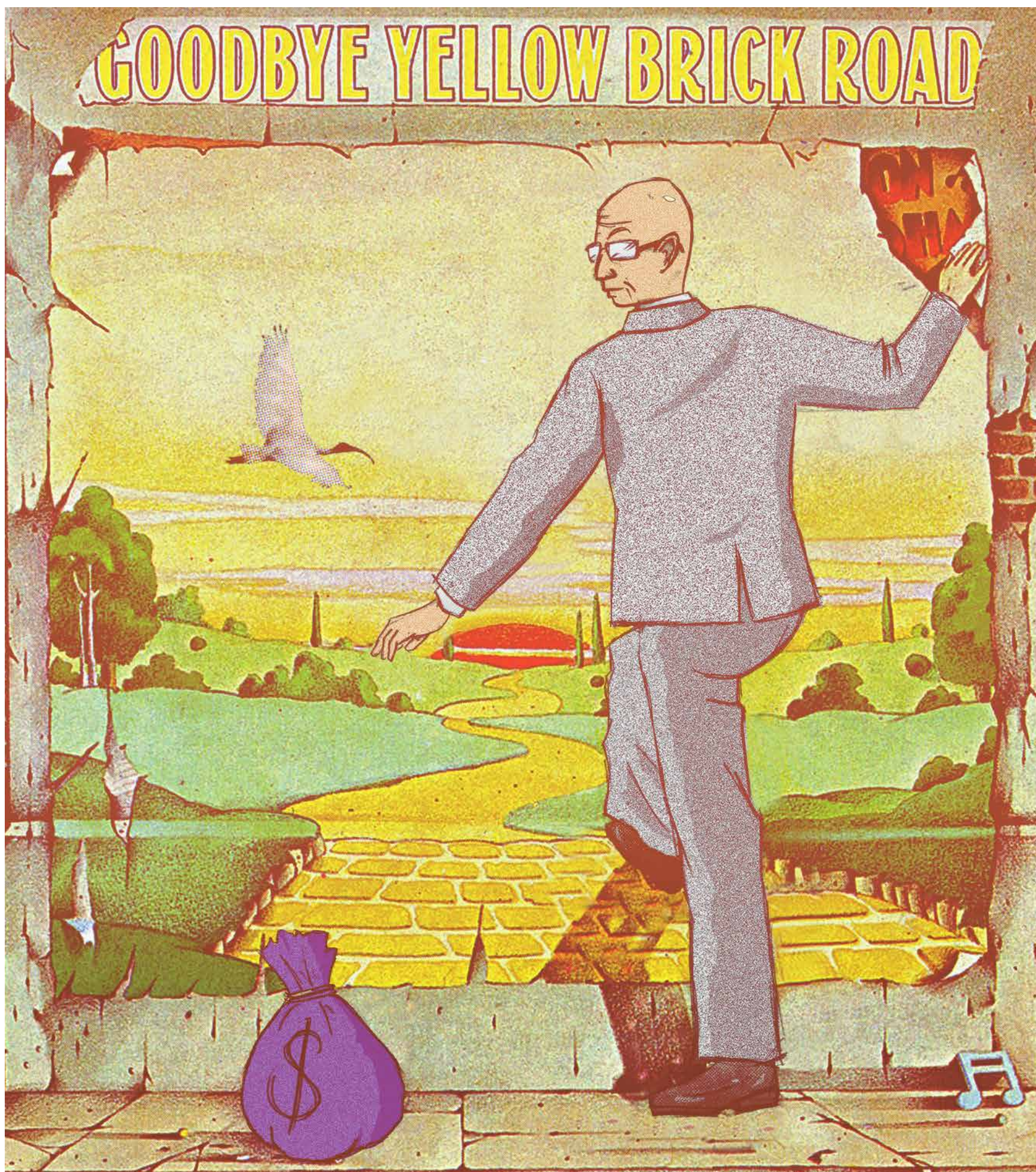


# THARUNKA

University of NSW's Independent Student Newspaper

FINISHED?  
RECYCLE ME OR,  
BETTER YET, SHARE  
ME WITH  
YOUR FRIENDS!







UNSW Tyree Energy Technologies  
Building Roof Solar Panels  
Image credit: Neerav Bhatt

# Editorial: A letter to the present and future Vice-Chancellors of UNSW

## Welcome to the last issue of *Tharunka* for 2014.

In more ways than one, it's the end of an era for UNSW, as we bid farewell to outgoing Vice-Chancellor, Professor Fred Hilmer, who will retire in early 2015 after spending nine years in the top job at UNSW, seeing his salary rise above \$1 million a year in the process.

What is remarkable about his tenure at UNSW is that Professor Hilmer was appointed to the role with the business acumen of having been at the helm of a major Australian company, Fairfax, during its slow and painful demise, and yet nobody batted an eyelid at the thought of giving this man control over a leading Australian research university.

What is more remarkable still is that, despite Professor Hilmer's lengthy tenure at UNSW, the fate that has marked Fairfax's gradual movement towards irrelevance has not befallen this University quite so extremely.

In his time at UNSW, Professor Hilmer has presided over the increased corporatisation of this University, spearheading the move to push smaller, cheaper food vendors off campus in order to allow large chain giants to set up shop with increasingly unaffordable food prices. The irony, UNSW students have told us to date, is that to afford eating at these food outlets, they are forced to work multiple jobs which leave them with no time to have the lazy lunches with friends so artfully depicted in UNSW's promotional material for prospective students.

To add to his many and varied lack of achievements,

Professor Hilmer has repeatedly refused to take a stand on fossil fuel divestment, even as the Australian National University made international headlines with its decision to stop investing in energy companies which are slowly corroding our planet.

UNSW invests \$50 million in fossil fuel stocks around the globe, \$44 million of which is invested in Australian equities. Universities occupy a unique role as the progenitors of innovation and advancements in society, and UNSW itself is a world leader in renewable energy research. Continuing to invest in fossil fuels shows a contemptible disregard for the planet that sustains us and the research pouring out of this University proving the unsustainability of fossil fuels.

Perhaps most significantly, Professor Hilmer has expended more energy than any Vice-Chancellor in Australia, rivalling ANU's Ian Young, in doggedly pursuing a political agenda of fee deregulation in the university sector. While the Australian Government has only advanced this proposition under Tony Abbott's Prime Ministership, Professor Hilmer has been ahead of the pack, spending the better part of his nine years as Vice-Chancellor arguing for fee deregulation on every media platform that will take him.

If Hilmer has shown a contemptible disregard for the environment through his rejection of fossil fuel divestment, the same can easily be said about his contemptible disregard for students, who have overwhelmingly indicated time and time again that they do not want increases in university fees.

Professor Hilmer, we're calling it now: you have

been a selfish Vice-Chancellor, and this University will not miss you.

The incoming Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Jacobs of the University of Manchester, now has the opportunity to show leadership in shaping a truly collaborative University that undertakes real consultation with its largest stakeholder: students.

Professor Jacobs, the tenure of your predecessor has shown that UNSW is an institution that can weather the strongest of mismanagement storms.

We believe that you can do better.

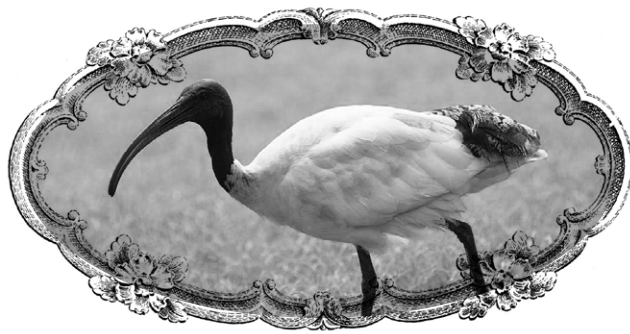
You have the chance to make UNSW the leading choice of Australian students by bucking the groupthink of the Group of Eight universities, and implementing real change that affects generations of students. Fossil fuel divestment, fee deregulation and food affordability on campus are just three of the biggest concerns students share regarding their future. Consultation with the student body will easily unearth the rest.

The opportunity to shape a public institution of the stature of UNSW is not one that comes around often. Professor Jacobs, that opportunity is now yours. If you choose to listen, you will have 56,000 students, and millions more Australians, behind you. If you do not, your name will blend into obscurity on the long list of Go8 Vice-Chancellors who have wasted the opportunity to truly lead their universities in difficult times.

UNSW is at a crossroads. Which path will you take?

**-Ammy, Freya & Tina**





# Agony Ibis

**Dear Agony Ibis,**

Something happened to me recently and I'm still recovering from it. And when I finally fall asleep, I see them again in my nightmares. They come for me, no matter what. It happens over and over and it's always the same. Their eyes follow me, seek me out. Their hands claw at me, shoving flyers into my hands. Their shirts surround me, like some twisted Christmas theme. Some of them are wearing bucket hats. I fear for my life. I try to run but there is no escape.

I wake up in a sweat and I know that it's not election week anymore but I still see them, still feel them pushing against me. The campaigners are everywhere and I can't shake them. I scream in my sleep, "I have to get to class!", "I'm not interested!", "I'm exercising my right to abstain from voting", then finally "I ALREADY VOTED!"

The first crowd moves away, satiated, but the walkway stretches ahead of me and I know that at least five more will approach me before I can truly escape. I've never been this inconvenienced.

How do I rid myself of these nightmares? How do I stop living in fear? Will I spend the rest of my university career fearing the one week my status as student is suddenly valuable? I fear I won't be the same... at least until I graduate.

**Begging for help and mercy.**

**A. Student**

**Dear A. Student,**

First off, remember that you are not alone. Election week is a stressful time for everyone and there are probably many out there like you, still recovering from the difficulty of having to change their walking routes or deal with strangers desperately trying to take five minutes of your time.

My best advice is to face your fears; seek out someone who was in one of those t-shirts and have a talk to them. Better yet, make up a flyer outlining the situation for them and then accost them on a walkway. Follow them even as they do their best to shake you off. Ask

them personal questions in order to engage them then twist the conversation to suit your purpose. Try physically blocking their path. Get some friends together and cage them in.

Alternatively, try talking to them about the SRC. Find out why they've been cutting class all week to hassle you. Do you know what the SRC does? Me neither, perhaps you could write back when you find out and we could both know? But judging by how many people were out there and how hard they fought, it seems kind of important.

It's almost as if they're trying to get positions where they make a lot of key decisions about your university using funding that comes from your uni fees. Maybe it very directly involves you? Who knows, maybe it even involves this newspaper? I kind of wish there were someone to tell me.

Wait.

**Yours,**

**Agony Ibis**





# Fewer internship places for med grads despite doctor shortage

Nick Timms

**Approximately 240 medicine students in Australia will not be given an internship placement at the end of this year despite a continuing shortage of doctors in many Australian regions, according to a national audit of offers by the National Medical Intern Data Management Working Group.**

Meanwhile, many areas of rural and regional Australia are still in need of doctors. The figures have sparked debate on whether or not more funding is required for the Commonwealth Medical Initiative (CMI) that would help guarantee internships for all students.

A health spokesperson for the Australian Greens, and a former GP, Dr Richard Di Natale, has expressed concern about this figure.

"Completing a medical internship is essential for a graduate to work as a doctor in Australia. Without an internship, a medical degree is useless," Senator Di Natale says.

"Regions of Australia continue to suffer from doctor shortages and inadequate medical internship opportunities will make the problem worse."

The Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) has expressed disappointment in the fact that such a large number of graduates from Australian medical schools will be unable to practise in Australia.

