agenda to the uni – a broad audience with which to gain support. While Su-Min Lim's article may not have been a triumph of impartial journalism (though it came close), the response of ISOC and various members has been very underwhelming, displaying a failure to grasp opportunities when they come. Instead, they have chosen to throw petty insults at the University – and strangely, the very students from whom they expect support. Perhaps a little less stick would go a long way in moving this donkey towards a prayer space.

Saddest of all this venomous, hate-filled letter, full of accusations but conspicuously empty of proof. Everyone has the right to express their opinion, but in this case it would have been better if they hadn't. It certainly reflects poorly on the writer and, unfortunately, on ISOC itself.

JONATHON RYAN

## Sick of Socialists

Dear Editors,

I am writing this letter to express my outrage at the sheer volume of glossy posters spammed around campus by the group calling themselves the 'Socialist Alternative'. It is ironic that these people claim to espouse Marxist principles when they blatantly support the capitalist means of production.

All that paper, made by poor proletarian workers in a factory, is money going to the bourgeoisie at Reflex! Wood pulp sourced from multinational corporations ploughing through the forests of third world countries! The printers are made using circuitry with gold sourced from mines controlled by First World corporations, paying below the poverty line to ensure the dependence of the Third World workers! With ink bought from the bourgeoisie at Officeworks! Why, I bet they were even designed on an Apple computer, sending money to that fat cat Steve Jobs!

I won't be satisfied that the SAlt are true and proper Communists until all their posters are made using ink and paper they made themselves, so that we can all be sure they aren't incidentally supporting capitalism. Plus, home-made paper is bitchingly inefficient to make, so maybe there will be less Salt spam all over Morven Brown blocking out announcements everyone else wants to make. Everybody wins.

KRISTYN GLANVILLE

PS. I also find it ironic that SAlt has more control over the means of producing posters than every other society on campus, effectively stifling the masses from putting up posters. Because SAlt will use their unequal poster power to just spam right over the top, they are silencing the interests of the less dominant poster-makers.

# STARVING THE POOR TO TEACH THEM A LESSON

KRISTYN GLANVILLE

Tony Abbott's latest gimmick against the apparently rampant problem of youth unemployment is to make under-30s ineligible for the dole. I can't help but think, though, that there is a definite problem with how this plan conceptualises what drives people to the dole in the first place. While I agree with Tony that some people on the dole might be lazy or unmotivated, I don't think the way to change these kinds of attitudes is to punish people.

Firstly, I found it farcical for Abbott to suggest that people seeking work should just pack up and move to areas where jobs are available. If you live in a place where there is no work, and Tony Abbott takes away your welfare, how are you supposed to afford the cost of relocating to another state? And even if you could afford it, would the economic incentive be enough for you to uproot your family and social connections?

Neither is it necessarily the fault of an unemployed person that they are jobless. Many welfare recipients face barriers such as being unable to afford the necessary training or transport. Others suffer from mental and physical health problems. A welfare safety net is crucial to redress this. Ironically, Abbott's blanket policy is meant to promote individual responsibility, but totally ignores individual situations where a person has compelling reasons for being unemployed. On a more structural level, the damage of a policy such as Abbott's, and really any policy which threatens to take away welfare unless the recipient does 'X', is that it operates under the faulty assumption that every person will and can use the socially accepted means of making money.

Policies which rely on individualistic economic rationalism completely ignore the role of cultural attitudes towards employment. Generations of people residing in the same neighbourhoods that have all been on welfare since the dawn of time have a cultural attitude that welfare, rather than employment, is the normal and acceptable means of gaining income. Ultimately, these people subscribe to a different philosophy about how to make money.

*'Politicians are either too stupid or too scared to come out and say it'.*

A quick-fix solution like Abbott's does little to change these attitudes apart from punishing their existence. It does not encourage people to prosper or work for the betterment of the wider community.

In my view, it is very unlikely a punitive threat will make people change their behaviours. There is always a certain inertia in the way people live their lives. Any psychologist will tell you that it is the carrot rather than the stick which teaches new behaviours and attitudes.

If people lack motivation to work, there are other ways of changing this. Work with communities to change their attitudes towards employment. Make school/careers relevant and appealing to young people. But don't just cut off welfare. Simply put, people need the money to survive, because the causes of unemployment are not going to vanish overnight.

The problem with Abbott and other politicians making welfare contingent on jumping some hurdle is that they assume people will play their game. They think that all of the people affected by the scheme will make a rational choice by the standards of wider society. People are never ever mentally ill, or affected by a behavioural disorder, or suffering from a drug addiction, or from a family where welfare is the normal means of income. People all have the same opportunity to gain lawful employment because everyone got adequate schooling, received extra tutoring if they fell behind and were encouraged to study by their parents. Everyone has the same capacity to get a job, and the threat of poverty is a good motivator to go get one.

Ultimately, though, there will be many who do not play the game. Without welfare and without the means or inclination to find employment, how will they survive? By burdening the resources of their family and friends? By becoming impoverished or going into debt? By becoming involved in criminal behaviour that pays the bills better than a dole check did and a minimum wage job ever could? Empirically speaking, all of the above. But politicians are either too stupid or too scared to come out and say it.





