

# THARUNKA

University of NSW's Independent Student Newspaper



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## VOLUME 60, ISSUE 3

Week 4 - Week 5

Theft comes in many forms.

Whether it's the stinging reminder that your culture is the casual plaything of institutions and individuals with nary a care for the very real history enveloping it, or the literal snipping away of your genitalia and agency for the satisfaction of others, theft is etched into the stories of the people around us.

More than anything, it is wrought from the silence of our peers and leaders, allowed to perpetuate by those fortunate enough not to feel its loss. But in this issue of Tharunka, the buck stops with us.

In our cover story, Amber Grimmel looks at cultural appropriation in the context of a spate of on-campus parties at Goldstein College and the Roundhouse, exploring the theft and stereotyping of cultures that still has the potential to wound today.

In our features section, Heloise Millikan comes out against female genital mutilation, a practice which robs many girls around the world of their agency and sexual satisfaction in the name of custom and male pleasure. Further on, Sarah Fernandes reviews 'The Day the Laughter Stopped', an online, text-based game which foists the loss of agency in sexual assaults onto every player's reality, with striking results.

Closer to home, Matthew Davis uncovers the \$8 Paintball scam being flogged to every UNSW student, while Matthew Baker digs deeper into the rising cost of childcare at UNSW which is readily pricing parents out of studying here.

Laura Kenny charts the stories of the parents left behind, and our Left vs. Right columnists, Lauren and Nick, discuss the contentious Zoe's Law.

We've also got coverage of the Biennale Transfield controversy, an explainer on the conflict in Ukraine, a closer look at UNSW's sports clubs, and the exciting news that Kings Cross has been renamed Australia's safest suburb. Onya, Bazza O'Fazza.

And for the cherry on top, in the Shortlist we look at the introduction of new academic withdrawal procedures which will effectively 'out' students with disabilities to prospective employers, just in case you were still labouring under the impression that the University is first and foremost concerned with your welfare.

**Until next fortnight,**

**Ammy, and the rest of your friendly editor ghouls, Freya and Jake**

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Tharunka acknowledges the Bedegal and Gadigal people, the traditional custodians of the land on which the University stands.

Tharunka is published periodically by Arc @ UNSW. The views expressed herein are not necessarily the views of Arc, the Representative Council or the Tharunka editing team, unless expressly stated. Arc accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of any of the opinions or information contained in this issue of Tharunka. Any complaints should be made in writing to the Marketing & Publications Coordinator.



Letter's submission:  
Hidden Camera Photo of Conservative  
Club IGM and Afterwards:  
Stack of reptilians during meeting  
- James Warne

# Short List

## BITE SIZED CAMPUS NEWS

### *New academic withdrawal procedure set to 'out' students with disabilities*

Under a new procedure for academic withdrawals from courses, applications made after the census and academic withdrawal dates, but prior to the final day of teaching, will elicit an 'Academic Withdrawal' grade on students' academic transcripts. A second 'Permitted Withdrawal' grade will apply to all successful post-census date withdrawals. While the new process will now allow students to withdraw from courses before the end of the teaching period without affecting WAMs, the attempted course will count towards academic standing calculations and be visible on academic transcripts.

Concerns have been raised regarding the impact of this policy on students with disabilities, many of whom are forced to withdraw from courses after the census date, and will now have these courses highlighted on their academic transcripts as 'Permitted Withdrawals'. It is anticipated that this policy will effectively amount to a forced 'outing' of students with disabilities, particularly with regard to employment.

Tharunka understands that multiple complaints by students with disabilities have been made as to the visibility of multiple Permitted Withdrawals on their transcripts, which will likely give rise to speculation or outright questioning as to the nature of any disability causing the late withdrawals from courses.

The new procedure is intended to bring UNSW in line with other Group of Eight universities in order to reduce the number of academic withdrawal applications received, and will be trialled for one year before being subject to review.

### *University releases SSAF expenditure areas*

UNSW has indicated areas in which it allocated expenditure from the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) in response to consultations with student leaders, citing the introduction of new retail facilities and spending on study spaces as its main fulfilment of student requests regarding SSAF expenditure.

According to the University, part of the \$6.3 million in SSAF revenue received by UNSW in 2012 was spent on introducing three microwave banks and an IGA supermarket on campus, transferring sporting clubs under the Arc banner, increasing Arc funding to \$3.2 million per year, and opening new retail outlets on campus, such as Subway and Max Brenner. The University has also pledged not to decrease funding to medi-

cal services, mental health, Arc, and the Student Equity and Disability Unit (SEADU) from 2013 onwards.

As per SSAF legislation, UNSW is required to consult with students regarding expenditure of the \$273 per student fee.

### *SRC appoints new Welfare Officer*

Following the resignation of SRC Welfare Officer, Dean Mattar, the SRC has appointed Brendan Byron as Mattar's replacement. According to regulations, in the event of a resignation less than six months into an SRC Office Bearer's term, the next highest polling candidate from the election will be appointed in their place.

Byron, who ran on the Stand Up! ticket associated with the Labor right faction on campus, was previously NSW Welfare Officer for the National Union of Students in 2013. Stand Up! received 25% of the student vote during the 2013 SRC election.

### *The Curious Case of the Backflipping Michael Spence*

In the wake of Tharunka reporting on the Group of Eight (Go8) universities pushing to deregulate fees in a number of popular courses (Vol. 60, No. 1), University of Sydney undergraduate Senate Fellow, Patrick Masarani, told the Sydney University SRC that Vice-Chancellor, Dr Michael Spence, had been unaware of the Go8 submission. It is said that Spence was embarrassed by the proposal to the Abbott government's review of the demand-driven funding system for public universities, and blames known fan of fee deregulation, UNSW Vice-Chancellor Fred Hilmer, for the submission.

However, in the Sydney University proposal personally addressed from Spence, and submitted on the same date as the Go8 submission on 16 December 2013, Spence stated the Sydney University submission was intended to "support and complement" the Go8 submission. Indeed, as late as February 2014, Spence told The Australian that he hoped the government's review of the demand-driven system would clarify a system that underfunds each student place but does not allow universities to increase fees.

So which will it be, Spence?

### *Attorney-General seeks UNSW submission on consent laws*

The office of the NSW Attorney General has reached out to the UNSW SRC Women's Department to make a submission regarding the Attorney General's review into the "freely and voluntarily" consent provisions contained in section 61HA of the Crimes Act 1900, which currently apply to sexual assault and aggravated sexual assault. The submission will address the review's recommendation that the section 61HA definition of consent be expanded to apply to other sexual offences in the Crimes Act for which a lack of consent must currently be proved by victims.

Students interested in contributing to the UNSW submission are encouraged to contact the SRC Women's Officer, Olga Lisinska, at o.lisinska@arc.unsw.edu.au.

# Letters

Submit your Letters & Comments to **THARUNKA**

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Caleb Burke's article "Abbott vs. the ABC" seemed to overstate the extent to which our current diplomatic troubles with Indonesia are a result of the spying scandal. Whilst it is true that Indonesia is annoyed by recent revelations that Australia tapped the phone of the Indonesian president, it isn't what "sparked a diplomatic rift". Indonesia is more pissed off by our selfish, unilateral asylum seeker policies which violate their sovereignty. ("Operation Sovereign Borders" is a misnomer anyway because our Navy don't even know where the borders are.) They're also peeved because we've cut \$4.5 billion from our foreign aid budget over the next 4 years despite our strong economy. Indonesia is the biggest recipient of Australia's foreign aid. (Fun fact: Australia is the 3rd biggest recipient of Australia's foreign aid.) They're also annoyed by our selfish, short sighted climate change policies (or increasing lack-there-of), because rich countries such as Australia can

better afford to take action to reduce emissions [sic] than others, yet small pacific islands are going to be the worst victims of sea rises. There's more to our Indonesian troubles than just spying. Unfortunately most people don't realise this because News Limited like to limit news about how our climate policies, immigration policies and economic policies are causing us great harm on the global stage.

**Matthew Davis**

Matthew Bugden had an informative and balanced article anticipating changes to the HECS system in the last issue of Tharunka ("The end of HECS as we know it", No. 2 Vol. 60). Alas the statement made by the NUS within the piece was neither.

The changes to the UK tuition fee regime were not preceded by a student loan privatisation as claimed, and the repayment threshold was actually lifted (from £15,795 p.a. to £21,000 p.a.).

The claim that HECS privatisation represents "a step further towards a university system that only benefits the rich and that can only be accessed by the rich because it will entrench the 'user pays' university model which has been expanding in Australia since HECS was introduced," is also misleading.

There is a fiction, peddled by the NUS and others, that in the glory days of free university our higher education institutes were far more representative of wider society in their demographic make-up, and that the switch to 'user-pays' has eroded this in favour of 'the rich'.

While university participation amongst students from poorer backgrounds has remained stubbornly

low, the general trend has been a rise rather than a fall (with some years providing exceptions). The switch to a demand-driven funding model over 2009-12 (opposed by the NUS at the time) has provided the greatest boost yet.

The largely government subsidised HECS system we presently have primarily supports students drawn from disproportionately wealthy backgrounds to attain degrees that allow them to earn a significant income premium. Those arguing for free university or opposing an increase in fees need to keep this reality in mind.

The biggest barrier to tertiary education participation amongst low-income background students has been and still is pre-university educational attainment (dropping out of high school at higher rates and getting relatively lower ATAR/ENTER scores).

No matter how generous the government subsidy of tuition fees is, participation from poorer background students is not going to increase without reform and investment in early and middle years education. Ironically, without focusing on this element of educational inequity, the NUS's campaign to oppose a user-pays system will be of greatest benefit to the wealthiest in our society.

**Daniel Carr, education policy researcher and former secondary teacher.**

Re: Issue 2 Shortlist

Wonder if Janet King will find the missing John Howard.

**David Bailey-Mckay**

## NOODLE HOUSE YARNS

with  
**DAVID BAILEY-MCKAY**

Democracy is fun. Participating in the democratic process is fun. And there is a lot to be said about controlling the democratic process. In factional politics, controlling such a process becomes the lifeblood of politics. So from the time the likes of Richo, Clarke and Gramoski put on their Huggies First Stack, the democratic process becomes a beautifully orchestrated event. Here, strings are plucked and pulled to create an election, which on paper looks like rules and regulations were followed.

And how does one do this? In my time, I have found that three key things are needed to run a great guided democracy: The numbers, respect, and a grain of truth to what you promise. With these three things, you should be able to rock and not be rolled.

A former Leader of the House once declared, "You either have the numbers, or you don't have the numbers." The importance of having the numbers in this situation was for the government in trying to find a new Speaker who could fit a glass slipper. Nevertheless, they had that magical equation of 50 per cent plus one to continue to govern. In this aspect, having the numbers should ensure you have control, however, it won't allow you to keep control of the democratic process.

Having respect is the ability to be able to say openly to a room: "I ain't gonna do you wrong while you're gone". This means that those who lose out will still stay, and those who voted for you will continue to come. If one does not have respect within the party, caucus or club, the vote loses all legitimacy and the organisation dies. Much can be said about a former state-based student political faction that has lost the respect of its members.

A grain of truth too is required when attempting to control a ballot. Unlike a free and fair election where politicians can lie, a known liar can rarely maintain the numbers or have respect within an organisation. This grain of truth doesn't, however, have to be a noble truth, or the promise of utopia. Generally, this is a promise of anything from a future position, to a Mars bar.

With these things, you should be on your way to controlling your Arc club, or having your own program on Sky where people listen to your worthless opinions. Then again, you're reading my column.



## Agony Ibis

**Dear *Threskiornis moluccus*,**

Why does nobody like me? :(

Yours,

The billions of Coral polyps that line the north-eastern coastline of Australia

In this environment it would seem that you're shit out of luck my coral friend.

There seems to be no end to the onslaught of abuse and tyranny from the so-called civilised peoples of Australia. I sometimes wonder how people can be so silent when something as beautiful as you is in the continuing process of being withered away. I believe it's half of the coral cover that you've lost since 1985 (yes I do read academic journals); such a bloody shame. With that stuck in your mind's eye I imagine that with the approval of the Abbott Point coal port you're going to love being smothered to oblivion by 3 million cubic metres of dredged sea bed. Seriously though, what the fuck. I feel a tearful sense of solidarity with you. I've seen comrades eat the trash and waste humans leave behind all over campus. And they go on about how the love 'green spaces' or how environmentally friendly the type of

dishwasher powder they use; they make me sick sometimes (literally and metaphorically). What's a bird, or better yet a large collection of psychedelic underwater ferns, supposed to do! Perhaps armed struggle should be contemplated...

Good luck friend,

**Ibis**

**Dear Agony Ibis,**

I'm deeply upset with the last cover of Tharunka. It depicted Tom Hanks as having some relation to the Opus Dei run Warrane College. He has never had anything to do with them! He's Bubbah Gump! And Left-tenant Dan! And that guy that went crazy on that island with that volleyball that I think had something to do with that TV show named Lost that I think went somewhere but didn't end up watching past the second season... That's beside the point. I demand satisfaction!

Bye,

Rick

**Rick,**

Watch this clip from Tom Hank's classic 1986 film 'Cork Rill'd' for an answer to your question.