"As regions of Australia continue to suffer from doctor shortages, it is nonsensical to be wasting another cohort of medical graduates," Jessica Dean, the President of AMSA says.

"Completing an internship is an essential process for a graduate to work as a doctor in Australia. If the government is serious about correcting the ongoing doctor shortage, it only makes sense to completely utilise the graduating Australian workforce."

The Commonwealth Medical Initiative, developed to help internationally born Australian graduates complete an internship in Australia, promised up to 100 places. However, last year it only placed 76 graduates.

"The CMI initiative is a welcome addition to the medical training landscape. However, the addition of 76 places may still leave over 160 medical graduates who will be forced to take their skills overseas," Ms Dean says.

"Last year the CMI initiative was oversubscribed with 183 applicants for 76 positions. These graduates not only want to work in Australia, they are even happy to relocate to work in areas of need; rural and regional Australia; isn't this the answer we are looking for? By failing to facilitate training opportunities, Australia is allowing itself become a victim of brain drain."

Nikela Tillekeratne, a US citizen and a first-year UNSW medicine student, is concerned that due to the potential shortage of internships in Australia, she may have to relocate back to the USA for her internship.

"I've been told that because of the internship crisis, a lot of international students will have to go back to their home countries to do their internships," she says.

"As an international student, I fear that if I don't get an internship, I will

have no choice but to go back to the US to do my internship and complete my studies there. And then if I go back to the US, I will hopefully get an internship there, which is also difficult, because since I studied outside the US, I might be lower on their priority list, so I'm kind of in a really bad situation here."

Nikela has also noticed that other international medicine students at UNSW might be in a similar position.

"I know there are a lot of international students in med, and I'm pretty sure that a lot of them are in a similar situation. A lot of them are in Singapore [and] Sri Lanka, [and] they'll probably have to do the same thing," she says.

"One of my really close friends is from Singapore, but she's a Sri Lankan resident. She's a fourth-year med [student], and she's in the same situation: she thinks she might have to go back to Sri Lanka to study."

According to Nikela, UNSW is renowned for its high rates of securing internship placements for its graduates.

"UNSW is known [for] giving internships to all of its graduates. I think for last year's class, they got all of their students internships," she says.

"But they're saying it's getting worse, so maybe for this class, some people might not get internships; next year it might be worse. But you can never tell because I have five more years to go, so you really have no idea what can happen in that amount of time, whether it gets better or worse."

Nikela says that at UNSW, preference for internships is given to local students, as opposed to other universities where academics are seen as the key selector.

"Right now I think for UNSW it's usually local students [who] get internships and international students don't. That's how they're separating it," she says.

"At [the University of] Queensland, they do it around academics, so it doesn't matter if you're an international student or a local; if your academics are good enough then you'll get an internship. So in Queensland there are local students who haven't gotten internships."

Ms Dean says that action from the government is needed to alleviate this situation, as international students should not be at a disadvantage.

"These students have spent up to 6 years immersed in Australian culture, learning our diseases, and training in our healthcare system. They are perfectly suited to serve Australia. They just need to be given a chance," she says.

"AMSA is calling on the government to invest in the future of healthcare and provide Australia with the healthcare system it needs."

The Greens have listened to this call and wish to stand with AMSA.

"Insufficient medical internship placements will also impact on our ability to attract international students to Australian universities, compromising an important export industry," Senator Di Natale says.

"The Australian Greens stand with the Australian Medical Students Association in calling on the government and opposition to expand funding to the Commonwealth Medical Initiative (CMI) to guarantee internships for all Australian medical students."



Image credit: unnottingham via flickr



Image credit: Gana Tronic via flickr

# Cheap laughs still gagging diversity

Michaela Vaughan @mvaughan101

**Australian comedian and presenter Adam Hills is a celebrated and admired entertainer who is renowned for his positive and cheeky humour. However, Hills's performance has progressed a lot since he first started out, and the substance of his material has changed. In 2012, the comedian commented that early in his career, he would single out groups of people in his audience.**

"There was no reason for me to talk down to them, it was purely because that's what I thought you did in comedy."

Since then, Hills subscribes to the belief that comedy should be about uplifting people and has enjoyed much success because of this. Hills remarked, "Now, whenever I talk to the audience, I'm not going to put people down...I want them to leave feeling better than they felt when they came in."

Unfortunately, many Australians continue to derive and seek out humour that ridicules and belittles minority groups. Females, in particular, have long been an easy target, and such negativity in the workplace is no exemption. Merely 14 women are in the top 200 richest people in Australia, with Gina Rinehart the only woman in the top 10. It is no surprise that women find it very difficult to rise to the top – amongst many, many other things, they bare the brunt of unparalleled sexist jokes and behaviour.

The recent scandal between Wallabies business manager Di Patston and gifted rugby player Kurtley Beale is an exemplary case of the destructive nature of supposedly "harmless" sexist jokes. Beale accidentally copied Patston into a group message earlier this year that was intended to degrade his colleague in a sexual manner – as a joke. When Patston found out, she sent the following message to Beale: "...I have earned this job and I am proud of being a female at this level. If I complain then I make it hard for women in Rugby and it puts the reputation of the entire squad at stake." Although the ARU has stated that it will investigate this workplace sexual harassment, Patston has since resigned from the humiliation and stress of the incident. What we see here is the pervasive use of sexist humour throughout a workplace, which has the effect of restraining any number of brilliant female co-workers from reaching their best.

The modern-day feminist (i.e. one who believes in equality) is depicted as grave and angry. Laura Bates, founder of the "Everyday Sexism" project wrote: "The idea of the humourless feminist is an incredibly potent and effective silencer. It is used to isolate and alienate young girls; to ridicule and dismiss older women, to force women in the workplace to 'join in the joke' and, in the media, to castigate protest to the point of obliteration."

The tangle of stereotypes that feminism is caught up in successfully reduces much of the feminist debate to debunking myths of what feminism actually is. Instead

of discussing what can be done to improve the lives of people everywhere through feminist philosophies, feminists find themselves convincing naysayers that they don't hate men and they aren't stone cold. The UN's HeForShe campaign is very much about making feminism palatable for men, and I fail to see how it will ever bring about real change to historically oppressive power structures.

Despite this, I am still hopeful that we will make more progress and will see an Australia that pays their employees equally for their contributions, where parents will have an equal opportunity to get custody of their children, and that partners will have no problems sharing the financial load, if they chose to do so. A 2011 study in the scientific journal *PLOS One* found that infants as young as 15-months-old had an innate sense of fairness. I truly believe that everyone has the capability to share in the feminist agenda – it just takes a willingness to understand. However, I think Australian feminist author Clementine Ford said it best when she said:

"History has given women lots of reasons to hate men and to be angry. And that anger is real and men should feel ashamed for having caused it. It's okay to be angry. It's okay to hate the patriarchy and how it benefits men. It's okay to talk about male privilege. The men who understand these things and who truly care about women's rights and liberation will join your war cry and the world will be a better place for it. Get behind us or get out of the fucking way."

# Threat of random decapitation cows Australians into accepting de facto police state

Matthew Bugden

(@matthewpbugden)

Parliament passed the National Security Amendment Bill (No.1) 2014 in late September, giving unlimited powers to ASIO and secret police to investigate and monitor ordinary Australians without needing a warrant.

The passage of the bill followed an apparent ISIS plot to publicly behead a random Australian in Sydney.

There is no shortage of punditry discussing the legislation, which independent federal Member of Parliament Andrew Wilkie calls the first step towards a "police state". This is so, despite the issue being effectively sideswiped by the banning of the niqab in Parliament House, which has focused the moral outrage of young progressives away from the terrifying piece of legislation.

But what has made Australians so accepting of secret police being given unlimited warrantless powers? It is quite simply the advent of the random decapitation "meme".

The powerful and overriding fear of having one's head separated from their body with a sharp object has effectively put irrational, racially based fear back into the heads of the average Australian.

Writes one anonymous Zero Hedge contributor:

"Remember, when the power structure sees a meme is working they double and triple down on it. With the beheading videos effectively pushing the American public back into a post-9/11 fetal position, it became clear that the fear of 'beheadings' is enough to send the Western public into a total panic state."

The reason for the effectiveness of the random decapitation meme is that it could happen anywhere.

The post-9/11 period, where it was possible to avoid being a victim of a terrorist attack simply by steering clear of high-density metropolitan areas, buses and trains, public buildings, tourist traps, commercial jetliners and Bali is no more.

With random decapitation, there is no designated zone to avoid. You are just as likely to be decapitated in a warehouse in the Sutherland Shire as you are in the middle of the QVB.

But the random decapitation jihadist movement is so much more than just random ubiquitous, non-class divisive paranoia. The practise heralds the new "Youtube" (or LiveLeak)-famous era of

Islamic terrorism.

The social media-obsessed jihadist may strike one as unsettlingly post-modern, but it nonetheless represents the logical next step in fundamentalist Islamic youth culture. A culture that was already so bizarre and frenetic that, in many ways, it reminds one of young Christian boys that skateboard, gauge their earlobes and generally do things

British Muhajireen Brigade, an offshoot of ISIS, were posting Instagram selfies of themselves "on jihad" in Syria. Much like the Australian backpacking through South America, these young Muslim men were posting these photos for one reason: to try to make others jealous of their holiday. In these photos and captions, jihad was made to look like the perfect balance of Western excess and

see "pimped out" "rides", swimming pools, AK-47s, and even a solid gold bar pilfered from the home of a local Syrian official. Even with the X-Pro II filter distortion, looking at these photos, it is not to see the ISIS "brand" for what it is: a shoddy and absurdly hypocritical attempt to reconcile Western millennial youth culture with solemn religious fundamentalism.

These young male jihadists are a textbook case of confused young men with an identity crisis. In the photos, they clearly model themselves on the gang-banger-thug-hoodlum subgroup of American underclass society, made up of mostly African-American and Latino males ostracised because of their race, who objectify and degrade Western women as "sluts" while worshipping their own mothers and sisters as matriarchs.

One Instagram was captioned:

"To the sisters: What are you waiting for? Your husbands clothes need washing! (I'm joking) but seriously what are you waiting for? You may wear your veils without being harassed, no woman is harmed here and if she is there is a harsh penalty as the woman's honour is not to be tampered with whatsoever, there are plenty of mujahideen desiring to get married who have some of the most loving and softest characters I have ever witnessed even though they are lions in the battlefield, there are orphans here waiting for mothers to love them the way their parents would have. Come to the land of honour. You are needed here."

It is a caution often given by media pundits like CNN's Anderson Cooper that, after a shooting, one should specifically not mention the shooter's identity so as not to encourage copycat killers. In countries like Australia, where restrictions on gun ownership make mass shootings' notoriety practically speaking impossible, the next best thing is to kill in a distinctive, visceral way.

Decapitation is ideal in this regard, since it is cheap and easy. The home-grown terrorist doesn't need any technical knowledge – he doesn't have to google "how to make a bomb powerful enough to kill a small crowd of people", or fly to Northern Iraq to train with the mujahideen – in either case, he would likely be instantly flagged by ASIO as a person of interest and put on a no-fly list.

Thanks to the random decapitation "meme", all Australian Muslim extremists need to become a jihadist is a knife, possibly a car to transport the victim to a secure location, and last but not least, a video camera.



Australian POW seconds before being decapitated

that seem like they should be sins, but by a strict literalist interpretation of the Bible, are technically not sins – in order to compensate for a belief system that would otherwise alienate them from their secular peers.

This is one of the less-spoken-of ways in which ISIS has managed to distinguish itself from regular grassroots jihadist movements – by attempting to portray jihad as "cool" and "hip" in order to recruit moderate Muslim youths from Western countries, who hold Western passports.