# WORLD NEWS OF THE WORLD

## BOOK BORROWED FROM HOUSEMATE KEEPS OPENING TO SEX BITS

Recently in preparation for a long train journey you borrowed a 600 page novel from a housemate. Finding it hard to get into the story you opened the book to a random point in the middle and were surprised to discover a steamy and explicit sex scene. Having finished that part of the story, you opened the book at random at a different point and were surprised to find another equally torrid passage.

You wondered if it was actually meant to be an erotic novel but when you read the first two chapters in a linear fashion there was no sex at all. It struck you as a peculiar coincidence that you should have found those two sex bits by chance.

Then, a cunning plan occurred to you. Balancing the book on its spine, you allowed the pages to fall open to the parts most frequently read by the previous owner. These turned out to be a total of four increasingly juicy sex bits.

You half-heartedly pretended to be unimpressed with your housemate's taste but were secretly grateful to have been spared so much unnecessary reading.

## Militant feminists invade Poland

A long period of international tension has come to a head at last with the invasion of Poland by the aggressive feminist forces.

The 'feminazis', a band of radical feminists inspired by the anti-pornography writings of Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon, descended first upon the small and defenceless city of Wielun and engaged in a campaign of aerial strikes which claimed over a thousand lives and destroyed up to 70% of town buildings.

The all-out offensive was the culmination of an escalating series of attacks including terrorist bombings of Polish railway stations. Thousands of feminazi ground troops then swarmed over the border executing men, women and children in their wake.

Observers fear that more horrors for are in store for the civilian population including genocide, forced labour and compulsory readings of Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique.

## Man outraged by meeting Asians at Asian restaurant

Late last week, a man was observed becoming increasingly agitated due to his treatment by staff at an Asian restaurant.

The man, conspicuous due to his extreme whiteness, spent several minutes hovering at the door waiting to be shown to a table although there were clearly several unoccupied. When it dawned that he was expected to use his eyes and legs without external guidance he made an impatient 'huf!' noise and sat down.

The complaints piled up throughout the evening - that the staff didn't make small talk, that you had to get your own water, that the fresh-off-the-boat waitress didn't understand the word 'napkin'.

He was finally seen to storm out muttering "Bloody hell, I've never seen such service in my life!".

It was later confirmed he had received enough food to feed a three person family for the price of an entree at a comparable European eatery.

## GUY EXPLAINS WHY HE WOULD NEVER SLEEP WITH WOMEN HE WILL NEVER HAVE CHANCE TO SLEEP WITH

At uni last Wednesday a group of friends was talking about a mutual acquaintance and someone said she was "hot". This was affirmed by all but one member of the group, who took the chance to loudly proclaim that she was "totally ugly and weird".

He described various features of her face, eyes and body that failed to "float his boat" and concluded that she was "nothing special, I wouldn't do her". The speaker then went on to mention other girls who he would and would not do and to rate the physical and psychological features that had driven him to these conclusions.

Everyone else in the conversation thought privately that hell would freeze over before he got anywhere near a single one of these women, but was too polite to say so.

## Friends debate point at which chopped fruit becomes a salad

In a quiet suburb in south-east Sydney, three friends were overheard discussing the point at which a combination of fruits reaches sufficient magnitude and complexity to be described as a salad. The most conservative of the group argued that a salad needed at least three different chopped fruits tossed together.

Her more liberal companion suggested even a single fruit could be defined as salad if cut into different shapes which were then mixed.

The discussion was on the verge of becoming heated when a third friend known for his conciliatory nature proposed that maybe it was a salad if there were at least two sliced fruits mixed together.

The others seized with relief upon this compromise, and the conversation returned to more amiable lines. It was agreed by mutual consent that the question of a vegetable stir-fry would be left to another day.

## EMOTICON DIFFUSES TENSION IN FACEBOOK ARGUMENT

# Scum That Might Just Save Your Life

JAMES FEHON with SU-MIN LIM

Imagine that you're sick. So sick you face a lifetime of discomfort, maybe even torment. At any moment your condition could flare up and kill you. There's a doctor who might have a cure but it's expensive, risky and possibly illegal. Would you continue putting up with the illness? Or would you run whatever risks you had to for the chance of a decent life?

Now imagine that you're not sick, but a refugee. Your day-to-day existence is dangerous and unpleasant. Political or ethnic violence could claim your life at any time. As far as you can tell, you will never have the opportunity to exercise your rights freely in a safe and peaceful society...unless you find some way out.

The scenario above isn't as fictional as it seems. Millions of people worldwide hold a well-founded fear of persecution, hence the concept of political asylum. Some of these people choose to pay people smugglers to help them seek asylum. Lately, our political discourse has taken to dismissing legitimate claims as opportunistic and economically motivated. The argument is that if they paid a people smuggler to come here, their claims to asylum can't possibly be real.

This is a fallacy. There's nothing wrong with doing whatever you can to seek the fulfillment of your rights, especially if no other means is available to you. Asylum seekers may spend their life savings to pay for passage to Australia. If anything that demonstrates the will, determination or desperation of those seeking asylum here.

Some argue that if asylum seekers were genuine refugees, they'd stop in transit countries rather than continuing on to Australia. In reality the treatment they receive at these transit points almost amounts to persecution in itself. We should not be legitimising the caging, beating, and abuse of people fleeing persecution which occurs in some of these neighbouring societies. We are one of only a handful of regional

## 'People smugglers provide a service which asylum seekers desperately need.'

signatories to the Refugee Convention, and yet by funding the activities of police forces who commit these acts in neighbouring countries we accept and encourage this treatment.