[youtube.com/watch?v=oHg5SJYRHA0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHg5SJYRHA0)

Enjoy,

Ibis

# When culture became a costume at Goldstein College



## Amber Grimmble

*Several students have recently made complaints about Goldstein College's "El Dorado Week", held during O-Week this year. Goldstein College students were seen dressed up as Mexicans throughout the week in the celebrations. Common costume items included sombreros, moustaches, ponchos and face paint in tribal styles. All 150 student residents at Goldstein College have been given signs for their rooms with their names on it, decorated with pictures of sugar skulls or people in sombreros.*

Other students from The Kensington Colleges were also seen dressed up as Native Americans throughout O-Week. Cassie Harris, Queer Officer on the SRC, observed a group of students in Randwick dressed in sombreros carrying rakes.

"[The students] were dressed as 'Mexican gardeners'. It's absolutely disgusting that such a racist party was allowed to happen on campus," Harris said.

Approximately a hundred new students at the College were made to wear fresher t-shirts at all times so they could be identified – the shirts featured sugar skull designs and moustaches. Several students have since called the cultural sensitivity of the event into question.

One first-year and new resident of the college said, "It was either you put the shirt on or you don't get to participate in your college's O-Week. A lot of people were actually apprehensive about participating in the theme. I talked about it with friends and I knew that if I spoke up about my issues with the theme and racial stereotyping, it would be hard to make new friends at the College."

She elaborated that El Dorado is actually a European myth concerning the native people of Columbia, a myth that titillated Spanish conquistadors and other explorers.

"I feel like the theme was intended as a

South American theme, but people ignorantly confused the theme as exclusively Mexican. The people who organised it probably didn't intend for it to be racist, but the intention doesn't really matter."

The Dean of Goldstein College, Nick Dowd, said he thought the theme was a great idea. "The theme of El Dorado was passed by me, and I actually thought the lost city of gold was a great idea. The reason we went with the theme was to emphasis Goldstein's fiftieth year – the theme was really more about gold than South America."

Arc, UNSW's student organisation, has planned a Roundhouse party in second semester this year that will be themed "Day of the Dead" – also known as Dia de los Muertos – which for many is a sacred holiday and an important event in Latino cultures. At UNSW, the Day of the Dead party had been run for Halloween last year, with sugar skulls used in the promotional material, and with students wearing sugar skull make-up to the party.

A Dia de los Muertos themed party was going to be held last year by the University of Sydney Union (USU) before many complaints were heard from students on the event page. Many felt that the theme and marketing imagery were culturally appropriative and racially insensitive.

The USU's initial response was to ignore the criticism on the Facebook event and deleted the comment threads. When the negative criticism exploded, the USU Board eventually apologised for the theme and changed it to "start of semester fiesta", but the marketing imagery remained unchanged. The USU later held a public Cultural Sensitivity Forum in response to the theme of their start of semester party, aimed at understanding why the theme was inappropriate. It consisted of a panel of academics and two students who run an on-campus Critical Race Discussion Group.

One of those students, Oscar Monaghan, spoke to me about what they felt the outcome of the forum was. "The intentions of the forum were never clear, though many of us suspected that it was little more than an attempt to give the Union something to point to in light of the criticisms surrounding their lack of engagement with the concerns raised on Facebook.

"To that end, perhaps it was successful; but, despite assurances that it would be only the start of a consultative process geared towards establishing USU protocols around cultural appropriation, nothing further was ever mentioned, and to my knowledge no such consultation has taken place."

For many, Dia de los Muertos is an important cultural and religious celebration, and it is not associated at all with Halloween. Calvin Ratana of California State University's Daily Sundial wrote late last year about how Dia de los Muertos has been "completely appropriated [by the West] because of Halloween".

"Dia de los Muertos is actually a two-day holiday that starts when Halloween ends, although all three days are often celebrated in connection. Because of that, Western societies have tended to group the two holidays together, since they vaguely share the theme of the dead," Ratana said.

"However, unlike the contemporary celebration of Halloween, Dia de los Muertos is alive and breathing and has thousands of years of Mesoamerican identity and culture attached to it."

Ratana said, "According to Chicana/o studies professor Dr. Fermin Herrera, it literally means day of the dead in the native language of Nahuatl spoken by many Indigenous people. ... Dia de los Muertos is steeped in a rich culture and deals with [a] real life celebration that has a sacred meaning."

Arc has also planned a "Jungle" party

for later this year. I spoke to UNSW student Josephine, who raised concerns about the party due to its theme, especially about the likelihood of students dressing up in blackface. Josephine said the theme concerned her because "there is just too much of an association between Africa and the jungle. People in this country don't really understand the history of what blackface is, and the lack of understanding in this country makes the theme a recipe for disaster".

On the question of what needs to happen now, Josephine suggested that there should be measures put in place so that, in the future, racially insensitive themes are not picked again. "I'm not interested in debating racism, I shouldn't have to explain why you shouldn't be having these parties. The people who approve this stuff need cultural sensitivity training."

Josephine fears that these kinds of parties not only facilitate cultural appropriation, they openly encourage cultural and racial ignorance from students. The Chair and Student Director of the Arc Board, Chris Mann, believes that "if there is there is enough written evidence presented to Arc then there is definitely grounds to change the theme. Arc as a student organisation strives to be inclusive of all cultures and if there has been a misunderstanding and Arc has been made aware of it, we will remedy the mistake as soon as possible."

Rachel Lobo, the Ethno-cultural Officer on the SRC, feels that the situation can be improved. "I think this would be a great opportunity to ensure our student leaders are provided with the adequate resources to make better judgements and engage with issues they may not have experience with. It would be fantastic to see all Resident Fellows and House Committee members provided with cultural sensitivity training at the start of their terms."

Cultural exchange does not happen when those taking part do not understand the significance and history of symbols, practices and dress. Such themes reiterate the very techniques of colonialism by objectifying someone else's culture and turning that into something available for consumption. Cultural appropriation is oppressive, as it allows others to "play", temporarily, as an "exotic" Other, without experiencing any of the daily discriminations faced by marginalised cultures.

Culturally appropriative parties taking place at UNSW are disrespectful and complicit in erasing a rich culture and identity, and they are indicative of wider problems on university campuses. This is despite the fact that our student organisation and a majority of the colleges often emphasise that they foster inclusive environments.

A cross-campus action will likely be coming up in the next few weeks to begin discussions on how to combat racism on university campuses. It is time to start a dialogue about complicity in racism, putting mechanisms in place for dealing with such grievances when they occur, and preventing them from occurring.

# Childcare costs price parents out Of UNSW

Matthew Baker @matthewjbaker07

UNSW students with young children are finding it increasingly difficult to find accessible and affordable childcare on campus, which can exceed \$100 a day. This is leaving many students – predominantly young women – struggling to keep afloat financially.

According to SRC President Joel Wilson, “Students at UNSW believe that the current system of on-campus childcare is unaffordable and unable to cater to their needs.”

Childcare on campus is managed under the umbrella of UNSW Early Years, which itself comes under the ambit of UNSW University Services. Four centres on campus – House at Pooh Corner, Kanga’s House, Owl’s House and Tigger’s Honeypot – cater for children between three months and school age. The total capacity of all four centres is 289 children.

With women’s workforce participation under additional focus recently due to the federal government’s proposed \$5.5 billion a year paid parental leave scheme, there is also pressure mounting to reduce costs and address the childcare issue. As Olga Lisinska, the SRC’s Women’s Officer, told Tharunka, “There would be women who miss out on the chance to go to university, as they are not able to afford childcare.”

Students like Morgan Roach, a Social Research major whose two-year-old son is in House at Pooh, feels students’ needs are not being met. “The special status of student childcare and our needs ought to be recognised separate to staff centres, as our social and economic make-ups resemble very different scenarios in most cases,” Ms Roach told Tharunka.

As Ms Lisinska pointed out, “For 48 weeks a year [the cost of childcare]

comes out to \$24,000 per child. This is more than the average wage for an undergrad and more than half the average wage of a postgrad – both coursework and research.”

Although parents are able to claim the Child Care Rebate, as well as the Child Care Benefit if eligible, they still find it difficult to make ends meet. As Jemma Carlisle, general manager of Early Years, notes, “Despite recent increases in government rebates and our UNSW discounted student childcare rates, we actively hear our parents’ concerns regarding the cost and availability of childcare services, especially in the eastern suburbs area.”

Currently, parents are able to claim assistance via the Child Care Rebate and Child Care Benefit.

The former is not means tested and is based on 50 per cent of a parent’s out-of-pocket expenses. The maximum rebate is \$7,500 per child, per year.

The Child Care Benefit is means tested and capped at \$199.50 per week. “Families of a low income can reduce the cost to roughly \$60 per day, which results in approximately \$6 an hour for care,” says Ms Carlisle.

However, Olga Lisinska notes that government assistance “only reduced the fees to about half, which would still be unaffordable for many parents”.

Students like Morgan Roach agree. “With the full extent of government rebates, childcare fees still come close to \$900 per month. Coming up with that sort of money on top of housing costs, and all the other bills, is highly stressful and sometimes impossible,” she said.

Another key concern for students is the increase in childcare costs in recent years, and the uncertainty that creates for students with children in the Early Years centres, particularly when they are already struggling to make ends meet.

Both students and their student representatives appear frustrated at the gradual price increases.

“There are concerns that fees for childcare on campus are obscenely high, perpetually increasing, and that there is a huge waiting list for students to have their child cared for on campus,” said Joel Wilson.

Often the workload of study – be it full-time or part-time – along with the responsibility of young children, means working whilst studying is simply not an option, especially for young women.

Tharunka has been notified of several instances where students with children will even exceed a full-time study load at the expense of good grades just to get into the workforce faster to make ends meet.

“The other key challenge is to find the time to keep up with the workload. You pretty much have to forget about study at home when there are ankle biters awake, or home sick, which is why full-time, consistent childcare is critical to success,” Morgan Roach told Tharunka.

Thus, young parents can find themselves below the poverty line, with children, and still facing high childcare costs. As Ms Roach puts it, “For many of us, it is a life lived in arrears, on credit and by chance.”

Long waiting lists for students who want campus childcare is also a major issue, with an average waiting list of 12 months, according to the UNSW Early Years website. However, in practice, the waiting times can be much longer.

“I put my son on the waiting list when we found out I was pregnant, as I’d been reading in the paper for years about crippling waiting lists for care. Close to two years later, Leo started at the centre,” Morgan Roach said.

Another problem can be certainty of whether or not a place will be available,

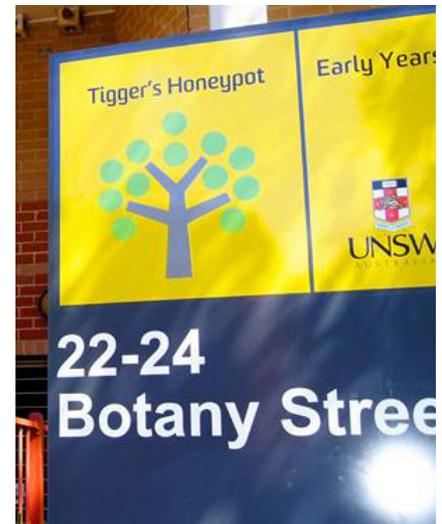
even after the average waiting period.

“They don’t give you much of an indication whether you will indeed be offered a place. They usually offer at the end of the year, so you’re in limbo about whether you can return or start your degree the following March,” said Ms Roach.

In response to such concerns, Gemma Carlisle told Tharunka, “The waitlist for childcare places at UNSW highlights our standard of service and the high demand from our staff and students. Unfortunately, the number on our waitlist and the length of waiting times are higher than we would like, but [it] is a reflection of the high standard of our existing facilities.”

Both the administrative side of UNSW Early Years and students recognise the impact of costs and lack of availability. However, for those whose lives this issue impacts on most, they see the situation as something far more profound.

As Ms Roach told Tharunka, “The question really is: Do we place value on students with kids finishing their studies? Do we care about the social and economic status of women?”



## UNSW Scores Below USYD, Melbourne In SSAF Report Card

Matthew Bugden

UNSW has ranked third in the 2013 National Union of Students (NUS) report on the implementation of the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF), behind USYD and the University of Melbourne.

In 2014, the SSAF, part of the Student Services and Amenities Bill 2011, imposes a mandatory \$140.50 fee on full-time students in order to fund a wide range of student services, among them an expansion of funding to Arc. The fee was implemented in response to the decline in quality of campus life during the Howard era of voluntary student unionism, and is stridently opposed by the current Abbott government.

The report ranks major Australian Universities according to how much various student organisations have influenced the allocation of SSAF funds. In this ranking, UNSW came in 3rd, behind

USYD (1st) and the University of Melbourne (2nd).

The criteria assessed were the percentage of student controlled services, the level of funding given to student organisations, how much support these organisations receive through staffing and honoraria, and how much involvement these organisations had in the decision making process to decide how funds were allocated.

The survey rigorously assessed the quality of the consultation process itself. The results were singularly disappointing. Only 22% of leaders surveyed said they considered the consultation process their University undertook an example of “best practice”, a drop from 38% in 2012, while the percentage who described the quality of the negotiations as ‘outstanding’ or ‘good’ dropped from 68% in 2012 to 63% in 2013. These results, two years on from the initial SSAF roll-out, call into question earlier excuses that the rushed

implementation of the SSAF in 2012 was the reason for the rushed, disordered negotiating process that year.

Providing transparency to the consultation process was the original impetus for NUS’s scrutiny, exemplified by its 2012 ‘Student Money for Students’ campaign. Though NUS was greatly supportive of the Bill—according to NUS National President Deanna Taylor, it has either ‘improved’ or ‘dramatically improved’ funding for 75% of student organisations’—it takes issue with the fact that the legislation included no explicit requirement for universities to negotiate with student organisations over the quantum of funds allocated by the SSAF.