In December, VICE reported that the

Muslim self-denial.

"We got Internet, phones, cheese burgers lol pizza, markets, schools for children, classes for adults, shariah courts and all sorts!"

Sure, they posted pictures of themselves practising their marksmanship and exercising, but you went away with an overall impression that ISIS is not your average conservative terrorist outfit.

Indeed, they seemed to have a distinctly Western "work hard-play hard" attitude towards their terrorist vocation.

Scrolling through their selfies, you





# Frenchy gives Tharunka a verbal Brazilian

Cameron Reddin @CameronReddin

**After years of paying his dues in the classroom, comedian and YouTube sensation Ben French, commonly known as Frenchy, is about to graduate to the big time.**

With a new agent in tow, French is preparing for a national tour, with stand up shows in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane over the coming months. He has also reserved a special performance in his hometown of Wollongong.

French migrated north to Surry Hills last year to study film at the SAE Institute and is proud to fly the flag for his beloved "Gong".

"I love it. A lot of people in the city don't go to Wollongong. They just think it's derro, so I just do whatever I want. Literally, it's the best get out ever. I could just not pay for stuff and be like – oh, sorry I'm from Wollongong, I'll just bring it back tomorrow!"

His first headline stand up show "Frenchy: Live and Lanky" at Marrickville's Factory Floor was the first hour-long performance of his career and drew around 300 people across the three nights in September.

"What's cool about the comedy progression is that it prepares you. You start doing five-minute spots and you get really good, then you do some ten-minute spots and start emceeing," French said.

"I had about 70 to 80 minutes of straight material, but if I did 10 to 20 minutes on the go then I'd cut some out."

French gained initial attention through his comedy skits on Facebook and YouTube. His YouTube channel, "Frenchy Sungaattack", was originally a band project between French and a friend, and it has since drawn 80,000 subscribers and over 12 million views.

"I still have everything labelled 'Sungaattack' and it sh\*t's me to this day. I could have just called it 'Frenchy Comedy', it'd make so much more sense. It's not even a good story," he laughed.

A sunga is the Brazilian equivalent of a speedo.

"I don't know [why I named everything 'Sungaattack']. This is why I should never get a tattoo, I thought it was so funny at the time and then an hour later I'm like 'that was dumb'."

French will show videos to anyone he can to make sure they are good enough to post online. He works closely with Tom Armstrong from comedy group the Roundabout Crew on several of his videos.

"The Around Girlfriends vs Around Mates videos I started about six months after I broke up with my ex, and she sent me a message saying 'some of these situations seem very familiar'," he laughed.

"I like the Around Girlfriend character. Once you get that concept, if you can get one you can do a million videos for, it writes itself."

Relying on mates' rates for much of the production process, French also works with videographer and friend Rory Anderson's company LAWW Media on some of the bigger videos.

"If I ever get any TV stuff, he's my guy. I'll be able to pay him and he'll get to shoot some good stuff," French

said.

"It's all mates helping out, but I know they're giving their time out for me, so they get their own little rewards – a little bit of fame and a bit of fun."

An avid watcher of comedy galas, French knew deep down it was what he wanted to do. He worked as a substitute teacher at several high schools while he built his profile as a comedian, but he struggled to see a career in comedy materialising.

It was only when the choice was taken out of his hands that he started to focus on comedy professionally.

"My [teaching] license is technically suspended. Okay, it's actually suspended," he said with a grin.

Earlier this year, the Department of Education and Communities contacted French telling him that his YouTube videos were unprofessional and that they did not fulfil his contract as a teacher.

"They gave me a list of the videos that don't meet the standards of a teacher and that was every single one."

The cancellation of his license drove French to pursue his passion for comedy. He took the notice as a wake-up call to chase what he really wanted to do with his professional life. He decided not to renew his license at the end of his suspension.

"It motivates you to do what you really want when you're in a sh\*t job, like – 'I can't do this for the rest of my life'."





Image: Wikipedia

# USYD fails female students in more ways than one:

Thom Mitchell investigates the double standard by which the University has been operating when it comes to defending the safety and privacy of their students.

In May last year, Alexander Wright – a student, employee and resident at the University of Sydney – took a naked photo of a woman at his campus accommodation during sex without her knowledge or consent.

He later showed the photo to numerous people off his mobile phone.

The University, and more importantly the law, appear to have failed the victim, who has suffered ongoing harassment.

“I’ve been groped, there have been rumours about me. Before I introduce myself people make sexualised comments towards me,” the woman told news.com.au’s Rebecca Sullivan.

“The photo became a badge of honour for him. It became a manhood thing. I feel like a prize or an award to be won, as though men think if they sleep with me, then they can prove they’re a man,” she said.

The victim has drawn attention to the wider issues around the sexualisation of women, telling news.com.au: “I do not

want the man that abused me to be the scapegoat. I don’t think he is the big issue here. He’s part of the problem. There are wider issues on campus and his actions have just highlighted that.”

Wright has avoided prosecution by police due to a legal loophole, exposing the barriers to justice faced by victims of sexual harassment.

In late October, about six months after Sydney University was made aware of the sexual harassment, USYD advised *Tharunka* that they had finally terminated Wright’s employment as a resident liaison officer at the University-owned and operated campus accommodation.

Wright continues to live and study on campus.

In a signed letter of apology, a copy of which has been obtained by *Tharunka*, Wright admits to taking a photo of the woman “in a state of undress” and without her knowledge or consent.

“I showed it to other students that we both know,” Wright also confessed in

the letter, which deploys language that shares an uncanny resemblance with the wording used in the law that provided a legal loophole allowing Wright to escape charges.

Under NSW law, it is illegal to photograph a person “in a state of undress...for the purpose of obtaining, or enabling another person to obtain, sexual arousal or sexual gratification” knowing that consent is not given.

Wright could have faced two years in jail for such actions, but he escaped charges due to a legal loophole.

The offence, which police say is covered under sections 91K and 91L of the Crimes Act, is a summary offence, and charges can not be laid (except in “aggravating” circumstances) if the incident is reported more than six months after it occurred.

The victim only learned of the photos’ existence eight months after it was taken.

She reported the incident to police,

but because the six-month limitation dates from the time the photograph was taken, Wright has not been charged.

“A photo doesn’t stop being a photo after six months,” the woman told *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

She said the photo shows her with her eyes closed, her face, breast, torso and part of her groin exposed.

Apparently, criminal law expects that such a photograph would lose its power to hurt, humiliate and sexualise a woman in a public and degrading way after six months.

The fact that criminal law – which acts to express societies’ values and delineate what are acceptable behaviours through punishment by the state – has not acted to reprimand Wright says something very bleak about the way the female body is sexualised and objectified.

The University of Sydney has also come under fire for not publicly punishing Wright.

The University has refused to provide



## “A system silent on sexual harassment - one woman’s experience highlights broader problems at U Syd and in the law.”

details of what punishment Wright has faced, but a spokesperson said that he had been reprimanded.

Defending this secrecy, the spokesperson said, “The University views student discipline as a matter between the institution and the student concerned.

“Making this information public is not part of the punishment for any student.”

The late decision to remove Wright from his position as a resident liaison officer followed talks with a Student Consultative Committee about the University’s handling of a sexual harassment complaint, the University spokesperson said.

Wright’s position was unpaid, and it “does not involve pastoral care but requires a high standard of personal conduct and behaviour to be maintained at all times”.

Wright’s position may not have involved “pastoral care”, but he did exercise some authority over younger students in his job as a resident liaison officer, and he continued to do so for the six months it took for the University to sack him.

In late October, *Honi Soit*, USYD’s student newspaper, detailed the University’s investigation, taking aim at the process which appears to be “shrouded in bureaucracy and secrecy”.

“I had to fight to get Student Affairs to consider it a breach of misconduct and investigate my claim. It took months to process it [from January to August],” the woman told *Honi*.

The University eventually facilitated a meeting between Wright and the woman in May this year, months after the woman reported the harassment.

The University “was reluctant to proceed with any such meeting, offered little to no assistance, and [the victim] had to push them to organise a meeting,” according to *Honi Soit*.

“I had to fight for it,” the woman said.

“I was told to run the meeting and was given no help or direction from the Head of Student Affairs.

“I was not kept up to date with the investigation and would often not hear from Student Affairs for weeks. Towards the end of the investigation Student Affairs would not return my calls or emails. I had to push them to find out if the case had been closed or not.”

At the May meeting, the victim asked Wright to make a public apology in the student newspaper, but *Tharunka* understands that Wright has not done so.

*Honi* reported that Wright had agreed to the woman’s request, but the University spokesperson told *Tharunka* that Wright “gave no undertaking to make an

apology of this nature”.

Despite Wright’s confession of guilt, “The University took the view that any action [including a public apology] that followed from the meeting should be the students’ choice,” according to the spokesperson.

The University would not facilitate a second meeting and told the woman it was her responsibility to do so, according to the report by *Honi*.

However, the victim said it was “not possible for me to organise all the parties [his friends especially] to attend an apology meeting”.

Responding to the University’s taciturn response, the victim told *The Sydney Morning Herald* that “justice done in the dark can’t be seen to be justice”.

Wright’s actions have also been concealed by a decision made by the University’s Student Representative Council (SRC), which pushed *Honi Soit* to censor their original story.

The paper retracted Wright’s name and image within five hours of the story being published, after the SRC was contacted by the University and other parties who expressed concerns for the “privacy” and “safety” of the perpetrator.

The editorial team of *Honi* was critical of the SRC’s instruction but said they were “bound to comply” with decisions made by the organisation that prints and funds the paper.

This is not the first time the paper has been censored.

Last year, a front cover featuring close-up photographs of 18 Sydney University women’s vaginas in a non-sexualised way was blocked at the eleventh hour.

The cover was intended to draw attention to unnatural and unrealistic perceptions of the vagina, but according to legal advice given to the SRC, the photographs contravened section 578 of the Crimes Act.

The eighteen women whose vaginas had been photographed for the cover responded in a statement published by *Honi Soit*:

“We are tired of society giving us a myriad of things to feel about our own bodies. We are tired of having to attach anxiety to our vaginas. We are tired of vaginas being either artificially sexualised (see: porn) or stigmatised (see: censorship and airbrushing). We are tired of being pressured to be sexual, and then being shamed for being sexual.

“The vaginas on the cover are not sexual. We are not always sexual. The vagina should and can be depicted in a non-sexual way – it’s just another body part. ‘Look at your hand, then look at your vagina,’ said one participant in the project.

Can we really be so naïve to believe our vaginas the dirtiest, sexiest parts of our body?”

The paper was eventually published with thick black bars obscuring each woman’s vulva – which the Crimes Act considers to be “indecent articles”.

The consensual publication of the photographs, which the women considered empowering, could have resulted in a maximum of 12 months jail time.

And yet, Wright has avoided criminal charges because his actions were not known to the victim for more than six months.

Presumably he continued to share the image – which the woman says was even shown at parties – until police deleted the photograph eight months after it was taken.

That criminal law condemns the publication of a newspaper cover designed to empower women by challenging unhealthy and unreal perceptions about the female body, while at the same time effectively excusing the distribution of a secret, sexualising image of a woman that has caused incredible anguish, is deeply wrong.

That Sydney University took six months to remove Wright from his employment, has refused to publicly disclose what other forms of punishment

Wright has faced, and has pressured the SRC to censor Wright’s identity, sends a deeply worrying message.

Wright’s victim has called on the Vice-Chancellor of Sydney University to “speak out publicly against what has happened to me and what has happened to other students as well”.