What about the people smugglers? Are they, as Kevin Rudd says, the "scum of the earth"?

There's no denying that individuals in the people smuggling business make money out of human misery. But they also provide a service which asylum seekers desperately need. By organising the delivery of asylum seekers to the door of a country which will fairly assess their claims, they allow their clients to exercise the right to freedom from persecution. The asylum seekers they've helped smuggle can live happier lives and contribute to their new society.

With asylum seekers paying between \$5,000 to \$15,000 per passage, it's obvious that operations out of Indonesia and other transit countries make a significant profit. They couldn't make this profit if it weren't for the existence of the human suffering which leads people to seek asylum. Does that make it wrong? Not necessarily. If there wasn't any cancer doctors wouldn't get paid, and yet no-one accuses them of exploiting misery. Tobacco company executives also make quite a significant income selling a product which kills people and provides no benefit at all. Lives are lost on people smuggling expeditions, but lives are saved as well.

Neither is everyone involved in smuggling getting rich. With various middle-men and payments along the way, the crew of boats can end up being paid as little as A\$63 to bring people into Australian waters. That's less than I paid the last time I needed to catch a taxi (driven by a former Iranian professor who fled Iran in the late 1960s). For A\$63 they bring a boat load of people to Australian territory, get arrested, and are sentenced to a mandatory minimum of three years term gaol. Our legislation is tough on people smuggling, but light on sense.

There are certainly some people smugglers who engage in deeply unethical activities, such as overcrowding boats or sending out unseaworthy vessels. But this doesn't mean that people smuggling in itself is an unethical activity. It's an illustration of the fact that there are bad people in every walk of life, especially industries that are legally questionable and therefore unregulated.

At times we've seen Rudd and Abbott suggest our 'tough on boats' approach is to protect individuals from losing their lives through risky journeys. There have been high profile tragedies at sea, but I'd tend to agree with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in viewing these events as the result of the "sad [reality of] a variety of factors, including poverty, tightened migration policies, violent conflicts and abuse of human rights" leading to desperate attempts to reach safety.

People smugglers didn't create these conditions. As long as these circumstances exist there will be asylum seekers paying smugglers for a chance at a better life. All the political manoeuvring in the world can't change the basic facts of supply and demand. Many politicians like to tell us they understand the concepts of market forces. Unfortunately they also think they're the centre of the universe. A nation's refugee policy is not what causes a person to flee their home – needing to escape from imminent danger and persecution is. We don't seem to care about underlying causes, just making sure foreigners don't exercise their right to request asylum and have it granted if they're legitimately in need.

In professing to be speaking in the interest of refugees, our political discourse has co-opted their plight. Attempts to demonise anyone in the people smuggling trade are a disingenuous and callous attempt to further a political agenda. The opportunity to play off our uglier base instincts are irresistible for Labor and the Liberals alike. Just this past fortnight, the Liberal Party have thrown a great big filthy wad of cash to bring a new advertisement featuring Tony Abbott's mug to our screens, while the ALP have announced the reopening of the most notorious of the Howard-era detention facilities. If Rudd thinks people smugglers should "rot in hell", I'm not sure where he's heading. He treats refugees worse.

It's also quite ironic when Australians to criticise asylum seekers for spending money to get to safety, considering our average incomes are often ten times higher or more.

In the end, people smugglers are a symptom not a cause – the cause is persecution and human rights abuses. If people want to pay money to get away from that, it's not unethical for them to do so. You wouldn't just sit there and take it. Given the wealth, privilege and safety that most of us enjoy, the really criminal thing is that we're not doing more to help.



# The Best and Worst Ways to Make Money

WILFRED BRANDT

They say money is the root of all evil, but what they neglect to add is that it's also the root of every soy latte, designer handbag and escort hand job. And where would we be without all of the above? Two words: in misery.

Maybe your parents are paying for your education. Maybe it's the government, or your wealthy mining tycoon CEO. Whatever the case, these sources will soon dry up. Mr Sugar Daddy will drop you for a new model after a few years, or a few more inches on your thighs - whichever comes first. One day soon, you're going to have to earn your money.

Thankfully, because societies worldwide tend towards genteel, generous, forward-thinking,

unselfish, un-shallow, non-materialistic value systems, the most important, necessary, society-improving, and selfless jobs are also always, without fail, the most high-paying. Whatever you've heard about the world being an unfair place is total bullshit.

You may still be studying, but I'm here to help you prepare for your eventual transfer into the fair, judicious, kind and gentle work-a-day world. After having dabbled in professions like hospitality, writing, art-making, music, and exotic dancing, I am ridiculously, ludicrously, obscenely wealthy. I'd like to help you be exactly the same. So here is my list of the best and worst paying jobs you can train for at university. Personal fulfillment and untold riches were never so easy to come by!

*"They say the meek shall inherit the earth, and maybe this is true of footy players."*



## *Jobs that will make you a lot of money:*

### *Teacher*

Many times on airline flights you might notice that the entire first class is populated by elementary school teachers. You can often see them working on lesson plans during trans-international flights, and texting the details to their principal via Blackberry (in between sipping Dom Perignon and wolfing down caviar, of course).