A structural factor that might help to explain UNSW’s relative standing in the rankings compared to USYD is its significant lack of direct student control and ownership of services, such as retail outlets. While Arc owns the Roundhouse and Whitehouse among an array of privately

owned campus food outlets, the University of Sydney Union owns and operates the majority of USYD food outlets. It is due to structural factors like university ownership of student services and the total proportion of SSAF funds allocated to Arc that Arc simply cannot wield the same level of influence as other student organisations, according to the NUS report.

According to the 2012 NUS SSAF implementation report, a gradual decline in student control of services has been occurring for decades, with the Dawkins era campus mergers identified as the turning point. This was around the time Universities began to conglomerate and the public began to see the primary utility of Universities as research and development hubs to stimulate the “knowledge economy”.

This structural shift was accompanied by a new, sleeker look for universities—large scale privatisation of services, com-

mercial ventures embarked upon by Universities that according to the 2012 NUS SSAF report, took “potentially lucrative commercial operations out of the hands of student organisations”. The privatisation of services has left student organisations marginalised and forced to scale back their demands considerably in negotiations with the Universities.

The lack of student controlled students services arguably accounts for one of the least flattering statistics for UNSW in the report: the ratio of funds given to student organisations as a percentage of total SSAF revenue collected by the University. At 46%, UNSW student organisations received almost half the funding of USYD, with 82% of SSAF allocated funds going to its USU.

The report shows that the imbalance in student ownership across Australian universities to be considerable. “Very few universities, notably Australian National University and University of Sydney, have retained the traditional model of student

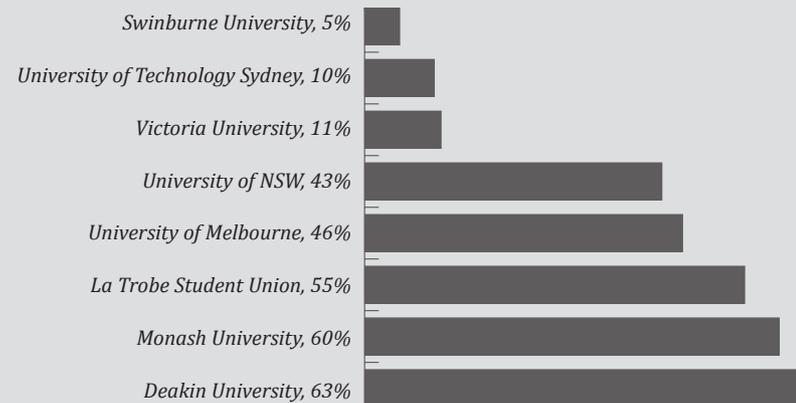
controlled student services.”

The evidence of this shift is clear from trends in ‘student welfare initiatives’ over the last few years. The vast majority of allowances made by UNSW have come as part of the ‘retail rollout’ (Max Brenner, Subway, etc), strictly commercial initiatives intended as gestures of good faith from the University, despite a complete lack of subsidies to make these services more affordable for students.

Arc has been working to amend this particular issue—it intends to conduct a SSAF survey towards the end of Semester 1 and present results from its 2012 and 2014 SSAF surveys, alongside recommendations from student leaders, to the University thereafter. But the lack of student ownership in services has taken an undeniable toll in the bargaining power relative to other major institutions.

The report may be viewed at: <http://tinyurl.com/pyr7be7>

## Proportion of 2012 SSAF going towards student organisations



\* figures from NUS report into the implementation Student Services and Amenities Fee 2012



# The \$8 Paintball Rip-Off

Matthew Davis

The International Paintball Group (IPG) can often be seen spruiking their \$8 paintball deals on the main walkway. I wish to inform you that IPG misrepresented and outright lied to me about the true prices and conditions of that deal.

IPG's sale tactic is to lure people in with the tempting deal of only "\$8 per person", plus a "great deal on ammo". Allegedly, \$8 is all that is required to cover basic equipment and registration for each player. In reality, the cost of equipment is extracted through a higher \$25 rate for the first one hundred paintballs. This distortion of cost allocation is designed to fool people into committing some money initially. Then, as the true costs and hidden fees gradually reveal themselves, customers feel they have already committed too much to pull out.

This tactic is so successful that the FAQ page on IPG's website even features a question about this higher rate. They claim that salespeople who choose not to mention this extra cost have done nothing wrong because it's in the fine print of the contract.

On 16 October 2013, a salesperson told me that paintballs cost 10 cents each after the first one hundred. I committed to 30 tickets for a paintball event to be run by a UNSW student society, based on the number of expressions of inter-

est I received at this price. Only once I attempted to pay for the extra paintballs, did I find out that they cost 14c each. This 40 per cent difference drastically reduced the number of sign-ups, so some of the places the society had already paid for were not filled. Consequently, the society made a loss.

The same salesperson also told me that we could play from half-past twelve to half-past four at any venue. However, later, when I attempted to book for a specific date, I was told that this is only true at the most remote venue. All other venues would allow play for no more than three hours, including breaks.

IPG salespeople try to overcome customer cautions by emphasising a "ten day cool off period", during which time you can get a full refund. This tactic is especially effective when combined with the claim that the \$8 deal is "just for today". This is simply not true – the same deal has been sold at every O-Week, Welcome Back Day and Week of Sport for at least the past two years.

The salesperson I spoke to explicitly and repeatedly said that this refund would incur no fee. This is a lie. Point 14 in the fine print states, "Refunds may attract an administration fee and take up to 21 working days to process." The absence of any mention of the limit on such a fee is quite worrying.

The refund administration fee is not the only hidden fee. IPG charges a four

per cent handling fee on everything purchased over the phone. Whilst paying for ammunition, I decided to increase the size of my purchase before finalising the payment. Consequently, IPG tried to charge me the four per cent handling fee twice for the one sale, totalling \$64 for one transaction. Furthermore, there is no mention of this fee on IPG's contract, flyers or websites, and the employee taking my call did not mention it. Luckily, I thought to calculate what the price should have been before stating my debit card details. I noted the difference and negotiated to have the four per cent fee charged only once. By the time I had paid for the \$8 tickets, the extra expensive first hundred balls per person, and the extra paintballs and lunch on the day, I had been charged over \$100 in hidden fees.

Similarly, there is no mention on IPG's contract, flyers or website of the premium of over \$1 per minute charge for calling their only phone number. They deliberately called me several times per week in the lead up to the event to "check-up" on me. Such a check-up can show good customer care. However, IPG went so over the top that after the event, I realised that I had been charged \$53 for replying to the multitude of voicemails they left (and complaining about their salespeople's false advertisement). Whilst this may not be technically illegal, it is unconscionable.

The cashiers at the venue refused to give out receipts for ammo purchased during the event. This is certainly illegal. As a result, the student society I was running this event for was also unable to recoup much of the costs from Arc because they require proper proof of purchase.

I am not the only one who has had such troubles. A quick Google search will reveal many forum posts from frustrated customers all over the world with the same complaints. I expressed my concerns about false advertisement to IPG. The company said it would investigate the matter, but it also claimed it was impossible that IPG's salespeople made false claims. I never heard back from anyone. IPG seemed to care little because it knew I had no proof that they lied.

I raised my concerns with Arc, who only responded after almost two months of repeated emails. The Arc sponsorship team eventually sent me a polite response stating, "We have informed IPG of the several issues you raised and received a very detailed response from IPG's National Sales Manager which we believe has satisfactory addressed the issues you raised." Consequently, IPG were invited back on campus for O-Week.

After feeling somewhat powerless because most of my concerns were founded on unprovable conversations, I recorded a chat I had with them at their stall on the main walkway in Week One, pretending to be a potential customer. During the chat, they did state the true price of ammo, however, they answered my query about the length of the events with, "It's an eight-hour day, full eight-hour day," despite the fact that you only get three hours at IPG's Peakhurst and Concord venues. Similarly, the salesperson explained that "there's a ten day cooling-off period, within ten days they can refund it", without mentioning the refund fee.

The student society I ran this event for lost over one hundred dollars due to IPG's false advertisement and hidden fees. If you have had similar problems with IPG, please contact Tharunka. Unfortunately, IPG are still allowed on campus, but I hope that this article prevents other students from falling into its trap.

# Arc Board moves to get women on board

Crystal Moran @manlycarrots

*As Board nominations open this week, Arc's Board and management will be watching closely to see whether their decision to support a marketing strategy over a quota will successfully encourage women to nominate.*

In March last year, Tharunka reported that attempts to implement affirmative action policies had stalled, despite strong support from both the Board, and amongst the SRC and women's activists. At the time, just three of the fourteen Board members were women; this year, there are five.

In documents provided by Arc, it is clear that many approaches for improving female nomination rates were considered by the Board. These included quota models or the introduction of a female directorship (similar to the COFA and Postgraduate Director positions), as well as the softer 'cultural approaches' eventually adopted in late 2013.

Arc Chair, Chris Mann, told Tharunka that just prior to the 2013 Board nominations, a special resolution was circulated, proposing that either one of the three elected student director positions was female (including the COFA and Postgraduate positions), or that one of one of the ordinary directory roles went to a woman, irrespective of what gender the COFA and Postgraduate directors were. The marketing strategy was included in the special resolution; however, it was recommended to occur regardless of whether a quota was instituted.

"The board could not reach an agreement on the special resolution; the reason was that the Board had concerns with the process of the policy, not the overall principle value of equal employment opportunity," Mr Mann said.

"We didn't see there being a problem with women getting elected; we saw a problem with women nominating. There was evidence and processes put before the Board, and from all that information, the decision for a marketing approach was adopted over a quota system."

The multi-year marketing strategy will include posters, video, and online and print advertising in Tharunka and Blitz, with a key focus of the campaign being featuring women in the visual advertising. While designed to appeal to all students regardless of gender, Arc management believes this will address the possibility that women are self-selecting themselves out of the nominations process.

After the 2014 Board elections, the strategy will also include courses, information sessions, and forums, which feature women leaders.

Though advertisements appeared on the Arc website and in the student publications, posters have been few and far between, and the video component of

the strategy is not expected to be circulated until after nominations have already opened. This has prompted some to question the capacity of the strategy to be successful in its aims.

UNSW SRC Women's Officer, Olga Lisinska, a supporter of a quota model, said, "If the marketing strategy is not being used to its fullest capacity, then it won't actually result in any change."

Similarly, Board sources suggest that although it will not be implemented until the middle of 2014, the motion to run the forums and mentoring programs was passed before the 2013 Board elections. By the time its effect can be seen in nominations, two Board cycles will have passed. Ms Lisinska said that while she recognises that policies not fundamental to Arc's operations may take time to put into action, sluggish rollouts "make it ap-

change, and really fast-tracking it, because you've got women in leadership positions fostering other women leaders."

The Vice President of UNSW's Conservative Club, Anneliese Oldcastle, disagrees, saying that rather than causing positive cultural change, quotas "ultimately encourage negative stereotypes against women in university or business, such as 'she only has the position because she is female.'"

"University women shouldn't be reduced to mere quota pawns. We are just as capable as male students, and I resist anything that promotes that perception that we need a stepping stool and lack the qualities to reach the top by ourselves," she said.

Both Ms Oldcastle's suggestion of negative stereotyping, and Mr Wilson's belief

do not necessarily come into effect.

"In 2013, there were fifteen candidates who participated in the Board Elections, six of them female, with a female topping the polls, and three female candidates getting elected out of a possible six positions, which meant the affirmative action provisions weren't enacted," she said. This is apparently only the fifth time a woman has topped the polls in the USU's 42 year history.

This success has not occurred without challenging side effects. The extensive affirmative action review undertaken by the USU suggested that the "affirmative action policy has become subverted and manipulated as a strategic tool by existing first year Board Directors when deciding which candidates to run". It also quotes former female Board members, who said that they didn't vote for themselves, or that their friends campaigned for male candidates, because of the expectation of affirmative action provisions.

The problems surrounding affirmative action were well summarised in the review by 2005 USU Vice President Lauren Hendry Parsons - "AA is a blunt instrument... it's hardly a scalpel. Although practically and statistically this policy achieves its aims (more women running for Board, more female representation on Board), it also fundamentally reinforces troubling ideologies concerning a woman's inherent legitimacy and worth as a candidate and Board director."

While affirmative action quotas or marketing strategy might solve the under-nomination of women for ordinary directorships, this is not the only structural problem keeping women under-represented on Board. Each year, three (21%) of Board positions are allocated to ex-officio members - the SRC and PGC Presidents, and the SDC Convener. This year, all three positions are held by men. Last year, all three positions were held by men. In the four years since the founding of the PGC, there have been twelve ex-officio places, and only one of those was held by a woman - Scarlett Ha back in 2011. Similar patterns exist within College student leadership structures, and within the Student Leaders Group.

Mr Mann says that while "the Board cannot control who is elected there, nor can it implement an [equal employment opportunity] policy for the ex-officios", they will continue looking at ways to encourage more diversity in leadership positions, and not just with respect to gender, but to other underrepresented groups, such as international students.

"Arc Board ultimately wants to create a culture and environment that promotes diversity on the Board and within the organisation... as such, the Board will strive to create opportunities to encourage and foster diversity on the Board."



pear as though it's not a priority for the Board".

The faster quota approach is one favoured by the UNSW SRC President, Joel Wilson. While he supports a communications campaign as a component of cultural change, he believes affirmative action quotas are the key to making that cultural change happen sooner.