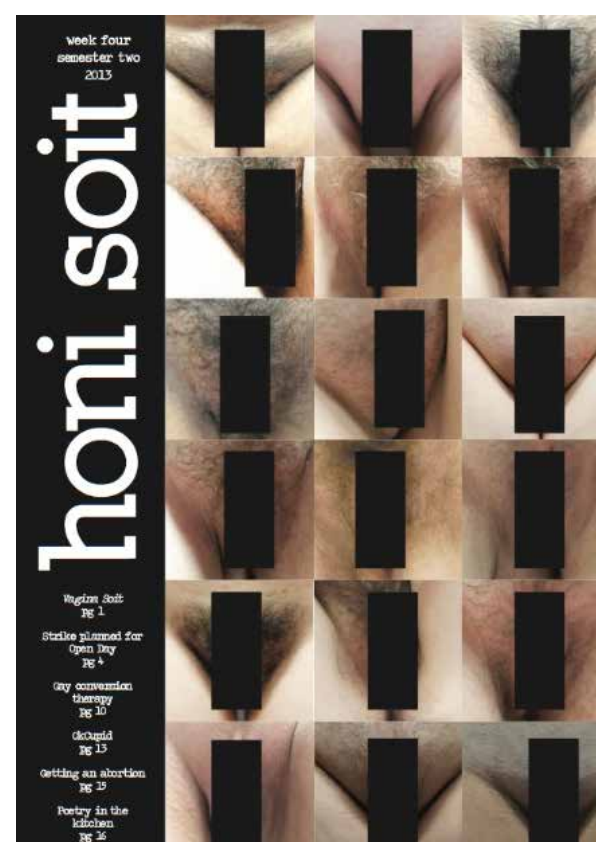
The University’s spokesperson told *Tharunka* that the Vice-Chancellor was engaged in ongoing discussions regarding “suggested improvements to the University’s processes to handle such complaints”.

However, *Tharunka* understands that Dr Spence has not publicly condemned Wright’s actions.

The woman told news.com.au that her experience highlighted a broader problem with “rape culture at Sydney University”.

Her experience of sexual harassment highlights a broader culture of patriarchy, too.

The woman’s ordeal demonstrates how that culture is propped up by bad laws and the silence and inaction of institutions like Sydney University – an institution that should be leading the way in addressing the overwhelming sexualisation and structural disadvantage faced by women.



Honi Soit Women's Issue cover (original via [mamamia.com.au/news/honi-soit-vagina-cover-image-nsfw](http://mamamia.com.au/news/honi-soit-vagina-cover-image-nsfw))



# Some time in Ollie's Room

Michaela Vaughan @mvaughan101

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Elsie stood outside on the narrow balcony and tossed a half-eaten apple into the neighbour's garden. She would have eaten the whole thing but a nasty bruise had stained one side of the fruit making it inedible. She liked apples not so much for their sweetness but rather for their texture. She enjoyed their crunch and flood of juice, and the contrast of the film-like skin with the fleshy centre. She made a good throw of the unwanted apple and hit the mailbox of the adjoining terrace. Elsie sauntered back inside the bedroom and flopped on the mattress on the floor and prodded the sleeping man awake.

"Hey bugalugs," she clicked, "its almost midday."

"Yeah, alright," Oliver grumbled and rubbed the heels of his hands into his straining eyes.

Elsie reclined back onto the mattress and looked up at the ceiling. It had a nice facade, although she knew nothing of such workmanship, and could only admire the aesthetics of the shapes encasing the room. A small mouldy bloom conquered a region of ceiling just above their heads.

"You should do something about that mould, Ollie," Elsie offered. "It might actually do some damage if you don't stop it."

"Yeah, I know," Ollie croaked, still struggling to get his eyes open. "It's just not such an easy thing to fix. This house is so old, so I think it has something to do with that."

Oliver rolled over and nuzzled the side of Elsie's ribcage. She was warm and had the sweet scent of sweat. He was pleased he didn't have to be anywhere for a few hours and savoured the moment, squashing his face into her slender body. Elsie placed her delicate hand beneath Ollie's head and gently scratched the ridge of his skull.

"You know, I once made my mum vomit from a mouldy lunchbox," Elsie chirped. "I left it in my schoolbag over two weeks of holidays and whatever was in there had gone completely festy. She was quite unhappy with me but cleaned it anyway. What a woman. I might have even been in high school."

"Elise, that's disgusting," Ollie interjected.

"I suppose it is," Elsie contemplated.

Oliver removed himself from Elsie's body and slowly lumbered over to his chest of drawers to find some clean clothes. After rummaging for a while Ollie was satisfied with his choice and turned to face the young girl. As he did so he caught sight of her bandaged upper arm. He had forgotten momentarily about that incident a few days previously. A splinter of guilt cracked his good mood and ignited a vignette of painful memories.

"How's your arm?" Oliver enquired after a pause.

"It's not too bad. But I should take some painkillers soon," Elsie responded. "Actually, would it be possible for you to help me undress the wound and put a new bandage on? Its hard for me to do one-handed."

"I can do that," said Oliver with a smile.

Ollie turned to get changed as Elsie begun to remove the tape securing the bandage. Her fingernails edged between her skin and the tape and slowly lifted the soiled, woven material. The stench of the gash was overwhelming and quickly filled the space of the small room. The sore was thoroughly infected and was coated in a gluggy, yellow pus. Bits of tissue appeared to be rotting and blood was still congealed on the side of the wound. The surrounding area of skin was purple-grey and hot with inflammation. This was not good.

"I just remembered I've got to go somewhere," stammered Oliver as he spontaneously made for the door. "I'll be back soon, you'll be right won't you? I've just got to do some things but I'll come back with coffees."

Before Elsie had a moment to respond, Oliver nipped out the door and galloped down the stairs. Dazed and confused, she stood up from the mattress and walked out onto the balcony. She watched Oliver step out onto the street and jump into his '90s model burgundy car. The engine spluttered initially but soon roared to life and the car zoomed down to the end of the street. Elsie, feeling resigned and dejected, decided all she could do was to wait outside for Oliver to come home, leaving her wound exposed.





## *Healing*

The lumpy scar on the small of her back is the only apparent sign she underwent a major operation this week. She flicks through the free digital TV channels. It's a shame she'll miss the light festival in the city this year – but she's asked her daughter to take some photographs for her. She alternates between lying around (healing) and standing about (far too much) cooking things in the kitchen. Her ex-husband drops off a basket of lemons from the tree at his place. She makes marmalade. Yesterday she made a jar of lemon butter. It took far too many lemons and far too much of the day.

Her daughter asks her how she is feeling.

Bored and tired of lemons.

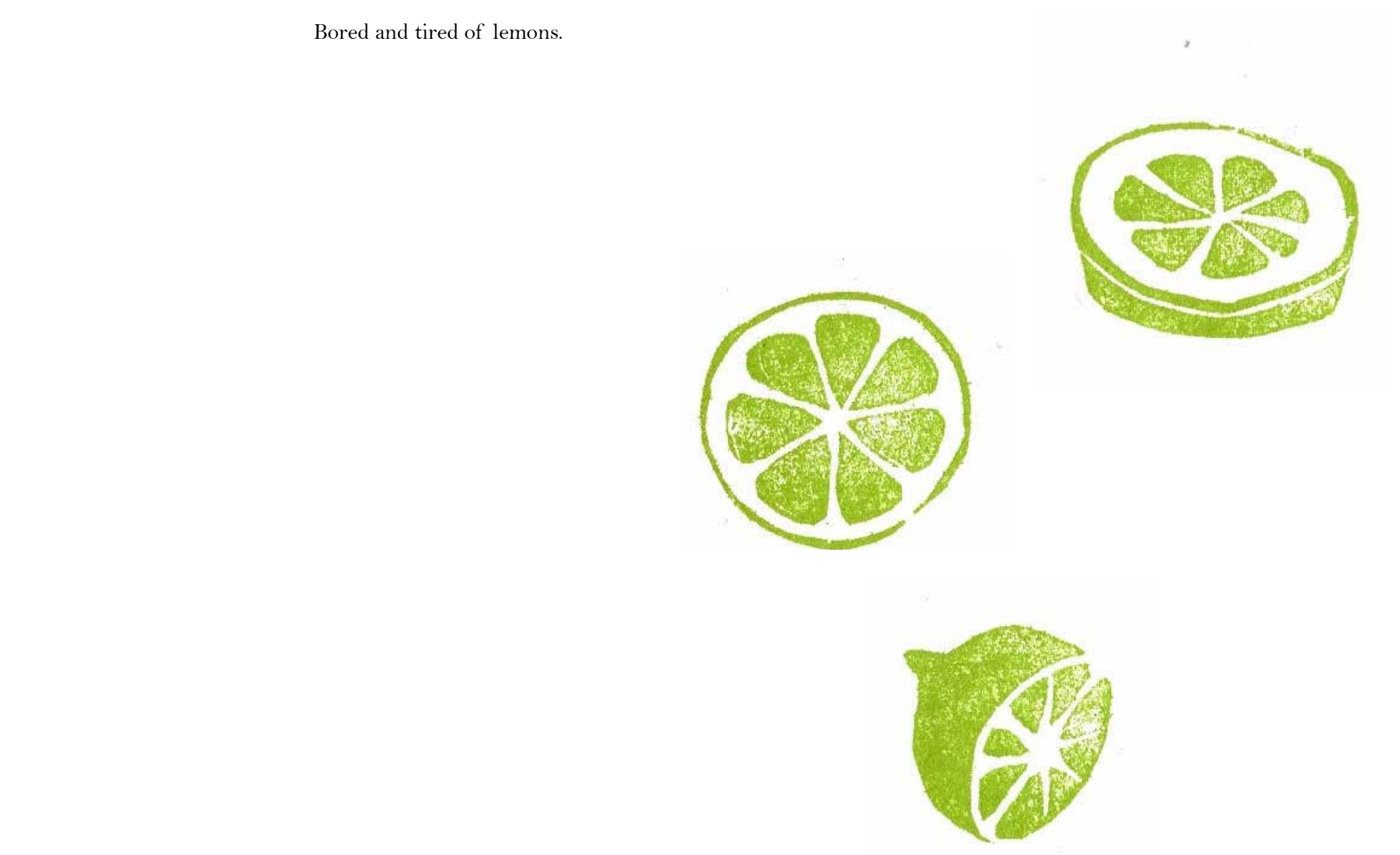






Image via [emart.wordpress.com/category/2011/february/commuters-on-a-subway-sandwich-wrapper](http://emart.wordpress.com/category/2011/february/commuters-on-a-subway-sandwich-wrapper)



# His name was Matthew

By Jenna Dolecek

His name was Matthew. Or rather, his name is Matthew. He has not ceased to be, but many treat him as if he had. As if he was less deserving of the human experience than they.

Matthew is a good looking kid. Better, if he cleaned up a bit. He has a messy, wavy mop of sandy blonde hair, eyes as blue as the ocean, and a shy smile. He's a good eight inches taller than me and has that awkward teenage boy stance.

I met Matthew on a Monday after I had finished work and was waiting for the bus. I was standing against the metal and glass structure at Railway Square just as I had every Monday before. It was sunny, warm and a little breezy. I was polishing off some trail mix as he approached me.

"Excuse me, ca -," he stammered, turning and looking away.

I looked up.

"I'm sorry, can I have some food? I'm hungry."

No one else paid him any attention. I had finished my trail mix and shoved the plastic container into my purse, suddenly becoming aware of the bag full of food I was holding.