Training as a teacher pretty much guarantees you a job for life, making piles and piles of money!

### *Social worker*

If you see a handsomely groomed man trying on an Armani suit in David Jones, and calling his personal assistant to bring around his S-Class Mercedes Benz, chances are that man is a social worker! Social workers are often decked out in the latest high-end fashions driving luxurious sports cars from all the money they make helping the poor and disadvantaged people of our society.

By choosing to work with drug addicts, the mentally ill, and ex-cons, social workers make way more money than they could ever make working for giant, multi-national corporations, drug companies, or Richard Branson.

### *Writer*

In every field imaginable, the writers are the most highly-paid, most well-adjusted, and most well-respected amongst their colleagues. Screenwriters in television and film command huge figures for work that doesn't pander, is non-formulaic, and is challenging - regardless of how well their last movie did, whom they've slept with, or how old they are.

The only fields where writing work is not steady, lucrative, or well-respected are in marketing, copywriting, and advertising (which, as a result, are extremely non-competitive, un-cutthroat, friendly, healthy, and totally Zen working environments).

### *Artist*

Artists are renowned for being even-keeled, responsible, restrained, thick-skinned, soft-spoken, and mild-mannered - to the point of boredom sometimes! Their utterly conventional lifestyles are rewarded with massive, reliable salaries from government funding, private collectors, gallery owners, and major corporations interested in growing their collection of experimental, confrontational, avant-garde art.

The world always rewards abstract, original thought with no concrete links to tangible consumer goods. As such, the most highly sought after and paid artists are performance artists and interpretive dance choreographers.

## *Jobs that don't pay well at all:*

### *Lawyer*

It's a sad state of affairs that such a noble profession is often reduced to hosting bake sales and sausage sizzles to raise funds for various corporate law firms. What's most disappointing about this sorry state of affairs is that lawyers are such gentle, fair, amenable people, who would never hurt a fly or sell their grandmother's wheelchair for prestige or a new Lexus.

### *Sports star*

Professional football players tend to carry themselves with a quiet air of dignity. A group of footy players out for a drink will often go totally unnoticed by the surrounding patrons, as they sit cross-legged in a corner, quietly sipping non-alcoholic cocktails and softly discussing world events, Nietzsche, or a recent outing to the ballet or opera, before returning home remarkably early to rest up.

They say the meek shall inherit the earth, and maybe this is true of footy players, because in tandem with their nebbish aesthete ways, they command appallingly low sums of money, and often have to even do product endorsements for free in a desperate attempt to raise their profile. Hopefully one day these unsung heroes will get the media attention - and monetary rewards - they so deserve.

### *Anything to do with computers*

Obscure inventor and destitute madman Bill Gates should serve as a terrifying example to anyone with even a remote interest in, or knowledge of, computers. If you know anything about anything to do with writing programs for computers, designing websites or applications for computers, selling computers, or inventing computers, forget pursuing this as a career!

Computers are rapidly declining in use, and in less than a year they will be all but obsolete, a silly fad like skateboards, tattoos, and fluorescent clothing. What few, poorly paid computer jobs already exist are going to be decreasing and eventually disappear as the general population returns to a life dominated by knitting, letterpress production, and butter churning.

### *Rapper*

Working tirelessly and never bragging about their meagre accomplishments, rappers abstain from any ostentatious shows of their earnings, or conspicuous consumption of luxury goods, automobiles, or French champagne. Male rappers are inevitably always accompanied to events by dumpy, overweight, unattractive women in ill-fitting, drab clothing. These are also the kind of girls you regularly see them cavorting with in music videos.

If only the general public would see the real artistry in hip hop music and culture, perhaps, one day, rappers will not have to settle for cheap clothing, functional jewelry, and taking the bus to their concert.





I recently restarted suckling from the hideous soul-crushing teat of the retail industry when I took up the position of Duty Manager at a Coles supermarket. Though my role is varied, the majority of my time is spent dealing with irate customers and kicking out thieves from the store.

I've worked in a variety of stores in my lifetime all in different locations, but this store is without a doubt the worst when it comes to human manners and simple decency. They are beyond rude, outright offensive, throwing their unwanted groceries wherever they please.

It doesn't concern them at all if it's meat or frozen goods, they discard it anywhere except from where they took it. Eggs are the worst. A carton costs around three dollars, but that doesn't stop them from throwing them around and breaking half of them, all without any regard for the people shopping after them, or let alone the staff that have to clean up the mess they leave.

The logic behind their rude attitude was revealed when I refused to refund a customer's plum purchase. This person had bought half a kilo of plums and then found them cheaper elsewhere, leading this individual to demand Coles to provide a \$2.48 refund. I was consulted by the service staff and told them to refuse the refund, but then had to return to deal with the irate customer. I informed her that with Food Safety regulations, all fresh food had to be thrown out if refunded. There was nothing wrong with the plums and the problem was from the customer's lack of foresight in not shopping around before purchase. No wrongdoing on Coles' behalf.

To be honest, it just pissed me off that I would have to throw out perfectly good food to indulge an obnoxious bitch who could not get off her high horse over \$2.48.