"We should be fostering leaders, and in particular female leaders, and making sure that they have the capability and training to confidently apply for and take on roles which have been traditionally occupied by men", he said.

"[Affirmative action quotas] are a mechanism of getting that cultural

in catalytic social change have been evident within the University of Sydney Union (USU) Board since it enacted affirmative action quotas in 2006. Their model ensures that at least 5 of the 11 ordinary directors are women.

In the first year of the new rules' operation, only three women successfully nominated, and were appointed without election, with criticism from themselves and others that their positions were not meritoriously earned.

Last year, it was a different story. USU President Hannah Morris says that since the introduction of affirmative action, there has been such a significant trend for female participation, the quota rules



## Student involvement in Mardi Gras on the rise

Nick Timms

When Dean Mattar was one of UNSW's Queer Officers last year, he was disturbed by accounts of queer students facing violence.

"There have been many times where I had to help fill out apprehension of violence orders, or book taxis for students because they didn't feel safe going home, and there were many times when I had calls from hospitals... that linked on to issues of bullying on campus," he says.

"Usually this type of harassment tends to happen behind closed doors, but it is still quite rampant."

Mattar, now a co-convenor of the Australian Queer Student Network (AQS), sees it as his responsibility to stop incidents like these – through engaging universities with empirical evidence, creating a safe and social network of queer students, and encouraging expressions of pride, like the Sydney Mardi Gras.

Oliver Barry, a UNSW student, was part of the opening float for the 2014 Sydney Mardi Gras and saw it as a great experience.

"It was very liberating, and really fun," he says.

"It made me really proud, you know, that this began as just a small protest, but now it's become a huge celebration of queer culture. It's really great to be a part of it."

Barry was one of many university students getting involved in the parade. In fact, this year's Sydney Mardi Gras Parade saw far more involvement from university students than ever before. And this involvement is only expected to grow according to the organisers of the annual Cross Campus Mardi Gras Float.

Andy Zephyr, the UTS SRC President and former UTS Queer Officer, says that queer students from universities all over the country came to participate in the float.

"We had students come up from the University of Tasmania, we had one of the National Union of Students' Queer Officers, we had people from Queensland, we had people from Western Australia, so yeah it was a really big get together of quite a lot of people," Zephyr says.

"We had about 15 to 20 per cent of students on the float that would have been from outside NSW."

Dean Mattar agrees with Andy that the student involvement is on the rise.

"Well it's always growing," he says.

"I was an organiser of the committee last year, and in my experience of this year and last year, there was a significantly larger presence this year. We had more participants, and we had more universities willing to give donations, which was very needed and beneficial for everyone, so yeah it's a growing process.

"We sent out invitations to the majority of universities throughout NSW, and we also sent out invitations throughout Queensland, ACT and Victoria. I think the furthest away was Western Australia and Northern Territory – we had a few students fly in from there as well."

Of course, it is not an easy task to assemble this many students into a unified float.

"Organising queer students to come in from all over Australia to Sydney on a night that is usually raining, and all trying to participate in the one event, while usually a little bit high on life, is pretty difficult," Zephyr says.

"I mean, we had trouble communicating. We have such a diverse range of people in the queer collective and in queer networks that it's hard to try and encapsulate a theme, and encapsulate spaces that are personal to everyone, but also represent everyone. That was probably the biggest problem we had, because we wanted to establish that we're here to make Mardi Gras, a more corporate event, political, but we also want to have the space for people to go, 'I think it's a political push to just literally be myself, for me to be myself in society, that is a political push for me.'"

Zephyr is, however, pleased at the increased involvement from queer leaders within universities.

"I feel a lot more confident, because this year, we've had a lot more involvement from queer officers, who are coming into their roles...so we had all four office bearers from Sydney, we had twice as much involvement from UTS, we had a really good showing from UNSW, we had people from UWS getting involved [and] we had people

from Macquarie who were really keen," Zephyr says.

"I think that just shows that the queer networks in NSW have been building quite significantly through events like Mardi Gras, and through events like national conferences, just learning to respect and get each other to these sorts of events, whether they are on the other side of the city, or on the other side of Australia."

The theme of the Cross Campus float this year was "More than Marriage" – a look at some of the other issues that queer students face besides the fight for marriage equality.

"We invited student representatives to put together small blocks to draw attention to particular political issues that affect queer students," says Mr Mattar. "For example, we had a people of colour block that focused on the discrimination that affects queer people of colour, [and] we had queer refugees, police brutality, queer education, and a few others as well."

"We wanted to say basically that the queer students, the queer student networks we have in NSW, are more than marriage," Zephyr says. "We're about queer refugees, we're about trans and intersex rights, we're about making sure that in all aspects of the law, queer people, gender and sex diverse people aren't discriminated against."

Zephyr and Mattar see the growth in student participation as hugely beneficial because they both see university students as an essential part of Mardi Gras.

"We often study gender studies, we're often involved in political groups like queer collective, and we're able to reintroduce some of that political awareness back into Mardi Gras, which is sometimes considered to be a really corporatised event, and we make it a little bit more political again," Zephyr says.

"I believe Mardi Gras is a beneficial thing, because we look at the historical context, and how it gives us a politicised perspective. It really gives voices to minorities, to able to politicise their rights [and] say 'look, we are citizens, we are humans, and we demand equal rights,'" Mr Mattar says.

*Photo credit: Folake Osibodu*

# Sydney Biennale and Transfield Cut Ties as Luca Belgiorno-Nettis Resigns

Annie Murney

Artists, activists, curators and cultural Sydneysiders breathed a sigh of relief on March 7 when Luca Belgiorno-Nettis, the director of Transfield Holdings, stepped down as chairman of the Sydney Biennale after mounting pressure.

If you missed the controversy leading up to his resignation, Transfield recently signed a \$1.2 billion contract committing to the building and maintenance of offshore detention centres on Nauru and Manus Island. The controversial link between the Biennale and the government's implementation of mandatory detention provoked a handful of artists to withdraw their work, relinquish their fee and cancel their public events in protest.

In the social media sphere, this unexpected news was greeted with gleeful and congratulatory comments. However, it has quickly become apparent that although this is a good result, it may not necessarily be a great one.

As Belgiorno-Nettis's father co-founded the Biennale in 1973, this severing of ties signals the end of a partnership spanning 41 years. Thus, Sydney's public art programs and cultural reputation have been intricately entwined with the

generosity of this family. This reveals the unfortunate fact that arts organisations often have to rely on philanthropic and government support – a situation that is unlikely to change in the near future.

The boycotts have been criticised on various fronts for the inconsistency of their protests. The fact is that Transfield has donated money to the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Art Gallery of NSW, so why not boycott these insti-

to be ethical is a deeply concerning one.

Although it's a moral victory, there is speculation that this turn of events will signal greater difficulty for arts funding in the future. Nevertheless, it is an unhealthy state of affairs when the biggest event of the cultural calendar is painted as hinging on one ethically questionable sponsor. This locates the event firmly in the custody of the corporation, not the artists, nor the people of Sydney.

**“This notion that art cannot afford to be ethical is a deeply concerning one.”**

tutions as well? Perhaps it is simply because at this moment in time, there is no global spotlight illuminating their financial ties.

The question of where to draw the line when it comes to “dirty money” is a difficult one. The refusal to accept funding from every corporate brand that is remotely associated with human suffering may leave a static or non-existent art scene. This notion that art cannot afford

In a statement regarding his resignation, Belgiorno-Nettis expressed the unfair situation, in which, the dedicated Biennale team have withstood the “blood on your hands” brunt of the criticism. Indeed, targeting a non-unionised workforce that includes many loyal volunteers is misdirected anger.

However, of further importance is the lack of criticism directed at the Australian government, the body that is enforc-

ing these inhumane policies. In her article, published in *The Conversation* (8 March 2014), Prof. Joanna Mendelssohn pointed out that “by outsourcing the more distasteful aspects of government, they are setting up private companies as future scapegoats, and in doing so hoping to avoid the consequences of their own decisions”. This exposes a dark political reality wherein private contractors are given financial incentive to facilitate mandatory detention as a calculated deferral of blame.

Complexities aside, what the boycotts and Belgiorno-Nettis's resignation have demonstrated is that there is a great deal of embarrassment and disgrace surrounding Australia's treatment of refugees. It seems that Transfield's withdrawal as an official sponsor, as opposed to reconsidering its contractual obligations on Manus Island and Nauru, has been to stifle the increasingly international coverage of the protest.

Although it is unclear how events will now unfold and what the long-term repercussions will be for Sydney's art scene, we can hope that a new standard of ethical sponsorship will be set. This is a small victory, but it is important to remember that the privatisation of human suffering will prevail under Transfield.

**Statement by Biennale artists' Working Group responding to key points**



**Statement from Transfield Holdings**



**At work inside our detention centres: A guards's story**



**Interview with asylum seeker detained on Manus Island**



*‘Many Australians struggle with the problems of managing the transit of refugees to this country; this is a global challenge. The Biennale of Sydney acts as an artistic platform for dialogue around issues such as this.’*

<http://goo.gl/Eln2AH>

*‘We are all human being, we are all refugees who came to ask for your protection; all we have is hope, hope for everyone outside this place in Australia or anywhere in the world - HELP US.’*

<http://goo.gl/2Ntt6F>

*‘It was clear from the first day of training what kind of culture they were trying to foster among their employees.’*

<http://goo.gl/y1CYFd>

*‘Through their sponsorship arrangement with Transfield, the Biennale of Sydney received profits from mandatory detention.’*

<http://goo.gl/4G76y3>

**SCAN CODES TO READ MORE FROM THESE IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS**



# NO LONGER ON THE FENCE: THE VAGINAL LOBOTOMY

HELOISE MILLIKAN

*Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the most extraordinarily clever way to subdue and assert domination over the feminine under the untouchable guise of “cultural practice”. FGM is not only a symbolic attack; it’s a clever little combination of assault upon mind and body, woven into a tapestry of ancient cultural tradition. The concept of her womanhood, and the details of her psyche, are shaped and restrained with the wave of a knife in between her legs at an age at which she cannot protest.*

This opinion, I have come to, through a point of reason and compassion, rather than a sense of western cultural superiority. To allow for any cultural wriggle-room on the issue is nothing more than an intellectualism of one of the wickedest forms of subjugation existing today.

The removal of her clitoris and the sewing closing off a large portion of her vagina will eradicate, or at the very least, reduce her capacity to reach her full sexual potential. She may never have an orgasm. She may be robbed of that precious bonding moment after love-making in which she is flooded with dopamine, oxytocin and opioids; all three are powerful chemicals, providing the female brain with a surge of energy, bliss, creative drive and self-love, in turn creating a headspace in which she is liberated and powerful.

Feminist author Naomi Wolf, in her recent book *Vagina*, talks about this nirvana in the mind of the woman. Wolf explains the overwhelming and transformative power that good, generous, fulfilling and wholesome sex can have upon the individual’s sense of self. Wolf explains that through the chemicals released in the brain during sex, women can enter a state of heightened

awareness of beauty, love and self. The longer lasting effects of these chemicals is heightened when in conjunction with an ongoing healthy sexual experience, more long-term sense of energy, power, and above all, creative energy, whether this be artistic, intellectual, social, or dare I say, political.

Considering this link between sex and power, the removal of the clitoris is an action equivalent to a lobotomy; an outdated procedure which serves to dull the madness of the mind by stabbing at the brain with a long needle. This leaves the patient quiet, uninspired, and never again to experience their complete mental and emotional potential. Now the victim is docile, cooperative and no longer able to embarrass the world with their hysteria.

Every woman who claims she is proud to have undergone the procedure, I feel for, as she will never experience her total sexual core. Every girl who cries out against what happened to her without her consent, I mourn for her, as she recognises a loss: the lobotomy of her vagina.

Ugliness, unimportance and nuisance – these words describe problems with the vagina that FGM sets out to “fix”, beginning by making the woman marriageable. The uncut vagina is seen to be ugly; the ceremony of girl-becomes-woman is considered necessary to allow her to function as a wife.

This ceremonial act will continue to thrive and maintain cultural acceptability as long as the underlying premise remains strong of the fundamental unimportance of female sexual potential, and by association, the absolute lack of interest in what a powerful notion of

the feminine has to offer a society.

The final insult is the sewing closing a portion of the vagina in order to make it impossible for her to insert anything into it until she is married. This is called infibulation and is used in about 20 per cent of all FGM cases. This means sex outside of marriage becomes impossible until the vagina is cut open or the penis of her husband is forced into it, most likely causing it to tear, allowing for penetration for the benefit of the man’s ejaculate.

Consider for a moment the philosophical implications of infibulation. The obvious aim is to prevent the woman from taking pre-marital lovers. The fact that surgical measures are then taken to physically prevent women from having sex boldly acknowledges and promotes the idea that women must not be trusted and there is something innately devilish about their natural desires.

All “deep-seated mistrust and suspicion of females” aside, I guess it’s true that women would be more likely to have sex if their vaginas weren’t sewn shut. Here’s a thought...men also have sex! Does this not also pose a problem? The solution? It could be suggested to community leaders that they start sewing little boys’ penises to their stomachs by the foreskin so that it naturally grows onto the naval and permanently attaches. This way, when they get an erection, they won’t be able to insert it into anyone. On the night of his wedding, his bride could simply cut it off his stomach.

Ah, but see, now we have come to a roadblock. I have this niggling little feeling that men wouldn’t allow something like that to happen to their bodies, probably because it sounds absolutely absurd, outrageously restricting, violating and ridiculous.