"How about we go get you something to eat over there?" I said, pointing across the street where a row of fast food restaurants lined the sidewalk.

"That would be great, thank you. I have no where else to go, this is the only way I can eat."

"What's your name?"

"Matthew."

"It's nice to meet you Matthew." I extended my hand to shake his. "Would you like to go to Subway?"

"Yes, I would. What part of America are you from?" He asked, perking up a little.

"You heard that, huh?" I chuckled. "I'm from Kansas, right in the middle."

"Wizard of Oz, huh? That's my favorite movie!" He exclaimed, smiling a big, toothy grin. As we walked down the street, he would look at me occasionally and continue to scratch at his arm and neck. He was in withdrawal.

"Ah, yes, Wizard of Oz," I sighed.

"I talk a lot of shit."

"It's ok, so do I." We smiled at each other.

"You're very kind," he commented.

"Thanks. Everyone needs to eat, man. What kind of sandwiches do you like?"

"Chicken, crumbed chicken is good."

"Oh, that is good!"

He looked at me with sad, woefully innocent eyes, "Could you spare \$4 so I can get something to eat later?"

"I don't have any cash, but how about you get two sandwiches so you have one for later?"

"That would be great! Thank you, you're very sweet."

"Ah, don't mention it."

I smiled and we walked into Subway and I told him to get whatever he wanted, including some cookies and something to drink. Sadly, he looked like a kid in a candy shop. Only he was a hungry, homeless addict.

"Do you have somewhere to stay?" I asked as we walked out of the store.

"Yes, I'm staying in Waterloo."

"Good." I responded, happy to know he wouldn't be sleeping on the streets. Or at least, hoping he wouldn't.

"Thank you so much, it was nice to meet you. Have a nice day, beautiful."

I smiled, flattered and embarrassed. "You too, it was nice to meet you, Matthew."

I looked into his ocean blue eyes one last time and we parted ways. At this point, anyone else would've smiled, got that warm, fuzzy feeling inside, proud of themselves for helping someone, and continued on their merry way.

But I didn't.

I may have contributed to quelling his hunger for another day, but the truth is, I didn't help him. Matthew will still be hungry, addicted and in withdrawal, and he'll still be picking used cigarette butts off the ground when he can't get some from someone else. People will continue to ignore him – continue to reject him. Yes, he's a bum. Yes, he's a junkie. To some he's a hassle and an eyesore, but to me, he's a child. A child that is hungry, addicted and lost.

Despite the dirt on his face, the smell of his clothes and the track marks on his skin, he's a human being. All Matthew wanted was for someone to look him in the eye and acknowledge his existence. He never tried to touch me; he didn't ask for anything extra. For 10 short minutes, he had a friend who called him by his name and genuinely cared about his existence. In 10 short minutes, I witnessed him go from a nervous, insecure and sad kid, to a smiling, talkative and happy teenager. All because I acknowledged him and asked his name.

Dignity and respect are two very simple, valuable and life-saving ideas. The fact that Matthew doesn't have a home, or a job, or a sober lifestyle, doesn't make him any less of a human being. For all we know, he could've been abused or abandoned or neither. I'm sure some of you are thinking, "Oh man, she got conned, that kid was smooth." You're wrong. I know a con man when I see one because, not only do I know expert manipulators, but I have learned the art of manipulation from them. However, I choose not to put that knowledge into practice.

In all honesty, you could be right. I could have gotten conned, and I am willing to concede that because it is true. Here's the thing, he still deserves to eat, and I still would have paid for his food. For richer, for poorer. I have no problem buying someone food, rich or poor. That whole "pay it forward" thing? That's kindness for people with money. You know that person whose coffee you paid for at Starbucks, just to be nice? Matthew deserves that same treatment, just because. Who knows, that person at Starbucks could have been a drug addict with money. You wouldn't know otherwise.

Matthew is simply a kid who, at some point in his life, had something go wrong. The difference between Matthew and other homeless people I have interacted with before is what I said above. He never touched me, he didn't harass me, he didn't ask for more than he needed and he was kind. Even con artists are not kind. I've met plenty of nice con artists

in my travels. There is a difference between nice and kind.

So, when the time came for the warm, fuzzy feeling to kick in, it never happened. It never happened because I did not help Matthew today. I put a band aid on a gaping wound. I did not buy him food in order to line up for my dose of warm fuzzies. I bought him food because every human being deserves to eat. It is not fair, it is not right and it is not just for him to be deprived of what keeps us alive because of a decision that was made, by him or for him, which put him in this situation. We need food to survive, and he deserves to survive despite the choices he made or someone made for him. Unless you plan on ending his life, he deserves to eat. So do refugees, prostitutes, criminals, addicts, and even politicians.

What's the difference between buying Matthew a sandwich or my friend a sandwich? There isn't. I'm still paying money, I'm still spending it on food, and it's still for someone else. When someone says "don't give them money, they'll just spend it on drugs and alcohol", you know what I think? Who cares! I'm just going to spend it on alcohol too, just like everybody else, so who are we to judge? When you go to dinner and have a glass of wine, or go to the bar with friends and get a beer, or go to the liquor store, I want you to remember that you are buying alcohol too with that same money someone else would have. So, who are you to judge?

I did not write this to make you feel bad for Matthew, or me, or to make you feel guilty for not reaching out more, or for not feeling sad. However, I would be lying if I said I wasn't trying to manipulate you into feeling something.

I want you to feel that you should be kind to everyone. But let me clarify, kind is not pity. It is not doing something nice out of guilt, and it is not condescension. Kind means treating someone with respect; it means acknowledging their existence, however smelly or gross-looking it is. It means looking someone in the eye and calling them by their name, because they have one – everyone does, and they deserve to be called by it.

For those of you still unconvinced, still believing that crazy, homeless junkies don't deserve the time and space, remember this: no one began a crazy, homeless junkie. We were all born blank slates – Tabula Rasa, influenced and molded by the people and world around us. No one's true goal in life is to be a homeless junkie. Adults, kids, male, female, transgender, gay, straight, black, white, Aboriginal, Native American, religious, non-believers – no one.

Shit happens. Things change. No one has the answer on how to deal with life.

As I'm sure you've gathered, this story does not have a happy ending. Most likely, I will never see Matthew again. He may be dead in a week, or he may live until he's 70. But I refuse to forget about him like everyone else. Although I only knew Matthew for 10 minutes, I know him and he exists. Matthew may be a drug-addicted street kid, but he's just that – a kid. Matthew and I may come from different backgrounds, but he reminded me of something that holds true no matter what: be kind. Always.



# A YOUNG LIBERAL'S GUIDE TO THINGS THAT ARE GOOD FOR HUMANITY

Michaela Vaughan @mvaughan101

**I was startled to find the amount of outrage over Prime Minister Tony Abbott's comments recently that "coal is good for humanity".** Left-wing lobbyists GetUp! and environmental group 350.org Australia have both come out in criticism of these observations by Mr Abbott. For supporters of the Liberal government and their ideology, this commentary comes as no surprise. Of course, coal is good for humanity. As the Prime Minister rightly said, "Coal is vital for the future energy needs of the world." So I hereby have compiled a list of other things that I believe are also good for humanity, so then, we are all well informed and aren't so astonished next time:

- Loggers, especially Tasmanian ones. Loggers are the ultimate conservationists
- Driving to Canberra and not seeing any wind turbines
- Relying on Wikipedia to source information on climate change and to speak authoritatively on the increased bushfire intensity in Australia
- Parliamentary travel entitlements to your mates' weddings, NRL games and investment properties
- Airport VIP welcoming parties costing a cool \$2,060 of taxpayers money
- Goodies (not baddies)
- Being the first nation in the world to abolish a carbon tax
- French-speaking Prime Ministers
- Blokes' questions
- Not giving any Gonskis
- University deregulation
- Mining magnets' tax-free ride
- Corporate tax axed
- Royal Commission into Union Corruption priced at \$61 million after the approval of an extension (dw it's not about politics)

- Free speech for the bigots, journalists gagged
- Team Australia
- The age of entitlement finally ending
- The review of the Renewable Energy Target (RET) conducted by a climate change denier and former head of Caltex, former head of WA's biggest coal generator, and a former gas and coal lobbyist.
- Glass ceilings cracked!
- Calling each other grub in Parliament
- A Speaker who as of March 2014 had ejected 98 people from the House of Representatives – none of which were Coalition members
- Heavy lifting
- Cigars with the boys after a good win
- Budget emergencies used as a distraction

- War waging and fear mongering used as a distraction
- Three-word policies
- Speedos and a little bit of sex appeal
- A review of our national curriculum, which was achingly lacking in empirical research
- Politicians' salary freeze (one year only)
- Dismantling the climate commission following the 12 hottest months on record
- ASIO watching you in your sleep
- One female Cabinet member
- Diplomatic trips to Canada
- Renting in Canberra
- Tharunka
- Salt



## The Hirst Report

It is a sad inevitability that divisiveness will prove to be politically expedient in Australian politics. At a refugee rally at Town Hall recently, it was hard not to feel that there was something deflationary about fighting the same battles all over again. Kevin Rudd seemed to herald in a new era of progressive Australians, but Labor's time in office was plagued with infighting and ultimately the two major parties appeared as cruel as each other. Now the rhetoric surrounding "Team Australia", the absurd policies about religious or identity-concealing accoutrement at Parliament House, and a new war - it cannot help but feel like we have been transported back a decade with any good work erased. The Muslim community feel as alienated as ever, freedoms are being whittled away in an attempt to find a "new balance", the media has never been more compromised in its ability to hold the government to

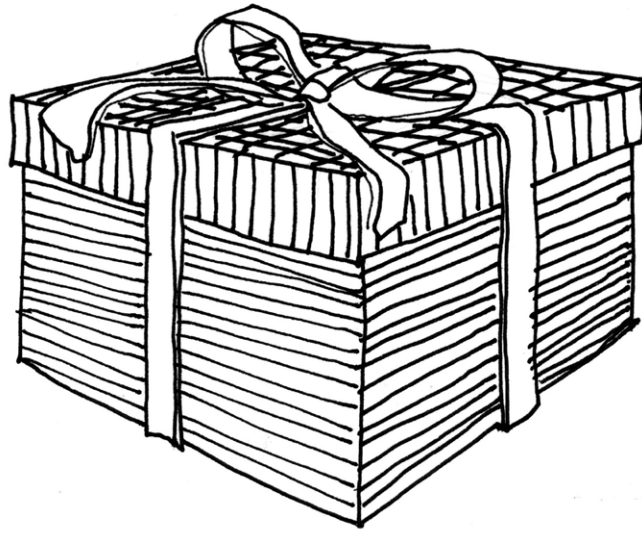
account, and for what? Some radical cells with guns, plastic swords and repugnant ideas.

Attempts to capitalise on fear in the community have always made governments do strange things, but the policy of segregating people wearing face-concealing garments in Parliament House must be one of the strangest. After having their identity verified and going through a metal detector, they will still be expected to sit behind glass panels usually reserved for school groups. Ostensibly this is because wearing a burqa or niqab will prevent officials from ejecting people who heckle. Exactly what mystical powers of sound dispersion these garments offer their wearers was not elaborated upon by the Senate President or House Speaker.