Her logic was that that money is better off in her pocket than in mine. When I replied that I was paid on an hourly basis and didn't see a single cent from any purchases, she simply switched her target to Coles: better the money in her pockets than in Coles'.

This is the prevailing mentality behind the people that come through the doors of the store. And for some, it goes a step further: they feel they have a right to the wares in the store, without paying for it. Coles can certainly wear the financial loss, so why not steal that block of enticing chocolate?



The other week, one idiotic individual decided to unwrap some chocolates and try to get out of the store with them. Unfortunately for him, he'd been watched through the entire process and was subsequently stopped, searched and arrested at the entrance by three staff members. A knife was found and Westfield security officers were called. They called the cops, while two staff members had to sit around guarding the offender until the cops showed up.

To cut the saga short, he was released and banned from the store after four hours. I mentally totalled the amount of money in staff wages that would have been spent guarding him and writing reports about the incident. Comparing that to the few blocks of chocolate that were stolen, the disparity between the two amounts is huge. It would have been more economically feasible to simply let the idiot take the chocolate and leave the store. Further, it would have probably been safer for all parties involved; I have had to escort a few violent junkies out of the store with security on numerous occasions.

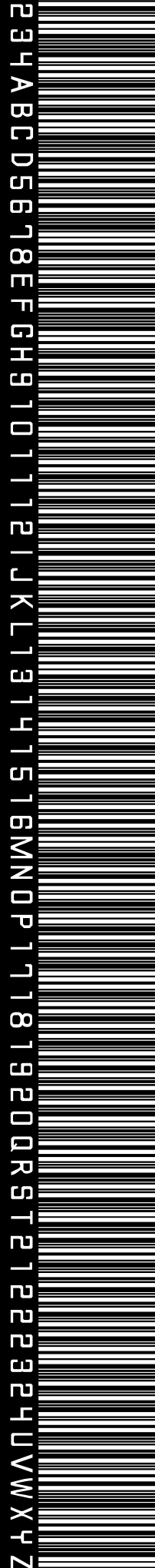
But then, how is letting them go fair to those customers who do the right thing and pay for their groceries? More importantly, wouldn't this encourage more people to steal? Can there ever be a middle ground in this?

Sadly, I think not, because the people who are willing to risk imprisonment over a stolen candy or two are usually abject morons, in my opinion. Despite their questionable intellect, the one thing that is clear is that they regard the staff members who work at Coles as their enemies. Apparently, we have a personal agenda and are hell-bent on our insatiable quest to persecute their god-given right to steal in peace.

There is no use in pointing out how low a wage we earn or that we are all merely trapped in a system of wage slavery. There is no use pointing out how we aren't there for our own pleasure or for the joys of 'customer service', which to some management mentalities means we have to take the abuse that is dished out by customers.

We are our own enemy; merely cogs in the retail machine; there is no escape for any of us.

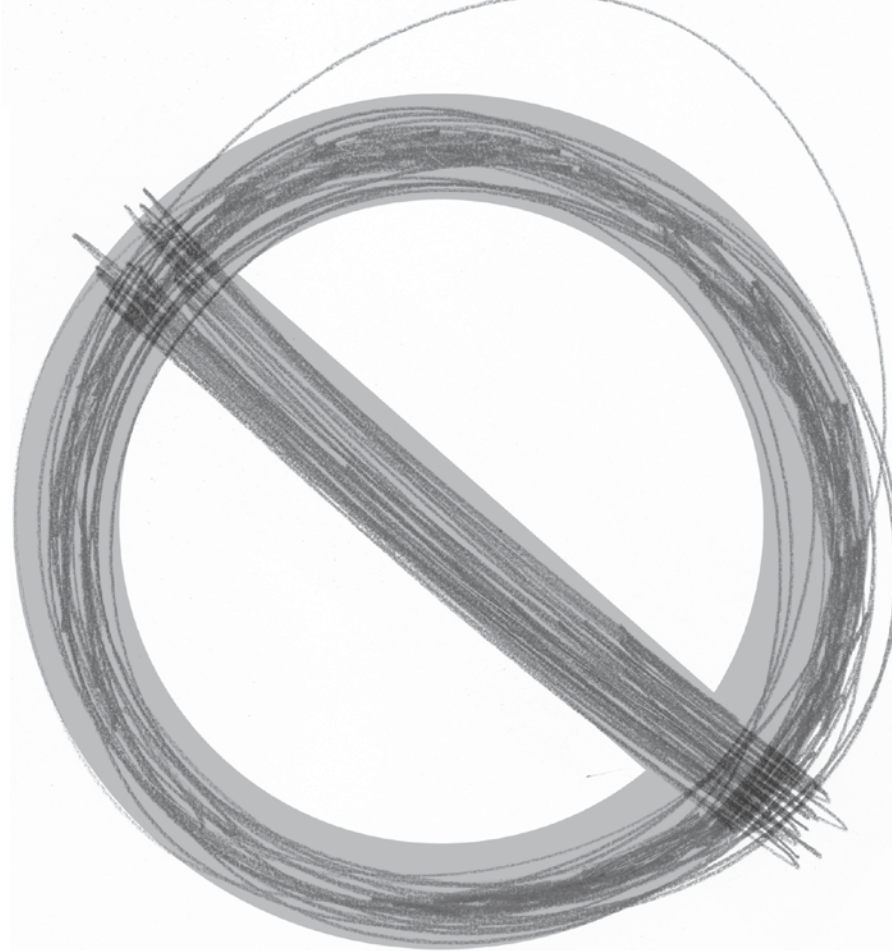
We are all in hell. Come join us with a smile, and thanks for shopping at Coles.