However, when inflicted upon women, what is it about the absurdity and cruelty of FGM that seems to bypass people’s sense of injustice and disgust? Why is the issue still up for debate in feminist circles? Could it be that thousands of years of tradition have numbed us to the cruelty of this procedure?

Men wouldn’t allow culture to inhibit the workings and domination of their penises. They cheer each other on when they play sport. They praise each other as musicians, artists and politicians. They praise a male pope, paint pictures of God with a beard, high-five each other when they have sex with women. They worship their penises, their strength and their natural inclination to demand respect.

Women need to start doing the same for themselves and each other. With this in mind, I’ll be damned if I am going to stand by and listen to my fellow feminists tell me that I should be more accepting of FGM due to tradition and “cultural significance”, which we apparently fail to understand.

Throughout every moment in history, women have been raped, beaten, oppressed, denied legal rights, told to be quite, medically categorised as hysterical, refused education, refused inheritance, refused respect, deterred from having sex by copping ridicule afterwards, called bitch, slut, whore, skank, cunt and cock-tease when we don’t have sex, get stoned for getting raped, told to be sexy (but not too sexy, you slut), taught to appreciate great art, great literature and great music created by great male artists, and are constantly expected to prove to our fellow professionals that women can be as politically and socially ruthless as men.

Female genital mutilation is a human rights struggle, and like every other struggle in history, it has found itself being intellectualised for the benefit of those who wish to do nothing to advance the rights of those who have found themselves time and time again crushed by society. FGM is one of these issues, the physical and psychological ramifications of which are degrading and destructive right down to the very core of the feminine.

**Do you agree with Heloise? What are your thoughts on FGM? Send a letter to [tharunka@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:tharunka@arc.unsw.edu.au) to have your say.**

*Image credit: Amnesty International (Sweden)*

# SOVIET REUNION: What You Need to Know about Ukraine

Madeleine James @itsmaddiejames

*Anyone with a television or access to Internet is probably aware that right now, something's going down in Ukraine. The nation of 45 million can't seem to catch a break, facing political unrest, violent protests and pressure from Western Europe and Russia is looming over them. Here's what you need to know to discuss the topic and pass yourself off as being intellectual and informed.*

## The background

Ukraine's current political crisis has been developing for many years. Conflict sparked in 2004 when presidential elections saw pro-Russia candidate Viktor Yanukovich emerge victorious. Yanukovich, no relation to Weird Al, was immediately accused of rigging the election, and after Ukraine's Supreme Court confirmed this allegation, opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko was elected. The only politician in the world to wear pigtails and pull it off, Yulia Tymoshenko, was made prime minister.

Fast forward through six years of failure to fulfil promises and steady economic decline, Yanukovich was once again elected president in 2010. Faced with the task of saving Ukraine from the brink of bankruptcy, as well as uniting a people divided between loyalty to Western Europe and Russia, Yanukovich entered talks with the European Union to establish free trade and better political discourse. He also put Tymoshenko in jail and built himself a luxurious hotel-sized, taxpayer funded residency (complete with private zoo) – but back to the matter at hand.

For reasons that are not completely clear, but may include bribery and pressure from Russia, President Yanukovich suspended talks with the EU in November 2013 – much to the dislike of many Ukrainians.

## The protests

Less than a week later, protests broke out across the country, culminating in a nationwide movement calling for Yanukovich's resignation. At its peak, Kiev's Independence Square was filled with an estimated one million protesters. To put that into perspective, that's 12 times as many people fit into ANZ Stadium. Imagine the

traffic.

Protests have grown so violent that riot police were sent to control activists, and laws were passed raising the penalty for participating in "unsanctioned protests" to 15 years' imprisonment. In the wake of all this, President Yanukovich fled Ukraine on February 22, and an interim government was put in place consisting of newly released Tymoshenko and colleague Oleksandr Turchynov.

## What's Vlad got to do with it?

With anti-government, anti-Russian reunion protesters driving bulldozers towards police and building cata-



pults in the streets, and police using stun grenades and water cannons in freezing temperatures, it's fair to say Ukraine was not in the strongest position to withhold an occupation. Enter Russia.

Ukraine and Russia's history is long and complicated. As founding partners of the USSR, they remained united until Ukraine voted for its independence in 1991, and

broke it off with Russia. Crimea, adjacent to Russia's western border, and given by Russia as a gift in 1954, remained part of Ukraine.

On March 1 this year, Russian President Vladimir Putin saw Ukraine's moment of vulnerability and pounced, gaining permission from his parliament to send troops to "defend" Crimea. Like Ukraine's jealous ex-boyfriend, Russia was never thrilled about the prospect of Ukraine shacking up with the EU, offering to shower it with gifts in the form of reduced gas prices and assistance in paying its scheduled debt repayments of \$US8 billion.

The United States, of course, isn't very happy about all this. Putin and President Obama have been in talks since Russia's occupation of Crimea, but Putin has not responded to threats of sanctions. Instead, Putin accused Obama of interfering in the matter "as if [he] were sitting in a laboratory and running experiments on rats, without any understanding of the consequences". Say what you like about Putin, but he doesn't seem to fully understand metaphor.

## What does the future hold for Ukraine?

At present, approximately 30,000 Russians occupy Crimea. The region's parliament has voted to hold a referendum to decide whether they will secede from Ukraine and join Russia – a move that will most likely be unconstitutional and not internationally recognised.

Yanukovich emerged from hiding, speaking of wanting to renew discussion with the EU, but with presidential elections having been brought forward, scheduled for May this year, it is unlikely he'll be the one doing the talks. Current favourites include Vitali Klitschko, a 6-foot-7 former heavyweight boxing champion, with a PhD, known as "Dr. Ironfist". You just can't make this stuff up.

Regardless, it appears that Ukraine's political struggle is not over, even when a new president is elected. The population's loyalty remains divided between Western Europe and Russia, and that is unlikely to change anytime soon.

**Update: as Tharunka went to print the Crimea was in the process of holding a referendum, claimed as illegal by the Ukrainian government, and voted to join the Russian Federation.**



Kerry O'Brien

*It's the newest game in town; the craze that has engaged the youth; the word on everybody's lips. I've got it, you've got it, and your mum is probably downloading the latest update for it now. It's Tinder, and it's been matched with a good chunk of the human population.*

This app-based phenomenon is spoken about openly in every bar, university library, coffee queue and train station. Anyone from 18 to (let's say) 50 has a profile, usually with either a misspelt byline or whimsical quote and a handful of pixelated selfies or, stupidly, a picture with their ex-partner. It's that trendy that if it isn't mentioned in an upcoming episode of *Girls*, I'll eat my hat.\*

Modelled on a classic schoolyard game of "hot or not", users swipe right or left for somebody they want to do something naughty with or would rather not. This

is soon followed by banal conversation about nothing in particular and the cycle continues. Although there's been some objection to this wonderfully shallow behaviour, you also have the option of seeing your potential spouse's friends and interests – information that is drawn from Facebook. The real beauty of this is that you never know who has swiped left – was it because you enjoy winter sports, or only showed group photos, or clearly spend too much time with your dog? Ignorance is bliss.

It's a simple truth that people no longer look up from their phones, and so meeting a partner or even making friends isn't the same as it used to be. We may as well find the answer in that same small screen. Just as it was normal for my parents to meet in a pub, it'll be no shock to me if a selfie and a swipe lands me a boyfriend. But why is this common, hilarious and unashamed trend so acceptable when people of my vintage grew up thinking dating websites were a product of the devil?

Somewhere around the time of VHS and when Oprah was on still on daytime telly, online dating was a niche activity for the desperate and dateless. Critics of online dating stressed about stranger danger, the expanding amount of information that people put on the net, and the plain and simple fear that being in a sexual situation with people you don't know well is a tad frightening. Admit it – you've thought that people who met someone via online dating are a bit weird, or felt the need to warn a potential axe-murder victim that they shouldn't go on that date tonight because eHarmony only attracts slovenly psychopaths. Or people who work in IT.

I think the difference between the OkCupid age and the time of Tinder is twofold.

Whereas people were probably more likely to approach a beautiful stranger with their number a few years ago, that rarely happens today. It's now the majority that are open to engaging in an online community of singles.

As well as the change in the social trends of dating, the impression of it is definitely more positive. There's a whole lot less commitment in an app that all your mates use – there's no subscription fee, no pressure and no automatic assumption of just how intent you are on fucking someone or finding a partner. You get all the excitement of talking to somebody new without all the stigma.

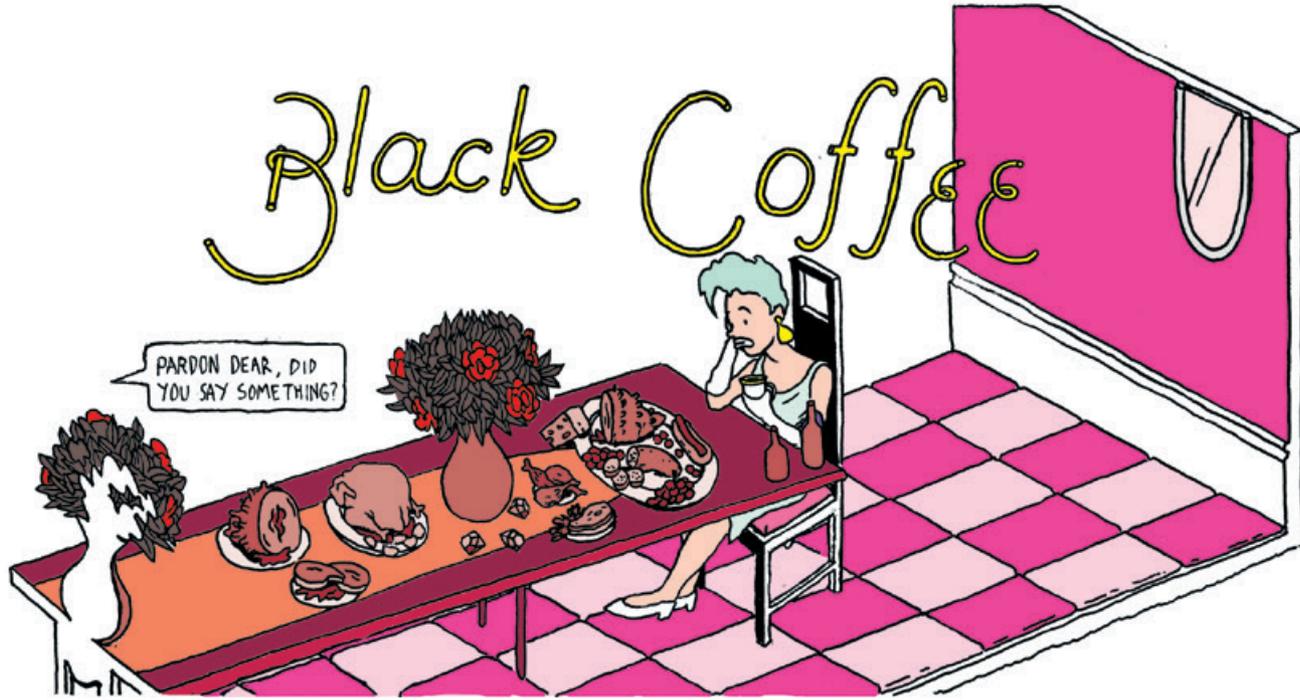
For people who are gay or bisexual, online communities are especially fruitful (ha, get it?) as it alleviates the awkward question of another person's sexuality if you happen to fancy them. And although the perception of online dating has devolved to embrace newcomers like Tinder, I don't think apps like Grindr will be receiving as warm a welcome from gay singles anytime soon. Or at least, not one to be spoken about at the office water cooler.

So what are you waiting for? If you're keen on being keen, then your Tinder-ella awaits. Just be willing to lie to your grandparents about where you met.

*Note: I was not paid nor received any benefit for this piece about Tinder, but am willing to sell my integrity for cash if the L.A. developers swipe right on this article.*

\* I don't wear hats, so have fun wiping the egg from your face, Lena.

# Black Coffee



PADEN H.



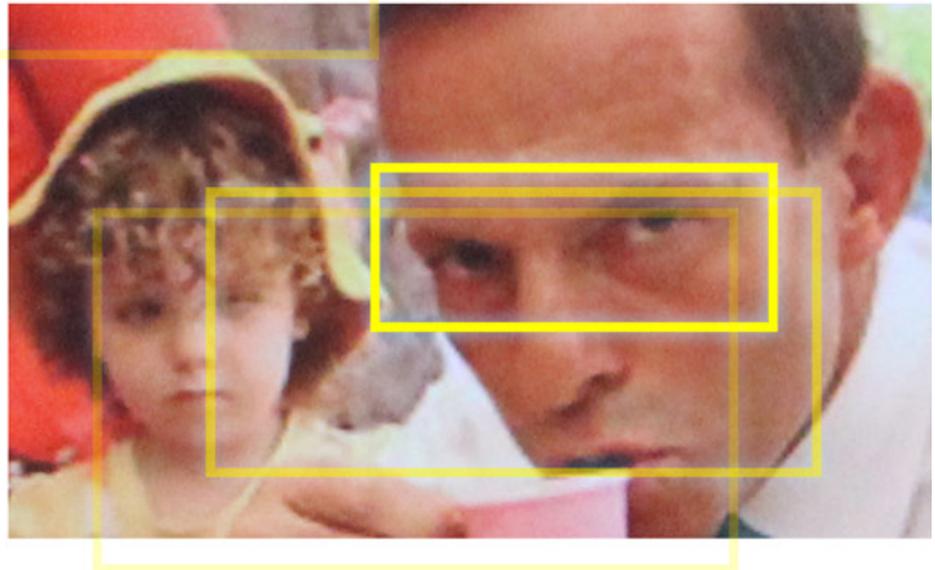
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# TOO YOUNG FOR WEARING BLACK

LAURA KENNEY @LAURARACQUEL / ILLUSTRATIONS BY KAOKO MIYAZAKI

## Asylum Seeker

I am too young to clothe myself in mourning black.  
A little mirror image of he who takes the living from the world.  
I've hidden away the person that I was -  
In a shroud of dark that drifts through streets with  
Beagle eyes, ever-edged with tears, I drudge  
With nothing to carry but thoughts of you  
Like dumb bells that clang and drag me  
To keep me in stride with this heavy heaving heart.