Asylum seeker policy in this country has never been crueller. Julie Bishop was a figure of international ridicule at the recent UN climate summit as Australia

continues to determinedly backpedal on the issue of climate change. The health and education system are facing upheaval and it is the poorest who are suffering the most. For the left in Australia, things have rarely been worse. Which is maybe why it was hard to avoid the feeling that a sloganeering march through Pitt Street Mall is pointless. Why it's easy to feel that we are completely shut out from the democratic process except for one hallowed day every three years where the narrow choice offered seems to make a mockery of any attempt to form a nuanced view on any given issue. But of course it's over such hard slogs that battles are won and lost. Australia's progressives need to fight off the lure of apathy because it's been a long time since there's been as much at stake.





# RACISM: IT STOPS WITH ~~ME~~ YOU

Yenée Saw

Whenever anyone mentions the favourite party game of pass the parcel, feelings of being left out overwhelm me. In kindergarten, to celebrate a classmate's birthday, we played a good old game of pass the parcel. This was my first time ever playing, and I was overjoyed that there was a chance – if the music stopped whilst I was holding the parcel – that I could win a prize.

The girl next to me had other ideas however; instead of passing the yellow cellophaned parcel to me, she would hand it over to the kid sitting on my other side. After five rounds of not being able to so much as touch the parcel, I took matters into my own hands and tried to snatch the parcel from the little bitch girl next to me. She said “nooooo”, followed by an incoherent explanation, and then continued passing it onto my neighbor – skipping right over me and not allowing me the chance of ever winning a prize.

After a while, I just gave up and sat there, pretending I was anywhere else but in the pass the parcel circle. Gazing into the empty space in front of me, I chalked up my exclusion to the fact that I was the only kid with black hair and dark brown eyes. Everyone else was Caucasian in my kindergarten class. But I was different – I was Chinese. Children can be cruel, but as the only kid of Chinese descent, I would bear the brunt of children's cruelty.

I remember Markus – the boy next door... my brother's best friend. I was genuinely confused when all the other neighbourhood boys were invited to Markus's eighth birthday – everyone except for my brother. I was confused, because Markus had admitted before that he didn't really like any other boy in the neighbourhood except for my brother, and it was true – they were inseparable. When I asked why my brother wasn't invited, Markus said candidly: “Oh right, well, we just don't usually invite Chi-

nese people to parties.” As a kid, I accepted his explanation.

Thankfully, as an adult, I don't have to fear feeling left out on the basis of my race.

Regardless, those painful feelings that I had as a child haven't just gone away – even as an adult, I still have this complex about being left out – I get irrationally upset even if I'm left out of an impromptu study session. Also, although I'm only in second year, I've started cosyng up to couples for the promise of a future wedding invitation – I have a paranoid fear that one day, I'll be scrolling through my Facebook newsfeed, only to see photos of weddings that I haven't been invited to. I acknowledge that this strong fear of being excluded stems from the childhood racism I experienced.

I also know that the “Racism: It Stops with Me” campaign is something that I have hope in. I was a cynic before it even became cool to be jaded about everything – I was critical of Emma Watson's recent HeForShe campaign and two years ago's *Kony 2012* (but that's an article for another time), so my endorsement of the “Racism: It Stops with Me” campaign really does hold weight. “Racism: It Stops with Me” is a campaign that encourages all Australians to reflect on how they can end racial discrimination. It is paradoxical that as a country which prides itself on cultural diversity, many Australians who experience racism are locked out of opportunities. This campaign strives to turn the tide of racism so that a fair and inclusive Australia can be built.

Racism is rife – by opening a dialogue where you reprimand any discrimination directed at a person's race, you're making the little girl who never got to pass the parcel in a kindergarten game feel like she won a prize regardless.





# THE ABOMINABLE CRIME

## SCREENED AT THE QUEER SCREEN

### FILM FESTIVAL

Film Review by Catherine Knight

With same-sex marriage being legalised in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Mexico and 32 US states, the assumption is often made that it is getting better for LGBTIQ+ people. Yet, just off the shores of Central America, on the postcard-perfect island that is Jamaica, homophobic violence has increased by approximately 400 per cent since 2009. This, the harrowing reality of life for queer people in Jamaica, is the focus of Micah Fink's 2013 documentary *The Abominable Crime*. The film takes its title from anti-sodomy laws that have remained in place in Jamaica since 1864, a part of the archaic legacy of the British occupation. Screened recently at the 2014 Sydney Queer Screen Festival, the film follows the struggles of lesbian single mother Simone Edwards and LGBTIQ+ rights activist and lawyer Maurice Tomlinson, who are both compelled to flee their homes and country due to the increasing danger they are placed in.

The film begins with an animated sequence, a visual poem representing the near-fatal shooting of Simone as she recounts the hate crime that changed her life. This abstract reimagining is chilling in its ambiguity, which instills the sense that a faceless mob of bigotry is lurking just out of frame. Shot merely steps away from her own home, Simone's story is one of a shattered domestic life, with the attempted murder forcing her to seek asylum in Holland, separating her and her daughter Khayla. Simone's working-class experience of life as a queer Jamaican female with little autonomy is offset by Maurice's story as that of highly educated and influential activist and professional. Maurice's status and his privileged access to a platform from which to be heard does in turn cause him to be targeted. When his hushed marriage to Canadian pastor Tom Decker is leaked to the press, Maurice is subject to death threats, with his public persona undermined and his life placed in jeopardy. Yet Maurice finds himself caught between the need to protect his own life and family, and his sense of duty to advance the cause of LGBTIQ+ rights in Jamaica.

Fink focuses on the relationships in the lives of these queer refugees, following the family dynamics that are thrust into turmoil due to their persecution. The storytelling is one of utmost intimacy, filming the piece over four years. This close exploration allows for a vulnerable and personal dimension to leak beyond the reductive crime statistics that dilute the sheer human reality of stories such as Simone and Maurice's. By holding focus on just these two lives, we are able to feel along with the tedious monotony, indecision and waning resilience experienced by those who are not only forced into exile, but are also blocked at each attempt to carve out a new life for themselves.

The visual world of the film plays with Jamaica as it exists in the Western imagination – sunshine, palm trees, beaches, Bob Marley insignia – and contrasts these notions of paradise with the violent reality of life there for queer people. This expected lush natural imagery is continuously undermined by flickering lights and claustrophobic interiors, which frame the high stakes and emotional confessions of two families at breaking point.

The irony of a white American filmmaker intending to salvage the stories of a Jamaican queer community who are subject to the ongoing effects of Western colonialist religious dogma cannot be ignored. *The Abominable Crime* does, however, make its mark as an eloquent and unsettling reminder that sexual and gender equality has not, in fact, finally come for all.



# WE ARE THE BEST!

## DIRECTED BY LUKAS MOODYSSON

Film Review by Simon Anicich

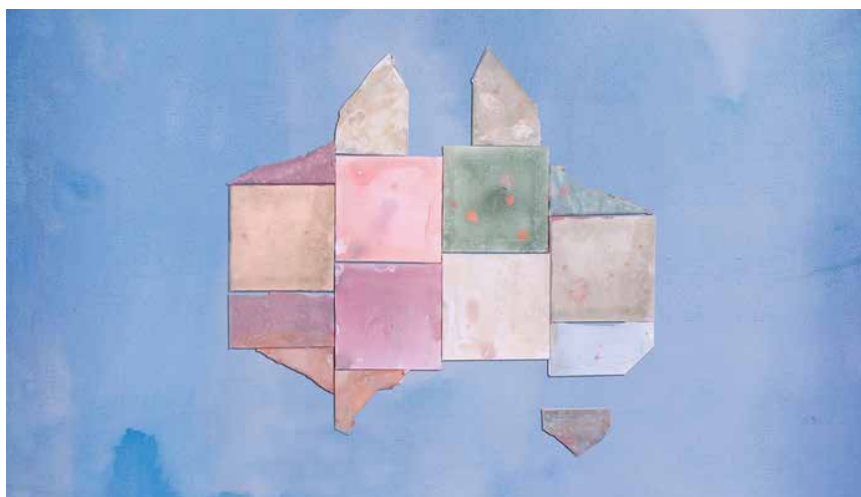
John Holmstrom, founder of seminal music zine *Punk*, refers to punk rock as “rock and roll by people who didn't have very much skills as musicians but still felt the need to express themselves through music”. This statement is a perfect representation of Swedish director Lukas Moodysson's *We Are The Best!*, a masterful celebration of everything the punk movement stood for. Moodysson's film tells the tale of Bobo (Mira Barkhammer) and Klara (Mira Grosin), two 13-year-old best friends who start a band for the sole reason of stealing the rehearsal room at their local youth centre from a group of boys who delight in bullying the would-be punks. The only problem is that neither of them has ever touched an instrument in their lives.

But that doesn't stop them, and as they soon learn, good punk music requires passion, not musical talent. In any case, they only manage to write one song throughout the film's duration. The song is an ode to their shared hatred of easily the most terrifying part of the high school experience (at least for me) – school sport. And is absolutely magnificent in its simplicity. The creation of this song is really nothing else but a loose plot point that provides something of a backdrop for this coming-of-age film, a set up which allows for a poignant exploration of the friendship between the two girls and a musically talented recruit in Helvig (Liv LeMoyné). In fact, nothing much really happens at all, but as a character study, *We Are The Best!* is such a triumph that the need for a substantial story plays second fiddle.

It was only after I saw the film that I discovered it is an adaptation of Coco Moodysson's (the director's wife) autobiographical graphic novel *Never Goodnight*, with the character of Bobo being a fictionalised version of Coco. Considered from this angle, it is obvious the film is a great labour of love for Moodysson, on par with such similar artistic tributes as Bob Dylan's classic “Just Like A Woman”, written for his lover Edie Sedgwick. As great as the other characters are, Bobo is the star of the film, a disillusioned young girl raised more by the music of the punk rockers she idolises than the mother who is preoccupied by the countless lovers who drift in and out of her bed. Barkhammer's performance is a revelation, conveying Bobo's emerging pubescent angst and the curiosities of the world around her with great aplomb. Surely, she is a star on the rise in her native Sweden.

I know that most people when going to the movies would pick a “conventional” blockbuster over a foreign film with subtitles if they got their choice, but I urge you to give this little film a chance. It is a simple tale yes, but its attention to detail and love for its characters puts it a step above the usual Hollywood fare. With *We Are The Best!*, it is clear the spirit of punk lives on. Sid Vicious would be proud.





# HAVENS DUMB

BY AUGIE MARCH

Album Review by Sarah Fernandes

After a five-year hiatus, Melbourne band Augie March have returned to the music scene with their latest release *Havens Dumb*. The band initially split after their lacklustre 2008 album *Watch Me Disappear* was met with weak critical acclaim. It had none of the complexity of their first two albums, and it was missing that perfect indie-pop balance they'd struck with their most popular song to date, "One Crowded Hour". The Melburnians were in desperate need of a retreat and it showed. *Havens Dumb* is the mostly terrific product of some of Australia's best musicians finally hitting their stride again.

Glenn Richards's nuanced lyricism has always been a defining feature of Augie March's music. His poetic style has drawn many a Bob Dylan comparison – and *Havens Dumb* only furthers this legacy. Common threads of bewilderment at the immensity of time, or criticism of Australia's masculine, racist culture run throughout the album. Richards has previously written music about growing old and becoming bitter – most notably on his aptly named side project *Closed Off, Cold and Bitter: Life as a Can of Beer* – but *Havens Dumb* is more mature than his past work. On one of the album's most harrowing tracks, "Definitive History", he takes a sly dig at Peter Costello, singing: "One for the mother, one for the dad/One for the treasurer, one for the plasma screen, and don't forget/The developer's dream." The album is also peppered with references to Greek mythology, which he uses to draw out issues of colonialism in Australia. He even has a go at himself on the last track, which opens with: "G.A.R., BA Lit, 3rd poet of Avalon, exiled to the broken bit outside Imperium."