# I AM NOT YOUR GAY FRIEND

ALEXANDRA BROWN



*‘Do not say this ever: “I have a gay friend who laughs about gayness”’.*

Chances are at some point in your life you will have pissed off a gay person. You will know when this occurs because they will tell you, glare at you, or use some other verbal or non-verbal form of communication to let you know you have said the wrong thing. If the root of the conflict is a disagreement about which brother from Supernatural is the best, fair enough. (It’s Dean, by the way.) If, however, you are a straight person who consistently makes jokes about gay people, then this rant is directed at you.

Having realised that you have offended your friend/acquaintance/co-worker, you may decide they are overreacting and that you don’t want to feel bad about what you said. After all, a joke is just a joke. It’s their problem if they want to get worked up about it.

No, it’s not. It’s your problem. Let’s face it: the deck is stacked in your favour. You can get married if you want to without moving to Spain. I would like to visit Spain; it seems like a beautiful country. I just don’t want to have to move there so I can get a ring on my finger, a wife, a house and 2.5 kids, and not have anybody blink when they learn we are married and thus tied down by the same social millstone as other couples. You don’t have to consider which suburb you are in when you hold your partner’s hand. Nor the fact that Hillsong is pretty vocal in declaring you unnatural, as are most other religions.

Gays are a stock item in sitcoms, particularly gay men. Frankly, they don’t compare at all to the gay men I actually know. Stereotypes do not reflect reality, they

largely mock it. Straightness as a state of being is not used as a cause for amusement in lazy television scriptwriting, even if fierce amorousness sometimes is.

You are straight, and you made a joke about gay people or the gay condition. Someone, a gay person, responded negatively. You may blame them for being touchy but really, who doesn’t get sick of being the butt of the joke?

At this point, you may have brought out the ‘friend bomb’. Do not do this. Do not say this ever: “I have a gay friend who laughs about gayness”. This is not a free pass. Your gay friend may laugh about being gay, but you do not have the same privileges.

Let me list some reasons why:

- They are gay. They are therefore entitled to joke about this part of themselves, a part you do not share. Maybe occasionally they allow you to be involved. This does not make you gay. Unless you suddenly start pining for the gender you belong to.

- We joke for many reasons. An excellent reason to joke is because when we are all laughing, we are not hurting or discussing anything that could hurt. Look at the funny gay person, can’t hit them when you’re laughing too hard! We’re harmless, really!

- To that end, sometimes you have to laugh or you will end up crying. Did I mention not being able to get married? I would really like to get married some day and I don’t think I’ll be able to. I joke about this.

There is also children to consider and how to start a family, personal safety issues, legitimacy and the other real life crap that you can fill in for yourself.

- It could be your gay friend really doesn’t give a shit and doesn’t mind you laughing with them. Bully for you. Gay people are not a homologue. We do not share a hive mind and feel the same way about all things.

I am not your gay friend.

Straight individual, you’re not a bad person. I don’t know you, but I assume you’re a decent type. You may think that comedians make fun of gay people, so, by extension, you’re a pretty funny person. This begs the question, why is someone angry at you for making a joke?

Well, it’s their life, isn’t it? Their trials are not your trials and you will never be in their shoes. Would you put up with someone you didn’t know very well making digs at your mother? Well, maybe for a while. Chances are, after one too many jokes, you might start wondering if that person is joking or if they think it’s funny because it’s true.

Here is a list of sentences. Tell me if you notice a trend:

- I have a girlfriend who laughs at jokes about women;
- I have an Asian friend who laughs at jokes about Asian people;

- I have a black friend who laughs at jokes about black people;
- I have a Jewish friend who laughs at jokes about Jews;
- I have a gay friend who laughs at jokes about gays.

These groups do not all face the same issues. I don’t want to imply they do. What they hopefully reflect is a trend to use the “I have a friend who is X, I am therefore not Xist” line.

I hate that line. I hate it like I hate Marmite. Having a sister doesn’t make you a feminist –everybody at some point in their life was related to a woman. Given that about ten per cent of the world is gay, it would be odd if you weren’t friends with a queer person. It is not a get out of jail free card. You are making fun of one of the most integral parts of a person’s life. It’s not something you can change, even if it is something you can hide or repress with religious therapy.

Straight person, you don’t get to make the same gay jokes as a gay person does. You get to joke about your own issues. Like why women won’t sleep with you or why men don’t love you. I don’t know what your love lives are like. Oh wait, I do! Because straight people won’t stop telling me about them!

Hey, I can’t be heterophobic. I have straight friends!





## The Inner-workings of Teenaged Fandom



### MATT KWAN

Late in the morning after Anzac Day, I decided to watch some television. The best show on free-to-air was a weird morning show called The Circle, where four women of varying ages and physical attractiveness gather to talk about random things and laugh inappropriately. It was not particularly entertaining.

In the midst of this inanity, there was a cut to a news update of a Justin Bieber performance. Justin Bieber appeared to be a child singer incredibly popular among teenaged girls, thousands of whom had camped outside in various city locations in an attempt to see him in real life.