The water should have been the dangerous part.  
I wish it were that he might have met Poseidon  
Wrenching waves against his safety - but not this.  
This was meant as just an off-ramp in your life.  
The signs had pointed you that way and off you sloped  
Towards the greener place where neighbours talked  
Where happiness like strangers walked  
And touched on every person every place.  
'Reza' they would call you with confusion left unmasked,  
Pronouncing hesitation as to your creed and plaque -  
And say your name all broken as would break a mother's heart.

The culture should have been the dangerous part.  
You'd bare your skin unto the sun and bear the burn  
That peels away the blacklist place you're from.  
With sideways glances made of some  
Humphrey Bogart design from the layman,  
Of the land you'd landed on.  
Tongue tied, twisted up in loops of houses, cars and friends,  
Or bankrupt, thin and hungry, stretched too far your heart -

How could the people be the dangerous part?  
What was I supposed to but believe you my own son?  
You said they'd take you in and you'd be safe,  
But not this - and now your father never speaks.  
It's always someone's father, someone's mother,  
Someone's sister, someone's brother, someone's lover.  
But not this - can it be my turn under the wheel?  
You're not a headline and you're nobody's statistic,  
You're just mine.  
I barely knew where Papua New-Guinea was.  
The last word you spoke was I'll call you soon.  
I let myself think 'Maybe he will' - my boy with the fiery heart.

The water should have been the dangerous part.

## Car Crash

You have become a present to someone,  
Dropped as by Saint Nicholas in the night down a  
Need-to-sweep-me Chimney and shot clean  
As the stuff of life into a body with soul.  
There's a minute left to midnight  
And it creaks through my sights  
Like a car, swimming headlights and brakes that can't stop;  
An Achilles who's hatched out the plan none would swap -  
There's a tearing of thunder, a cloud weeping thin -  
Like the face torn off rubber of your tyres in spin.

Tonight they took your heart boy,  
I can only shake in this hospital foyer unable to say the word.  
Younger than Hamlet and snared by your springe,  
But for you - dumbfounded- it was simple as sin.

I never had the time to look -  
Pay attention to his toys and tricks.  
You were less than twenty minutes gone  
When your blood to poison turned and burned  
Your sense off in an alcohol vapour flash.  
Tonight I lost your heart boy,  
And it wears my old wires thin.

I find distraction in old passions - joys I can sit in.  
Skating shackle shackle on the ice I feel each chink,  
Like speed bumps left there, worn into the road to  
Catch my sprint - as it caught you.  
I gasp - the air of crystal shards sinks deep into the lungs  
As in circuits I sweep round and round  
Resounding mantras for emptying the mind -  
Then crash! I've found the outer wall all wobbling  
Bumps and bruises and heart beats like a squall.

I'm stuck forever here in the crinkle cut and clear aired road side wreck,  
From which I can't emerge, I'm in your net.

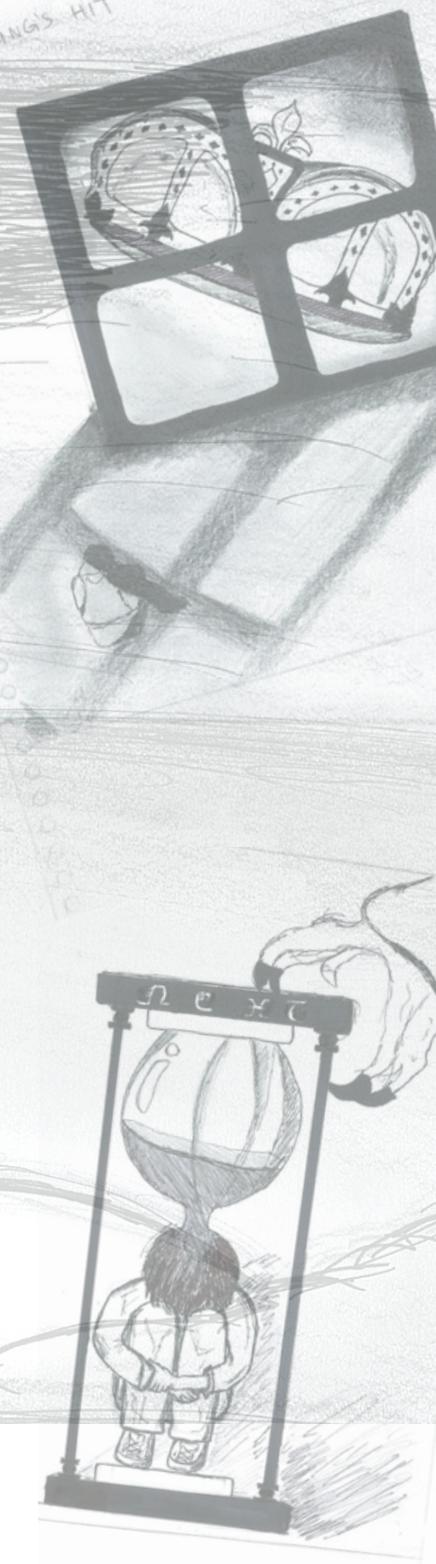
## King Hit

Turn on a heel and heat from the hot  
Young bloods on the floor as they croon  
Spill and slop, the millionth beer and the handsome ones leer  
At the girls, underdressed, underserved, underslept.  
He did not love her I think, just the idea of love -  
It was the idea he kept feeding drinks.  
The girl he was going with - a romance pink  
With the blush of misapprehensions.  
I would gladly take whatever  
If only I'd sensed him to stay home that night.

He was the back of my hand.  
The hole in my pocket that made him mine.  
The way he answered the phone in my voice, with my smile.  
I cannot find the words to say that twenty something years  
Of purpose just drank themselves away into oblivion -  
As a queen who lost of crown would wane  
As Pyrrhus from his city-pyre  
Calling out a wailing prayer  
I find myself in life's old habits spare  
Superfluous and half-raised  
From each sleep, re-reading passages you loved to read.  
Most days are the Perfect Day for Bananafish these days  
You always hated Seymour, and he's me.  
I am the new moon and all I see is the light of the old moon fading,  
My one delight, your childish toy, grown discoloured from my touch  
A dog eared book from greedy over-thumbing - loved too much.  
And even you my Danny Boy, I must let shrink away,  
And shadowed swoon into the night and let alone the stars.

## We wearing black now

That death is not a predator that snoops in late at night,  
That saunters up the hallway to have you in one bite.  
Death is but a thought you have, a thorn stuck in your side,  
A childhood friend that pits your dreams with fears you must abide.  
A door to doorman, visitor, the auditor of life  
Who by a whim, not clockwork, can skint us all with  
strife.





# The Hirst Report: We Don't Need No Education

Ned Hirst



*We don't need no education / we don't need no thought control.*

It is unlikely that Pink Floyd's chorus of disillusioned schoolchildren were singing about Christopher Pyne's review of the national curriculum, but if they had been, it would have been not only prescient, but entirely appropriate. Not because education is bad – it's one of the most valuable things that anyone can ever be given, and arguably the most valuable service our state provides its citizens. It's not that people don't need it, but an education system that serves as an ideological platform for washed-up conservatives to impotently rebel against society's progression towards pluralism and tolerance hardly deserves the name "education" at all.

Professor Stuart Macintyre of the University of Melbourne, the lead drafter of the National Curriculum, noted that it was a consultative process that took three years and, according to *The Age*, accepted over 4000 submissions in relation to English, maths, science and history.

Such a process will not produce a system that everyone is happy with, but it seems counter-intuitive to suggest that it produced a final product with such overwhelming political bias that it requires a complete overhaul. Particularly if that overhaul is to be conducted in a third of the time by two people, both of whom have very clear political biases, which they have taken upon themselves to spread liberally, with the very largest possible L, over the Internet.

Dr Kevin Donnelly, one of the two, regularly writes for ABC's *The Drum*, including one article where he discussed why he thought it was that people lobbying for gay marriage had been so successful. He strangely did not consider the possibility that its success is because the campaign represents a step towards a more equal and just society, supported by a majority of Australians, tired as they are of small-minded ignorance.

No, apparently we have all been duped. It's all in the language, see. People in leftist institutions (or at least institutions to the left of Dr Donnelly, which is presumably all institutions except perhaps for the lunatic fringe of the Liberal Party, 2GB and News Corp) have sneakily moved the boundaries of political correctness, so that now we can't say the same old prejudiced things without being called out on them.

Damn! Donnelly characterises this new discourse by saying that "those who view gay/lesbian practices as

unacceptable are condemned as homophobic". If you'll allow me to make my way to the soapbox, I would like to address Dr Donnelly directly.

Those who view gay/lesbians practices as unacceptable are homophobic, you troglodyte! You can try and disguise your prejudice and hate as the unexpressed opinions of some anonymous multitude, but it doesn't distract anyone from the poisonous vitriol that you inject into public discourse under the pretence that it is some kind of reversion back to the good old days of common sense. Perhaps you don't realise the pain this kind of pig-headedness creates. But that's no excuse. The times which supported your revolting, narrow-minded world view have passed. And no one is mourning them.

Maybe Dr Donnelly will find a sympathetic ear in his new colleague Professor Ken Wiltshire. Wiltshire at least has the tact and common sense to avoid spreading the kind of repellent opinions Donnelly wishes to propagate.

However, as *The Guardian* notes, he did write an opinion piece for *The Australian* after the 2010 election, in which, he argued that the independents should side with the Coalition to create an Abbott minority government. In signing off this article with an Edmund Burke quotation, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing," he did perhaps reveal a personal political bias.

If Christopher Pyne's intention really is to stamp all of the politicisation out of the curriculum, why appoint someone who considers the possibility of a Labor minority government "the triumph of evil?"

Perhaps Christopher Pyne, Ken Wiltshire and Kevin Donnelly sincerely believe that the reason the curriculum has shifted towards "cultural relativism", "sustainability" and "Indigenous Australia" (words which Pyne attempts to make as controversial as possible by spitting them at people) is that universities are full of proselytising left-wingers. Unfortunately for them, the change has been orchestrated by no one.

We are closer to Asia than Europe, and the next generation has tough decisions to make about the viability of the environmental and commercial practices we take for granted today. These things can't be reversed by attempting to inculcate young kids with Anglocentric and antiquated world views. It is the nature of the times that they are born into that they will experience people from other backgrounds who live in entirely different ways. And, hopefully, they will be able to work with them to face the challenges of the future, whether they're all "Judeo-Christian" or not.

## AN EXPERT'S GUIDE TO LIFE:

How To Deal With Your  
Hard-Earned Thirst

Dylan Chalwell



VB is a very special type of beer. It is not for everyone, and it is not for everyday. It is for those with a hard-earned thirst.\*] And one day, that could be you.

A hard-earned thirst differs considerably from the conventional instinctual drive to rehydrate. Conventional thirst stems from a desire to avoid a parched throat, bad breath, clammy skin, general discomfort and eventual death. Yawn.

Quenching your hard-earned thirst is much more important. It's less about making electrolytes pump blood to your organs (can you tell that I know nothing about how the human body functions?), and more about confirming your position as a valuable, strong provider for your family/sharehouse. In short, it's about vindicating your existence.

It's well known that you can contract a hard-earned thirst from things such as hunting, spear-fishing, brick-laying, ute-driving, miscellaneous repair work, boating, shed-building and hunting. However, a hard-earned thirst can also develop while in Beat Poetry appreciation classes, watching Wes Anderson films and listening to NPR's online live-stream.

In other words, a hard-earned thirst can strike anytime, anywhere.

Fortunately, one brand has spent the last hundred years helping people beat their hard-earned thirst. I am, of course, speaking of Australia's favourite beer. Which is called a bitter – but is really a lager. That's right: VB.

And yes, in the name of quality investigative journalism I actually bought and consumed one for research purposes. Was my hard-earned thirst quenched? You better believe it.