While the lyrics are strong, *Havens Dumb* is patchy in regards to the songs themselves. The band's first two albums, *Sunset Studies* and *Strange Bird*, were multifaceted and verbose. Extended jams were sandwiched between recordings of Richards's heartbeat and dissonant piano, and the perfect placing of each track meant the albums felt like a whole. *Havens Dumb* brings back the cryptic genius of their earlier work, but only partially. Certain songs like "Hobart Obit", "Bastard Time" and "Millennarians Mirror" slide back into the safe, comfortable, verse-chorus-verse formula of *Watch Me Disappear* – and it gets a little boring. "A Dog Starved" is the only contender in this category that remains catchy and grand – the kind of track Stephen Malkmus would be proud of. In "Villa Adriana", however, we're treated to Augie March at their best. The song is melodically and emotionally strong, and it showcases drummer David Williams's exceeding talent. The band also has a habit of ending their albums with a brilliant, lengthy, esoteric track, and "Never Been Sad" fulfils this to a tee.

If Augie March have kept one thing consistent over their 18 years together, it's the quality and depth of their lyrics. While *Havens Dumb* is musically erratic and doesn't quite feel like a synthesised whole, there are definite gems in there. The album asserts them as one of the best bands in the country and is promising of things to come.



# SYRO

BY APHEX TWIN

Album Review by Kyle Redman

Did you know this Richard D. James has now released two full lengths this year? Earlier in 2014, James indirectly released the long-thought-lost *Caustic Window* LP under the moniker Caustic Window via Kickstarter. The LP was never full finished by RDJ, intended to be released in 1995 but only making it to test pressing. It was obvious why, being mostly stripped back and sometimes even tedious amalgamations of influences. While the whole thing was hit or miss, the LP was an interesting investigation into exactly how far electronic music has actually come. In the end, Richard D. James had bigger things to come in his next few releases, namely *Richard D. James, ... I Care Because You Do*.

Until now, it had been 13 years since new material under the Aphex Twin moniker had been released, which marks the end of a My Bloody Valentine-esque hiatus. It goes without saying that the hype behind this new release has been of a level higher than both MBV and Boards of Canada releases from previous years, such as the forward-thinking impact Richard left on the electronic music scene. His styles have been copied and repeated over IDM, acid-techno and ambient electronic works, and his influence for the past two decades has been unmatched. In fact, returning to most of Richard's earlier works reveals just how dated they really are, given that the accessibility of technology available to produce these genre-defining sounds has ballooned.

On 2014's *Syro*, James isn't picking up where he left off. *Syro* is a return to cold, even "vintage" IDM that is noticeably Richard D. James-esque, distant to the organic elements of *Drukqs*. Calculated and relaxed, *Syro* explores more of Richard's softer side seen prior to *Windowlicker* and *Come to Daddy*, or even just '95. There are intense, tiny details littered throughout the album, marking it as a more cerebral and sophisticated Aphex Twin release in comparison to his usual twisted and bizarre style.

The question has to be asked though: Does this deserve, or live up to the hype? In short, no. There is a modern polish on a cold IDM sound that Richard displays the most genuine knowledge of, being one of the genre's archaic creators. Yet for all the detail and claims of virtuosic intelligence, *Syro* often lacks the gripping interest needed to attend to these details. "Minipops 67 (Source Field Mix)" kicks off in a good place, but tracks like "Produk 29" and "180db\_" are just thin on ideas. The title track is a shining light, but the depth and pull aren't found in many more tracks. And then we come to the end of the record, where James delves into some drum and bass but forgets the punch found in better, previous tracks like "Come to Daddy".

In all, this is another release from a famed '90s pioneer that we can reflect on; sometimes bad, sometimes good. For me, the innovation in the electronic world from the likes of Burial, Jon Hopkins and new Tim Hecker has much more to offer. In a sense, *Syro* does nothing new, and it does nothing old any better.









# DENI UTE MUSTER CELEBRATES 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Matt Baker

The Labour Day weekend marked the sixteenth anniversary of one of rural NSW's most iconic events: the Deniliquin ('Deni') Ute Muster. The event offers a kaleidoscope of what the outback and rural Australia have to offer.

The Deni Ute Muster is held in the Riverina town of Deniliquin, situated 260 km southwest of Wagga Wagga, close to the Victorian border. Whilst the town does have a rich agricultural base (it boasts the largest rice mill in the southern hemisphere), the Ute Muster provides the region with a much-needed alternate flow of capital.

The Deni Ute Muster was born at a time when the Carr Labor government was telling struggling rural towns to "help themselves" during extremely difficult economic conditions. For locals, the Ute Muster is the perfect example of a rural community doing just that.

Hundreds upon hundreds of locals volunteer their services, not just over the event's two days, but many throughout the year, to ensure everything runs like clockwork. Despite some funding from Destination NSW, the event continues to rely heavily on those local volunteers and a select group of paid professionals.

Deniliquin's Ute Muster now holds two world records: the most utes in one location at one time, and the most blue singlets worn in a single area at one time. Although neither of these records was broken this year,

organisers were delighted that a significant increase in the number of families attending the event kept crowd numbers up. There was also a reported increase in camping numbers.

An almost 20,000-strong crowd – in a town of under 8,000 people – gathered in a few big paddocks (a site that covers 60 hectares) to do all those things country Australians have for years tried to show they don't stereotypically do. Such things include wearing blue singlets, comparing utes, doing donuts with those utes, seeing who can crack a whip the loudest, seeing who can sit on an enraged bull the longest, listening to country music, and setting off fireworks.

The weekend was largely hailed as a success, and notably, the large crowds proved yet again to be well behaved, save for a few campfire-related incidents. It would be hard to imagine an event of its kind, with such a large crowd and major sponsors including the likes of Bundaberg Rum and XXXX Gold, ending so relatively incident-free. In fact, were success for similar events defined by getting intoxicated bogans to behave in enclosed spaces, then the Ute Muster could certainly teach the NRL a thing or two.

The musical entertainment, conducted over two nights, consisted of domestic and international acts. Crowds cheered for the music of country stars like Troy Cassar-Daley, Adam Harvey, Kasey Chambers and former local rock band Spiderbait, who were the weekend's biggest hit.

However, not everyone has been happy about the

event's success. Organisers over the last few years have had several incidents involving local police, including one last year when officers senselessly evacuated the VIP area before the musical acts had finished.

A major issue arose this year over the sale of alcohol and a restriction on "heavy" alcoholic beverages like full-strength beer and Bundaberg Rum. Police proved hostile to the serving of such drinks, creating problems for this year's event and raising concerns for the future, especially given that some key sponsors produce those drinks.

These incidents represent a part of an ongoing simmering of relations between local community members who again feel as though they are being let down by an unsupportive state government and police force. Governments can always find time and money to support western Sydney and other areas that are fortunate enough to be in marginal seats. Locals feel a little more attention to rural towns and activities designed to help their economies – like the Deni Ute Muster – wouldn't go astray.

However, such incidents should not detract from the amazing success of the event over the last 16 years, and how important such events are for the local community. The Deniliquin Ute Muster provides more than just an added income for local businesses. The event gives all who attend a chance to recognise and celebrate a rural identity that, whilst foreign to the many Australians who live in the city, is ironically how foreigners identify Australia and Australians.



## THE SRC ARE YOUR ELECTED STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES — YOUR VOICE ON CAMPUS!



### Education Officer

Billy Bruffey

The National Day of Action is fast approaching, with the petition campaign picking up lots of momentum ahead of the 20 October Uni Council meeting! On 16 October, campuses from around Australia will unite in a mass demonstration against the Abbott government's higher education agenda. At UNSW, we are mixing it up a little – we're hosting a High Tea Rally on the Library Lawn from 11 am, following by a mock forum to compel our university to host a Town Hall Meeting to debate fee deregulation. There's going to be food, music and progressive company. Come along to the stall, the rally and the forum to have your say on our future.



### Environment Officer

Nicholas Gurieff

Summer is on its way, and I don't know about you, but I'm keen to enjoy the natural wonders Australia has to offer. I want those wonders to be around for a while too, but if we don't change our course with greenhouse gas emissions, they won't be. UNSW needs to step up and play its part in the global transformation. We delivered a killer referendum result in Week 9 which shows the UNSW community wants real action on climate change from its university. Now we need to keep working to make sure UNSW management steps up.

Love the environment? Keen to meet others who share your passion? Drop in on our weekly Environment Collective meetings 10 am to 12 noon on Wednesdays. You can also get in contact and stay informed about our plans by visiting our website at [www.srcenviro.org](http://www.srcenviro.org), or by sending an email to [enviro@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:enviro@arc.unsw.edu.au).



### Ethno-Cultural Officer

Rachel Lobo

As the academic year is drawing to a close, we still have a few events to knock off the Ethno-cultural portfolio calendar. Week 12 will see our Critical Race Discussion + Workshop on Race, Poverty & Wealth. This event will be non-autonomous and no prior knowledge will be assumed, so all are welcome to join! Week 13 will feature our End of Semester PARTY! Free food, good company and the chance to reflect on all our campaigns, events and other initiatives throughout the year. We'll also be focusing on Cultural Appropriation in the lead up to Halloween. If you have to think twice whether your outfit might be slightly problematic...when in doubt, DON'T WEAR IT! Also, up until the end of my term on 1 December, members of the Intercultural, PoC and WoC collectives will be working on a few educational 101 Zines and general tidbits. So feel free to get involved, even if you haven't had a chance all year :) There may be a little launch party after exams depending on interest.

Best of luck with the assessments!



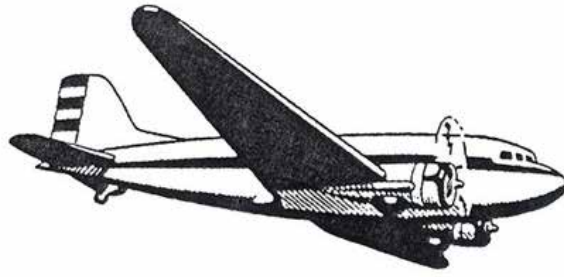
### Queer Officers

Dylan Lloyd & Cassandra Harris

Hey lovelies! We're happy to announce that next year's Queer Officers have been elected – congratulations Brittany Jane, Jen Chen and Joseph Dee. We're also super proud to announce that we are currently in talks with UNSW about rolling out policy for gender-neutral bathrooms on campus! Hopefully there will be at least one such bathroom in every building, which is a victory a long time coming. Come celebrate with us on Halloween night, where we'll party in the Queer Space and then head over to Oxford St while the night's still young.

Until next time,  
Dylan & Cassie





# TRAVELLING CHEAP: THE HARD-LEARNED LESSONS

Peter Snyder

So with holidays just around the corner – a very big corner ornamented with the horror that is exam period, but a corner none the less – thoughts tend to go towards what we should be doing over the break. Many will work; many more will laze around at home ignoring parental pleas to work; but here is another idea which you may have already dismissed. Travel. Better yet, travel on the cheap.

So let get down to it – right back to basics.

## 1 Know your accommodation better than you know your own room.

Okay, so my issue here stemmed from when I was in the US. I completely forgot about the tax and was charged way more than what I had originally intended or planned or budgeted for. The result was living on \$10 per day for nearly three weeks. So lesson one in travelling on the cheap: make sure there are no surprise expenses. I'm looking at you, America. Regardless though, where are the best places to stay?