However, the over-excitement of his fans led to some negative consequences. There was vision of many Bieber fans being treated by ambulance officers and some subsequently being taken to hospital. One fan appeared to have suffered a significant leg injury, such was her excitement. The fans must have been quite feral, as instead of wading in with batons drawn to start a brawl, as is usual practice, the police officers on scene timidly stood there while Bieber was transported to the safety of the Channel Seven studio to perform some songs.

Not having a great deal of knowledge of Bieber, I did some research on the internet. I found out that he is, in fact, not a child, but sixteen years old. It appears that puberty has been very late in coming to him. I looked up some of his songs on Youtube, and saw that he has collaborated with Dirty South hip hop artist Ludacris, and is a friend of effete R'n'B singer Usher, who was very popular in the early 2000s.

I concluded that Bieber wears too much makeup, is a singer very dependent on electronic manipulation, and a mediocre dancer. He is also a freak of nature, because males of that age should firstly, speak with a more manly voice, and secondly, be much larger. Most of his female fans probably speak with deeper voices. Judging from his video for 'One Time', he is also not very good at picking up chicks.

I then considered why so many people liked him, or anyone, for that matter, with such rabidity. Why does he constantly draw crowds of thousands of young females? He is not even sexually mature.

It seems that this kind of mad fanaticism is a strictly female phenomenon. I have never witnessed scenes where wild men camp out overnight and then run shrieking through the streets, chasing the van of their favourite band. On the contrary, the fanaticism many young girls display towards their male idols is phenomenal.

I thought back to one morning in the October of 2007, just prior to the Federal Election, when I was

nineteen and a campaign volunteer, handing out campaign flyers to people going to real jobs. The flyer contained some information on economic policies and my T-shirt had a slogan about the economy on it.

During the course of this exercise, I was mobbed suddenly by several teenaged girls, all of whom were below the voting age. They subsequently decided to take a photo with me and take some of my campaign material. My street-stalling partner thought this was an incredibly funny event.

Ever since, I have used this as an example of my attractiveness to women. However, I look back and realise that the girls were attracted to me not just because I oozed manliness, but because they wanted to feel part of a cult. They wanted to be behind the ideals I represented, and they picked the best representation of those that they could find at the time. This just happened to be me, as I was much better-looking than my campaigning companion.

I believe this is how Justin Bieber gained his popularity. Having established moderate street credibility and the beginnings of a fan base, lured by pre-pubescent wholesomeness, the claws of ravenous young females latched on to the Justin Bieber marketing machine. Growing exponentially as more females decided to hitch their souls to Bieber, it has now become, well, a cult.

Yet, Justin Bieber is not exactly the finest male specimen in the land. Surely, the females of the world could have chosen better – at least someone pubescent.

I then thought back to a conversation that occurred between me, a male friend, and a female friend. The female friend informed the two of us males that a mutual male friend was someone she would like to adopt as a pet. We thought she was mad and did not understand this at all.

However, if this is indicative of female attitudes towards men, it provides insight into why females like Justin Bieber. He is not a dominating alpha male character. He is awkward, child-like and a bit silly, much like Macauley Culkin before he became a drug addict. These women are not interested in having sex with him, mainly because that requires Bieber undergoing puberty or investment in a strap on dildo. They want to make him their pet.

However, they do not want to possess Bieber himself. They want what Bieber represents. They want a young child to mould and dominate. Bieber just happens to be the peak representative of that ideal. Once Bieber grows up and either gets a real job or sings songs in lower keys, his fans will move on as he will have moved on and away. The new generation of girls will find something else, and this current generation of girls will discover politics and mob nineteen year-old street-stallers of the future.





# WRITING AUSTRALIANA

KYLAR LOUSSIKIAN

whilst flicking through the SMH on the way to a squat in Rozelle where I will drink for hours to the sounds of ABC Classic FM before heading to Cremorne for some sadness.

I am watching Caroline Overington on the ABC in my flat near Darlinghurst. I live here because I am an alcoholic and I even have some really interesting sexual perversions, but I cope because I buy a few longnecks on the way home and have a smoke with my mother who lives upstairs under her constant Australian sadness.

Sometimes, I swim naked in Tamarama because it is exhilarating and it's the only way, of course, that I could ever feel alive. The longnecks and the smokes make me feel alive, but they're killing me. That's okay, because I'll die soon enough anyway. At least I'll die under the Australian stars and dream about barren fields and long distant deserts and Nick Cave and Patrick White and Caroline Overington and the Sydney Morning Herald.

I think back to my backyard often, back to when we lived a happy family life on a half-acre out in the suburbs near the creek and the bush and the wallabies. My dad listened to the races on Radio National and we called in sometimes and discussed the etymology of English words with the host. By 'we', I mean him, the smartest electrician/plumber/all-round fish and chip paper bloke you'd ever see. I'd push my toy train backwards and forwards (sadly), driving it around the backyard (where all our alcoholic tendencies lay dormant) while waiting for my mother (long dead, explaining why my father hit me and our neighbours had died young and they had been promising young doctors so it was sadder still).