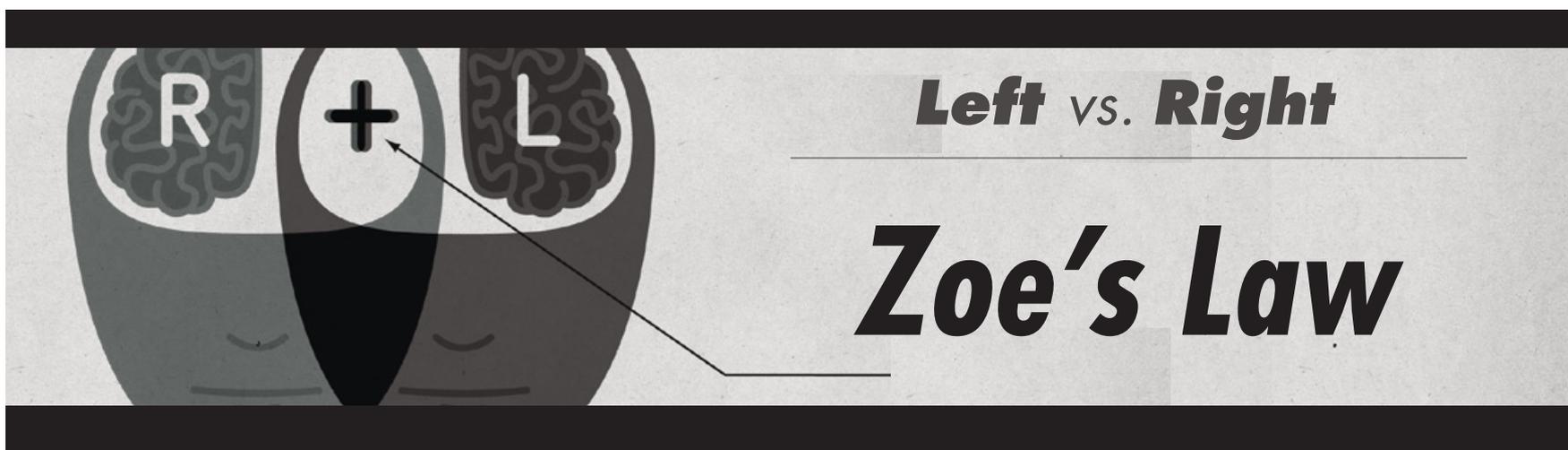
Here's how yours can be too – in four simple steps.

1. Purchase a VB. Simple.
2. Walk home. Resist the temptation to drink your VB on the street. There are probably children around and people who have just eaten.
3. At home, open the can and proceed to drink. For best results, tilt head slightly back, as though you are speaking to a tall person. Raise the can to chin height and place your mouth over the hole in the can. Tilt the can to a 35-degree angle. Wait until your mouth feels full of beer. Shut mouth, and until can. Swallow quickly. Make a noise like "Mmmm" or "Yhhhm". Repeat until can is empty.
4. Contemplate the end of your hard-earned thirst. The best place to do this is lying on the couch in your living room from Ikea.[†] I prefer face down, but many people find this strange and uncomfortable. Do what seems natural to you. As you lie on the couch, why not mentally draft a thank you note to Carlton breweries? It's a surprisingly cathartic process. NOTE: Under no circumstances should you contemplate VB's taste.

If that doesn't fix your hard-earned thirst (read: sense of inadequacy created by clever/evil marketing), I don't know what will. Catchya next fortnight, as we learn how to catch HEAPS of small, inedible fish from Sydney Harbour.

[\*] Enjoy responsibly

[†] This will also help with the headache that may have developed by now.



## On Zoe's Law

Lauren McCracken



As a young woman, I find the thought of Zoe's Law being passed in NSW alarming, especially while abortion remains in the Crimes Act. To many, that might seem like a shrill and irrational response to a bill merely trying to bring justice to a mother who lost her unborn child. What happened to Brodie Donegan was gut-wrenchingly awful.

I can't imagine the pain of losing a child due to the carelessness of another. But is Zoe's Law – named for Ms Donegan's unborn daughter – the best way to bring about justice in this situation?

The NSW Bar Association doesn't think so. It argues that the current law in this area is satisfactory, as concluded by the 2010 Review of Laws Surrounding Criminal Incidents Involving the Death of an Unborn Child. It believes situations like Ms Donegan's are addressed in the Crimes Act, which states that grievous bodily harm includes "the destruction (other than in the course of a medical procedure) of the foetus of a pregnant woman,

whether or not the woman suffers any other harm".

The law, as it stands, acknowledges such an incident as a crime against the mother, rather than against the unborn child. This is where Ms Donegan wants to see a change. She wants the loss of her unborn daughter acknowledged as something more than a personal injury. That's a completely understandable position to take. However, Zoe's Law presents far more problems and risks for the broader community than it attempts to solve.

Firstly, the way Zoe's Law defines the state of personhood is completely arbitrary. The idea that personhood begins at 20 weeks gestation, or at the weight of 400 grams, seems to be plucked out of the air. It's ridiculous to deem the loss of a 19-week-old foetus as any less significant than the loss of a 20-week-old foetus. This is why the current law works better for those who have lost a pregnancy due to grievous bodily harm. It protects the foetus throughout gestation, regardless of age or size.

Secondly, this could have huge repercussions for the legality of abortion procedures. We cannot take abortion access for granted while it remains in the Crimes Act. The NSW Bar Association warns that once we accept the premise of Zoe's Law, foetuses have separate rights from the mother, and it will be very easy for anti-

abortion activists and lawmakers to go further with it.

We could see the definition of personhood chopped and changed around to yet another random definition. We could see this definition of personhood extended into manslaughter and murder offences. This could have catastrophic implications for abortion access in NSW, particularly for late-term abortions.

This is a legitimate concern. Peak medical and legal bodies, such as the Australian Medical Association and the NSW Bar Association, have been saying this for months. There are also countless anti-abortion groups supporting Zoe's Law. I don't for a second believe they'll be content to see the bill pass and let it be. It's their foot in the door for further restrictions on abortion access.

If we want to recognise forced pregnancy loss as more than an injury, then we need a bill that does this without the risks of Zoe's Law. Law lecturer Hannah Robert suggested in *The Conversation* that experiences like Ms Donegan's need to be recognised by the law as a violation of reproductive autonomy. Such a law would truly recognise the experience as something more significant and distinct from a personal injury. Such a law would also strengthen reproductive autonomy, rather than erode it.

## Straw manning Zoe's Law is disingenuous and unhelpful

Nicholas Gerovasilis



The New South Wales Parliament's lower house voted late last year in favour of legislation that, for the purpose of grievous bodily harm, recognises the personhood of foetuses after a sufficient stage of pregnancy. Despite explicit exclusions for medical procedures, extreme controversy has surrounded the law, which opponents believe could lead to the curtailing

of abortion rights.

That the bill was put to a conscience vote and was subsequently voted against by several government ministers, underscoring the fact that it is particularly contentious. Unfortunately, however, the capacity for constructive discourse on the issue has been obfuscated by some of the more draconian opposition to the law.

It is disappointingly ironic that those who vigorously propound the fundamental importance of s18C of the Racial Discrimination Act share no such passion where religion is concerned. Rather than outrage, fallacious claims that the law reflects the Church's wider misogynistic agenda are met with apathy. It was in this very publication that the headline, "Church F\*\*\*\* Women",

expediently conflated Christian Democrat Fred Nile with the entire Church, while likewise illustrating abject disregard for any nuance on the issue of foetal status beyond the simplistic dichotomy of standing for, or against, women.

However, what is most obscuring about this rhetoric is that it misses the fundamental basis of the law. As Chris Spence MP intimated in his second reading speech, "The bill does not, nor does it intend to, have any bearing on a woman's right to choose." Where attention ought to be directed, therefore, is to the question of whether the legislating has been unambiguous in effecting the intention enunciated by Spence.

Firstly, section 8A(4)(a) of the bill provides that it does not apply to "anything done in the course of a medical procedure". Moreover, unlike Nile's proposal, the bill that passed through the lower house does not recognise a foetus's personhood from conception. Rather, it explicitly stipulates the provisions only enter into effect after 20 weeks' gestation, or alternatively, a body mass of at least 400 grams. Under the status quo, only an exceptionally small portion of abortions are performed beyond 20 weeks gestation. In Victoria, this number is less than one per cent.

Thus, prima facie, even taking the law at its most extreme outcome, the amount of abortions that would be affected would be exceedingly low. Yet, as previously

stated, given the explicitness of the provisions in the bill that passed the lower house, it is not clearly conceivable how this outcome will eventuate, at least without further reform.

I recognise, however, that the NSW Bar Association has voiced concerns that there could be wider implications on late-term abortions, notwithstanding the exception for medical procedures. Their opposition is essentially predicated on the potentiality of a knock-on effect whereby, subsequent to passing this law, there would then be a continual pressure to justify permitting harm, let alone the destruction, of a legally acknowledged "person". Although, given that this argument relies on the difficulty of resisting such consequent reform – more so than any other glaring technicality in the bill's present manifestation – the Bar Association concedes its argument may not be sufficient if there was not already adequate protection. It is confident, however, that present legislation relating to grievous bodily harm provides satisfactory coverage for damage to foetuses.

Hence, while I do not believe that this law poses the cataclysmic threat that some have charged it with – nor do I believe that it is remotely accurate to label it a thinly veiled attempt to criminalise abortion – I accept that given the dispute and adequacy of existing law, it is not entirely necessary.

hall to the building. My heart skipped a beat. He was tall, handsome, and all of my friends had a crush on him. I always thought he was way too cool for me. He was almost a grown man, and I was only 14.

Before I entered the school building, I stopped for a moment and looked back at him. There he stood, a cigarette in his hand, his eyes still fixed on me.

Wave

Keep Walking

## THE DAY THE LAUGHTER STOPPED

Game Review by Sarah Fernandes

*Trigger warning: rape, discussion of rape culture*

The splash screen for *The Day the Laughter Stopped* is graced by a hauntingly vague video compilation of the game's praises, set to the sound of waves crashing along a shore. "It's hard to play this game, but it's necessary that people do," reads one. "As powerful as it is disturbing," says another. Yet the screen is surprisingly vacant when it comes to a description of the game's actual contents. We know that it's a text-based interactive fiction game. We know it's trying to raise awareness about something that deserves a trigger warning. But it doesn't specify what it is. Clicking through the trigger warning disclaimer brings you to this:

"This is difficult. On the one hand, this experience works best if left unspoiled and unhinted at. I can't, however, let people who might have a strong and distressing emotional reaction to it play it without warning them. So let's get this out of the way first: If you just clicked the link here out of curiosity or you know for sure that there are no topics that might cause you emotional distress, please turn back and play the game first."

As tempted as I was to find out more, I knew I fell into the "just curious" category, so I began the game.

*The Day the Laughter Stopped* feels creepy from the start. Playing as a 14-year-old girl, you are given a degree of control over how she reacts to different exchanges with her schoolmates. She starts getting hit on by an older, handsome boy at her school. As you become invested in this shy teenager's quest for love and acceptance in a sea of insecurity, you try to desperately ignore the game's underlying sense of dread.

At the end of each story progression, you are given two options. Embracing the vigour and desperate longing that I, too, once possessed as a 14-year-old, I opted to take the riskier, "cooler" options when they presented themselves. Despite the fact that the options are often opposite (drink, don't drink; wave, look away; let him, pull back), the more you play the game, the more you feel like your decisions are inconsequential to the reactions of others and the progression of the story.

Finally, as the game's storyline builds to its thoroughly distressing apex, and your character is raped by the older boy, you are no longer able to click certain options, even though you so urgently want to.

Upon completion of the game, you're not given the chance to go back and try again. If you refresh your browser, the screen simply and ominously states: "There is no starting over. This happened." (Side note – I cleared my browser history and played again, this time choosing all the "conservative" options, and got the same ending.)

*The Day the Laughter Stopped* is an attempt to speak out against the discourse that insists women should make active changes to their lifestyle in order to avoid rape, or that women who were raped should have done X, Y and Z better.

The dissonance between what you want to do and what you're able to do is a very real experience felt by many people who have been raped. Your ineffectual (and eventually restricted) choices in the game do strikingly well in conveying the often misunderstood fact that nothing you do can change the outcome, because the outcome is not your fault. Instead of postulating that "she should've just said no", you are forced to realise that a lot of the time, the ability to say no is simply not an option.

In his blog, Hannes Flor, the game's creator, explains how multiple studies of patterns of criminal behaviour tell us that rape is usually not an impulse decision, but a premeditated act carried out by someone the victim knows. "You've fallen victim to a predator. There is nothing you can do to help this, and suggesting you can does nothing but put the blame on the victim when it happens anyway," says Flor.

To draw a link across the thoroughly exhaustive gap between a person's everyday



actions and the sick desire to commit such a horrific crime against them only excuses the criminal for their actions.

It is a sad reality that advice such as coming home early, not getting too drunk or wearing modest clothing is touted so often, but is largely ineffective at preventing rape. As well intentioned as this advice is, all it ends up doing is perpetuating a culture where a victim of rape feels guilty for living their life. The experience of stepping through this girl's story in the game will hopefully aid, even in some small way, in changing the way we talk about and deal with rape in our society.

*The Day the Laughter Stops* takes a hugely discussed issue and reframes it through a very real and human perspective. The player feels a part of the girl's powerlessness and lack of control, and it hits a lot harder than any essay or opinion piece ever could. The game is distressing, but powerful. If you're sure you can handle it, it is highly recommended playing.

The game can be found here: <http://hypnoticowl.com/games/theday/>

## SPHERO 2.0

Review by Alex Hixon @alexhixon

On the outside, Sphero is a small, durable, Bluetooth-enabled ball made of plastic that can light itself up and roll itself around. On the inside, there's a soft, creamy centre... er, I mean, there's a bunch of accelerometers inside, so it knows where it is and which way it's pointing – the same stuff that makes your phone screen rotate when you don't want it to.

You pair Sphero up with your phone and download apps you can use to make it do cool things. This is Sphero's strong point, but it also makes it feel like it's a solution in search of a problem.