Generally speaking, hostels are amazing, especially YHA (Youth Hostels Australia) (~\$450 for 3 weeks as an YHA member in America). They are cheaper than a hotel, typically more friendly than a motel, and they have a whole lot of other goodies added onto the docket. The downsides include having to share a room, but hostels typically offer lockers to keep your stuff safe. Plus, sharing and meeting new people is one of the best parts of the experience. It also helps when you need to split a jug or two.

Next up on the travelling cheap list of accommodation choices would be couch surfing. What makes this so great is that when you couch surf, you are no longer

a tourist – you're with a local and you do the things only locals do. Word of warning, only couch surf when you know the person you plan to surf with, or you should go through a website renowned for its safety – big shout out to [couchsurfing.org](http://couchsurfing.org) (over 7 million people, 100,000 cities and regular events). Also, it's typically free, so get keen for that.

Of course, if you really are in a pinch, bring a sleeping bag and have a starry roof for the night. I do not recommend this. It is uncomfortable, often illegal, and you never know who you'll run into. If you're in a tight spot though, it could be a lifesaver (if you can find a hidden point on a beach, like a hard to reach cove or something, I hear they're really comfy).

## 2 Food: Go bulk or go home

Okay, accommodation is sorted. What now? Food is the next biggest issue. Now some cities around the globe do have programs in place for people without any money. Lentil as Anything is a popular one in both Melbourne and Sydney, but overseas it can be hard to find places that offer these services. The big secret here is to cook for yourself and buy in bulk at the supermarket. Many hostels give you free use of the kitchen (sometimes with ingredients included), so get creative.

That said, many hostels offer breakfast included, so seriously load up, have a couple of servings and a late lunch/early dinner and you'll be sweet. There is also the trick of making yourself a sandwich from the free breakfast buffet and sneaking it out in bag, so again, get creative! And make sure that if you do go out, go out with a group, you can split the food, split the bill and everyone can chip in on the tip.

## 3 Sightseeing: Save your money for what counts

So this point is sourced from my own mistake, though a small one. In Paris, I wanted to go to the Notre Dame, and I was sitting outside, with my ice cream, wanting to go in. I didn't because I thought you had to pay for entry and thus turned it down. Anyways, as it happened, entry was free and I was just sitting out there like an idiot for no reason. A lot of places do require you

to pay up, and then pay some more for the privilege of taking photos, but there are still great places that you can amble through without coughing up a penny. For example, if you are into alternative culture, check out Venice Beach, California for more culture than you'll ever need. Or if you like art and architecture, a lot of churches and cathedrals around Europe will have you covered for free.

I may have laboured the point, but I cannot stress it enough – LOCALS! Not only do you get a better perspective of what is happening within a culture, but the options that people "in the know" provide are endless. For example, my last day in Mongolia, a few of the people I was travelling with wanted to go clubbing, but we didn't know where to go, or how to get there. However, a friend I met earlier set us right, and we essentially hitched (in Mongolia, every car is an unofficial taxi) to the club and got in free because my mate knew someone who worked there (they also threw in two bottles of free vodka). Seriously, getting in close with the locals will definitely save you money, and you'll have a more authentic time for it.

## 4 Transport buses are love, buses are life

So once you've saved up for airfares, you really don't want to spend much else on travelling around the place. My biggest suggestion here is to invest in an ISIC card. These things essentially say you're a global student, which means concession tickets everywhere they are recognised. They also offer discounts on heaps of things, so even more awesome than just your uni card. Next big thing is get a bus timetable on your phone or otherwise. Buses are your friends when travelling cheap. However, if you're craving the social aspect, research Top Deck, you can hop on and off, usually on the one ticket, and there'll be a whole bunch of people your age, so you're always safe and with a group.

So those are the main points I can give in the time given, but if you follow these simple rules, you can easily get an amazing holiday for surprisingly little money – all of which can be saved towards the all-important souvenir shopping. If you want more hints, or personal renditions about the best countries to hit up, send it through to *Tharunka* and I'll get back to you. Otherwise,







# FROM DUSK TILL DAWN: THE YEAR OF SPORTS DRAWING TO AN END

Niko Pajarillo

As *Tharunka* is coming to a seasonal end, so is the calendar year of sports. Although there are two months left on the calendar before the turn of the year, sports around the world is waning, when the sun is ready to set, recuperating for a fresh season in 2015.

Fatigue and a draining season have struck the tennis elite with the full force of a car – no pun intended. Fresh off her legendary eighteenth major title in Flushing Meadows, New York, injuries have woefully crept up on Serena Williams. Abruptly retiring against Alize Cornet in the second round of the inaugural Wuhan Open in China, the official record noted that Williams suffered a viral condition, rendering her no longer able to continue the match against the Frenchwoman. Consequently, she has now lost to Cornet three consecutive times in one season – something that hasn't happened since Justine Henin in 2007. The following week, in the Beijing Open as defending champion, Serena withdrew from the tournament with a nasty knee injury. Although, arguably, the most dangerous player when in full flight, the unfortunate tale of age and the wear and tear on an athlete's body is slowly becoming more prominent for Serena Williams, despite recently triumphing in breaking tennis history. They say lightning doesn't strike twice, but even for Serena, Mother Nature makes no exception.

Rafael Nadal is coming back from injury; the Span-

iard was absent for much of the summer of tennis, having suffered a premature upset at Wimbledon, withdrawing from the US Open and the preceding preparatory tournaments due to a wrist injury. Beijing marked his return to the hard courts. Although sharp in his opening two matches, a temporary mental lapse in his third round match against Martin Klizan proved costly, as he lost to the Slovakian 6-7, 6-4, 6-3. Critics and fans alike were astonished, needless to say, given that the Spanish bull was up a set and a break in the second set.

On the opposite end of the draw was the world No. 1 Novak Djokovic, who had a slightly disappointing campaign in the Big Apple, where Kei Nishikori demolished the Serb's hopes for back-to-back wins at Wimbledon and the US Open. Resilience defines the very mark of a legendary man, and, fittingly, Novak won a record fifth consecutive title in Beijing, thus perfecting his record to 24-0. For all intents and purposes, he demolished Tomas Berdych in the final, 6-0, 6-2, during which, Berdych was on the brink of a double bagel in the fiftieth minute. However, the Czech player pulled through just by the skin of his teeth to win two games, and this is no dramatic overstatement. Djokovic displayed formidable shotmaking and tennis play of the highest order, pummeling Berdych and making it one of the most lopsided finals in men's tennis in a very, very... very long time.

With exhaustion getting the best of the cream of the crop, there is no time to slow down, given that

the unofficial fourth quarter of the tennis calendar has begun. The race to the WTA Tour Championships have wrapped up and been confirmed, where the top 8 women will be facing each other, gladiatorial style, in Singapore for the first time. Likewise, the men will square off in the O2 Arena in London. Maria Sharapova confirmed her spot on the race to Singapore by securing the title at the China Open against rival Petra Kvitová. She defeated the reigning Wimbledon champion, 6-4, 2-6, 6-3, climbing up to the No. 2 world ranking as a result. Kvitová, the current world No. 3, remained victorious at the inaugural Wuhan Open, where she set up a Wimbledon final rematch, downing Canadian Eugenie Bouchard, 6-3, 6-4.

For the men, Djokovic, Nadal and Roger Federer have all confirmed their positions in the final race to London, during which, Djokovic will be playing as the two-time defending champion. Nadal will be striving to add to his decorated career by attempting to win in London. London has always loved the Swiss masterpiece, not only at Wimbledon, but also the year-end championships, where Federer will eye for a record-breaking seventh title.

The season of sport has been inundated with ebbs and flows. From the annual NFL Super Bowl, to the FIFA World Cup, sport has remained at the pinnacle of society's culture. In wrapping up the final publication of *Tharunka*, it has been a pleasure in updating readers on the fortnightly swing of sports. See you next year.



# An interesting swim of life



Niko Pajarillo @NikoPajarillo

**After years of fierce competition, Australia has finally achieved championship rugby glory.**

However, while I would love to be referring to our victory-starved national rugby union squad, I am writing of a sport in which taking a dive takes on a whole new meaning.

UNSW's Underwater Rugby team won gold at the annual Ocean Hunter Trans-Tasman Cup in September, Australia's largest underwater rugby competition to date.

As the Wallabies succumbed to a controversy-filled laser extravaganza at the hands of Argentina, UNSW was getting down and dirty (but clean at the same time), defeating Tasmania 2-1 at Ashfield Aquatic Centre.

UNSW forward Scott Philip says the young sport is incredibly unique and explains that the talent pool coming through at the university is impressive.

"It's a fully 3D, silent, anti-gravity sport with a sense of urgency," he said.

"We're a diverse bunch and come from all swims of life."

Yes, dear reader, he actually said that.

So while the development of this unique sport seems to be going swimmingly, this writer's unfamiliarity with the game became evident throughout the interviews.

Questions like, "How do you kick with flippers?" and "If there's a punch-on, you must get some pretty cool, slow-mo action shots, right?" were quickly dismissed, but I was intrigued.

The game is played between two teams of six, with goal baskets at the bottom of either side of a swimming pool, ideally between three to five metres deep.

The objective of the game is to place the ball in the other team's basket, throwing the heavy, although passable, ball in any direction.

Similar to original rugby, tackling and wrestling are part of the game, however, the density of the water prevents common injuries, meaning the game is frequently played in teams with both men and women.

UNSW Underwater Rugby goalie Nicola Maher says the game is building strongly and that UNSW has embraced the sport with open arms.

In the Trans-Tasman Cup, the team looked convincing from the moment the referee waved time on.

"Our team that went on to win was undefeated," Maher told *Tharunka*.

"Everyone's pretty excited. It's given players confidence, especially some of the newer players.

"It makes them know that they're doing really well."

The team, named "Apollo", caused a splash throughout the two-day competition, sinking rivals University of Queensland before eventually taking on Tasmania in the final.

The match was intense, having to be decided in penalties. UNSW came out of the pool wet winners, 2 - 1, leaving the opponents all washed up.

It was a great victory, but the success of our athletes doesn't end there, with many eyeing the international stage.

Representatives from all across the country will be thrown into the deep end next year, with Australia set to participate in the tenth Underwater Rugby World Cup in Cali, Colombia.

"[For the] selection process, there will be a bunch of training camps around the country and there's selection based on all this criteria," Maher said.

"People from all around Australia say 'I would like to play' and will gather around various parts of Australia to impress the coaches and selectors."

The first trial will be held in Tasmania in November, with several of UNSW's representatives heading down and baying for selection.

Such is the quality of our current crop of players, however, Apollo representative Jono Cheng said it wasn't without hard work and a great love of both the players and the game.

"We were training pretty hard and came together as a team and won," he told *Tharunka*.

"I guess we're all just crazy people who love this weird and wonderful sport."

When asked why the UNSW squad was so successful, Cheng posed a rather fishy notion.

"I don't know if this has anything to do with it, but [a lot] of the squad is doing a PhD or [is a postgraduate student]," he said.

But Cheng insists you don't need any of that to be able to play the game.

"It's very easy to pick up, two mates of mine picked [it] up and they're non-swimmers, non-sporty," he said.

"It was a bit of a strange concept at first, but you get used to it, [and it's] really similar to basketball as well."

So in a game where boards are more an article of clothing than a bickering group of directors, and sinking to rock bottom is not necessarily a bad thing, players seem to be having a great time.

And for that, Underwater Rugby gets my seal of approval.

"It's pretty easy on the joints!" Cheng said.

"Give it a try; it's great fun."

The team welcomes anyone curious to play, regardless of ability, experience, age or gender. They can be found at the UNSW pool on Wednesday nights between 8:00 pm - 9:30 pm.