I think of why I failed at love, and now all I have is my boat and fishing-line out somewhere near Coogee, I think. I can't remember, because that's also recently gentrified, so perhaps closer to Darlington. That sounds edgy doesn't it? I drink alone instead, and sometimes I get a hooker and we make it all night long in my one bedroom apartment. I can hear the old man downstairs cough so I turn up the radio and drown him out with Nick Cave. It's been almost ten years since I listened to anything but Nick Cave. I spent the 1980s listening to The Go-Betweens and drinking cheap wine.

I catch my reflection in my broken mirror and I brush my three-day stubble. I can't afford the razor. Her name passes through my mind. I have trouble remembering it. Tomorrow night, I will use my money to buy a quart of gin and steal some more lines from Bukowski. I'll evoke the eucalyptus leaves and the smell of the Bondi sea spray and then I'll masturbate alone and send it in the morning to the publisher I met at the Sydney Writers Festival. I think they had offices in Potts Point.

I was once published in *The Sleepers Almanac*. It was a high point in my life and I was only forty. My dad was so proud he stopped hitting me, but this reminded me of something sad (it may have been the gentle crowing of the Galahs over a Manly sunset). Then I had this awful feeling of ennui (in many ways similar to the chirping of cicadas in the low scrub of the Garagal National Park) and remembered that if I can't be sad, I can be bored. God knows that's how my readers feel.

One Sunday we catch the ferry to Manly and have a picnic. Everyone is very happy but then watching the harbour lap up against the sandstone and kissing the salty lip of Elaine I again feel the weight of the world; all the four million people of Sydney crushing up against the windsurfers, the children playing the in rock pools and me.

I end the story with a poignant sentence and go down for more beers and smokes.





**Osman Faruqi**  
**SRC President**  
[o.faruqi@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:o.faruqi@arc.unsw.edu.au)

It's election time!

This week elections will be held to elect three student directors to the Arc Board as well as student representatives to Faculty Boards and Academic Board. The Arc Board is the governance arm of your student organisation and all members have the right to vote for their directors. Voting is done online and you should receive an email with more information this week. There's a lot of competition this year, so I recommend you find out as much about the candidates as you can (Facebook is a good place to start as most candidates have groups or fan pages) and then make an informed vote.

At the last Student Representative Council meeting a motion was unanimously passed in favour of moving the organisation towards being Fair Trade and environmentally and socially sustainable, as well as recommending that the University do the same. We're developing a number of environmental initiatives and programs and working with the University to develop their sustainability strategy. If you want to get involved in any of these projects or campaigns please send me an email at [srcpresident@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:srcpresident@arc.unsw.edu.au)

**James Still**  
**Welfare Officer**  
[j.still@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:j.still@arc.unsw.edu.au)

The Welfare Department has been super busy after organising an incredibly successful Student Welfare and Survival Week. We got things kicked off with the launch of the Cheapskate's Guide to UNSW and the Welfare Room. The next event was one of the best attended I have been part of organising since I started in the SRC. We had around 170 students turn up at CLB4 (which seats 110 – plenty of sitting in walkways and doorways!) to hear a presentation from Centrelink on the new changes to Youth Allowance. The participation from students was amazing, with so many questions being asked of Centrelink about reforms and eligibility.

We also participated in a nationwide webcast from the Centrelink General Manager about the changes to Youth Allowance! If you want to contact me for any reason drop me a line at [welfare@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:welfare@arc.unsw.edu.au).

Finally, check out this quote, I think you'll like the message:

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work!" -Thomas Edison

**Jessica Mobbs**  
**Womyn's Officer**  
[j.mobbs@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:j.mobbs@arc.unsw.edu.au)

Hello UNSWomyn and Men!

Well, something very exciting is coming up: the Womyn's version of Tharunka! We, the Womyn's Collective as well as some of the female Tharunka Editors and designers are putting our version of the mag together. So, to all female identifying students at UNSW, here is your chance to contribute to Womyn's Tharunka. Send in your articles, interviews, poems, photos, artworks, rants, experiences, cartoons, you name it, just send it in.

Also, there has been progress on the domestic violence front. The Community and Public Sector Union along with the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse (a research centre here at UNSW) is engaging with the Uni to try and get some measures to help women who have suffered domestic violence at home, some help within the work place. So basically making sure that because of the problems at home they don't have any repercussions at work. Very proud to say that Arc is also very supportive of this and will be implementing these clauses tout suite. If you need to contact me you can do so at [j.mobbs@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:j.mobbs@arc.unsw.edu.au)

**Nicola Karcz & Ben Noone**  
**Environment Officers**  
[n.karcz@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:n.karcz@arc.unsw.edu.au)

To our dear Tharunka readers,

You will not be surprised to know that the Enviro Collective has a whole lot of fun stuff going on at the moment. We're planning our trip to the annual Students of Sustainability conference, which is being held in Adelaide this year, from the 4th to the 9th of July.

This week-long event includes amazing workshops, rad skill-shares, and a famously scrumptious vegan menu that you won't want to miss. It's a little far to walk so we'll be getting the train together with a whole bunch of other students from Sydney then camping at Flinder's University while we're there.

If you're interested in coming along or just want to know what else we get up to then drop in to a meeting, Mondays 12-1 on the Quad Lawn, drop us a line at [enviro@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:enviro@arc.unsw.edu.au), or see our website: [unsw.envirocollective.com](http://unsw.envirocollective.com)





THARUNKEYS