Luckily, there are some really good apps. The main one lets you drive Sphero around and do some tricks. It has a game mode in which you have to unlock abilities by doing tricks, so Poochy Sphero can go back to his home planet (no, seriously). There are some great party games, such as ColorGrab, and one where you literally use Sphero in a pool. This thing ain't no Flappy Bird.

One major issue I found is that I had to keep recalibrating Sphero every few minutes. This got really annoying, really fast. If you don't recalibrate, the joystick starts sending the little guy off into various, unintended directions.

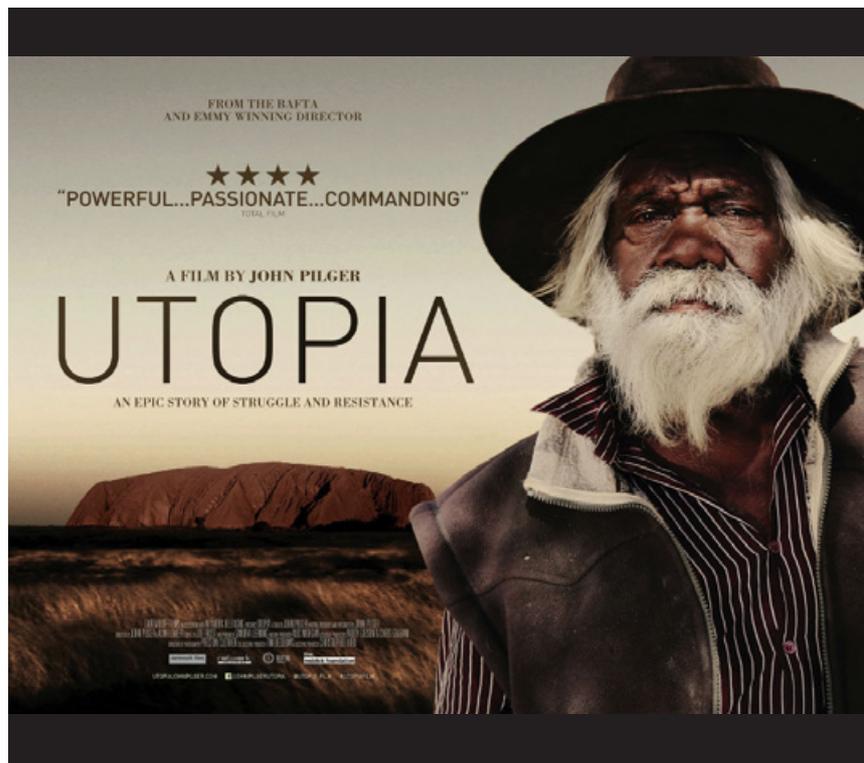
Of course, it wouldn't be as good if you were limited to only the apps others have made for you. You can grab the iOS or Android Software Development Kits and start hacking your own phone's apps, so you can control Sphero the way you envisage. I'd imagine you could do some pretty neat things with the augmented reality code samples. You can even program Sphero using BASIC, but I wouldn't really recommend it – trying to write programs using your phone keyboard will make you go insane.

Some apps did have some connection issues, effectively meaning they're unusable (including a Nyan Cat app? 2011 called). Unfortunately, the most promising app – an augmented reality game where you fight zombies with your Sphero – ran so slowly on my phone (a Samsung Galaxy Nexus), I could barely play it.

While the claim that Sphero is a robot is technically correct, it really doesn't feel like one. Your on-Sphero sensor inputs are limited to "bumping into stuff", and you've got to have your phone on and running an app for anything to happen. It's obviously targeting the Lego Mindstorms mindshare – but there's still has quite a bit to learn.

Similarly, you can use it as a controller, but this just felt somewhat gimmicky – my phone already has an accelerometer, why do I need a Sphero just to use "tilt"?

Sphero can be quite a bit of fun, but unless you've got an awesome app idea to use it with, driving around is going to get boring sooner rather than later. At this point, you've got yourself a \$150 party game. Cool if you're a cashed-up parent looking for a birthday gift, but maybe not so much if you're a starving student.



## UTOPIA SCREENING AND Q&A SESSION

Lucia Watson

Ahhhh, O-Week. A chance to kill off a few brain cells before the readings pile up, right? Not necessarily. On the last night of O-Week, Nura Gili hosted a screening of John Pilger's new documentary *Utopia*, which was a welcome change from the usual drinking and society events. The film is a reminder of the history we as Australians frequently overlook.

*Much like the Chinese government has blanked Tiananmen Square from the history books, the true history of Indigenous Australia is barely covered in the syllabus, nor are we really ever taught the true extent of maltreatment and oppression of the first Australians – both in the past and as we speak.*

Pilger's film is a basic documentary in style and doesn't attempt to add any glamour to a subject that most Australians would rather ignore. A lot of the footage is filmed on handheld, which reflects the reluctance of officials to talk about questions like why there is no commemoration of the conflict between settlers and Indigenous Australians in the war museum, or why a former prison camp and place of intense suffering, Rottneest Island, has now been converted into a holiday retreat.

What is important about Pilger's latest work is not style or genre. It does not strive to break the conventions of documentary making, nor does it try to combine new technologies into the filmmaking process. The essence of this film is a message that made me angry. Angry about how, as one of the wealthiest countries in the world, there are people living in conditions akin to the favelas of Rio de Janeiro or the slums of Delhi. Angry because a country with a health care system that functions well for most people has failed to fully eradicate diseases that Pilger described as Dickensian. I am angry with Australian governments, past and present, for their collective disregard for Indigenous history. I am angry about interventions, at every period of time, in this nation's short history.

The key idea of this film is essentially Australia's blatant lack of regard for its first people. This idea was really driven home in a series of short interviews conducted by Pilger on Australia in 2013, where person after person reiterated the age-old stereotypes perpetuated by governments and the media about Indigenous Australians.

The screening was topped off with a Q&A session hosted by John Pilger, assistant producer Chris Graham and researcher Amy McQuire. Topics such as the school curriculum, land rights and constitutional reform were discussed, amongst many others. One thing that still sticks in my mind was Pilger's response to a question about propagating discourse, to which he answered that the time for talking is over, and now is the time to act.

The film *Utopia* is a confronting, but unsurprising look at the state of Indigenous affairs in this country. It will leave you with some serious food for thought and a strong desire to act.



## WILD BEASTS - PRESENT TENSE

Album Review by Kyle Redman

The sonic evolution of UK quartet Wild Beasts through previous albums, *Limbo*, *Panto*, *Two Dancers* and *Smother*, presents itself in its most complete form on *Present Tense*. Their fourth record, and one that's essentially guitar-less, sees the band lose their raw musical drama in place of reflection upon post-millennial misery. The transformation from guitar band to electronica act coincides with the band's movement from a selfish celebration of promiscuity, to a more frictionless, modern uneasiness with intimacy.

Wild Beasts have never struggled to be a band that stood out. Hayden Thorpe's polarising falsetto is reined in a little on this full length, but even so, it would never be the case that Wild Beasts' approach could be confused with anyone else. They've always tended to side with the have-nots. In the opening track, "Wanderlust", Thorpe sneers at the lower class: "Don't confuse me with someone who gives a fuck". They've arrived from three previous albums of debauchery and self-flagellation to see a modern world they're disgusted with. It isn't in the vein of "Common People", ranting about rich kids' fetishisation with originality, but it's rather lamenting those "solemn in their wealth", compared to the protagonists who are "high on our poverty".

"Nature Boy", the album's second track, sees Thorpe's alto Tom Fleming take the lead role. His sleek, honeyed lower registers are visited regularly. "Nature Boy" is a wild young man ready to take your woman – and your white-collar, banking-sector ass can't even imagine how much she's into it. Class struggle features again on the track "Daughters", this time with bloody revolution and "pretty children sharpening their blades".

*Present Tense* isn't just thematically more dense and foreboding than previous albums, *Smother* and *Two Dancers*. The band's use of synthesizers is soft and welcoming in some places, but lo-fi and gloomy in others. Drummer Chris Talbot has probably never played an actual rock beat – something that doesn't change on this album either. His hollow, lingering technique on "A Dog's Life" is his shining moment of the album. It genuinely feels like the kit is deflating – the passing of the dog actually sucking the punch from the percussion.

"A Simple Beautiful Truth" is the album's pop offering, with Thorpe's voice tandeming Fleming's gruff to create the obvious candidate for their next 12-inch. Despondent, melancholic ambiance underlines Fleming's and Thorpe's powerful stories, none hitting harder than the death of a dog in "A Dog's Life": "Throw a ball up into space."

Final track "Palace" is perhaps Wild Beasts' first and only genuine love song. Finishing the futility in "Wanderlust", Thorpe wraps the album up with: "Baby there's have alls and there are have nots/ I'm happy with what I got."

No one else could make an album like this, and we're lucky Wild Beasts didn't chicken out of this brutally honest, arresting and politically charged account of our times. They aren't looking to offer solutions or answers, just experience. Thorpe and Fleming are open to their emotions, dejection and frustration in Wild Beasts' most complete, intelligent and profound album to date.



## SINGLE SERVING HOT FUDGE COBBLER

BY URVASHI AGARWAL

I am not used to having no time. I don't know if this is all that student life is about, but I feel like if I do not have work to do, then I have people to meet. If I don't have people to meet, I have to sleep. If I don't have to sleep, I have to be travelling for 2 hours.

I no longer have a lot of time to enjoy my hobbies either. I love to bake, but I can't spend 2 hours baking a cake, frosting it and then enjoying it. If there were an oven on my bus, it would be a lot easier.

So instead of focusing all my energy on getting everything done so I would have a spare hour here and there to bake what I want, I started making recipes that were fast, sweet and student budget-friendly. But all this without compromising the most important thing of all: flavour.

Let me paint you a picture: You are coming home at 8 pm after having finished a lecture, with a long night ahead because you have a quiz. Or assignment. Or anything. No one wants to kick off a late-night study sesh eating cold rice and curry, or old vegetables, or random pieces of meatloaf lying around the fridge. And two-minute noodles? Please.

In 15 minutes tops, you could have a fresh dessert dinner waiting for you. And while I am not advocating for dessert dinners all the time, it is so completely normal to want one once in a while!

So why not make it tonight?

### Single Serve Hot Fudge Cobbler

Ingredients:

- 3 tbs plain flour
- 1 tbs cocoa powder
- 2 tbs brown sugar
- 2 tbs caster sugar
- 3 - 4 tbs (42 - 56g) butter, melted
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 4 - 5 large strawberries, washed, roughly cut into small chunks

### Homemade or store bought hot fudge sauce

Method:

- 1) Preheat oven to 180 degrees.
- 2) Grease one ramekin.
- 3) Line a baking sheet with baking paper.
- 4) Mix together as much hot fudge as you want with strawberries and spoon into a ramekin - should come to halfway up the rim, but no more, otherwise it will completely burst out of the pastry while baking.
- 5) Mix together first six ingredients till doughy consistency.
- 6) Pat on top of fruit filling, covering it completely.
- 7) Place on baking sheet and bake for 8 - 10 minutes, or until the crust has a couple of cracks - hot fudge may be coming out from the top.
- 8) Cool for 2 minutes before dousing in ice cream, more hot fudge and strawberries.

*This cobbler-pie hybrid is made for one person. It doesn't have to sit in your fridge getting soggy by the day, forcing you to eat it on a daily basis (or in one late-night sitting). It's a mix of berries, chocolate, hot fudge and dough - it is choc-a-block full of awesome!*



## DEVONSHIRE STREET OBJECTS

Review by Dylan Chalwell

One of the most exciting developments in modern art is the emergence of provocative, unauthorised pieces in inner-city enclaves. In Surry Hills and Darlinghurst, for example, the only thing more pleasantly surprising than finding a wall that has been graffitied by local artist Lister, is finding one that hasn't.

Many do not realise that some younger, daring artists are experimenting with other forms. Just a few months ago, I encountered a sublime installation piece comprising of three dead lizards - one entirely skeletonised - in a blue pasta-stained pot behind the National Art School. In the vein of the best absurdist works, *Lizards in a Pot* forced me to recognise my own inability to domesticate mortality: Every attempt to hide it in the paraphernalia of ordinary life fails.

Anonymous's *Random Crap on Devonshire Street* - a collection of seemingly unrelated objects on the eponymous street leading up from Central - is similarly important.

I love the way that this work delights in its own juvenility whilst still allowing one to probe deeper - and with pieces like this, one really must. Does "crap" refer to the authoritative traffic pylon, the abandoned shopping cart, or the desolate tree trunk? For what it's worth, I see the "crap" as a self-referential nod to the attempt to gather these items into a coherent whole. In this light, the work becomes both a comment on the nature of art (a la Oscar Wilde) and an investigation into the capitalist system.

Works like *Lizards in a Pot* and *Random Crap on Devonshire Street* appear softly and die silently. In many ways, this review is more of a eulogy than anything else.



## KINGS CROSS NAMED AUSTRALIA'S SAFEST SUBURB

Michaela Vaughan

With the ink barely dry on the new alcohol restrictions, Kings Cross has miraculously been named Australia's safest suburb. Exclusive sources reveal that over the course of just five nights, the Cross skyrocketed to the top of the "Safest Suburbs Index", much to the disbelief of industry experts and party goers. The Cross even outperformed the suburbs of Canberra, historically known for their slow-paced, "nothing-to-see-here", "lets-build-another-roundabout" lifestyle.

Tharunka caught up with Mr Pumbaa, owner and manager of Porky's family restaurant on Darlinghurst Road, who approves of the new O'Farrell measures. "These laws have been great for us; my colleagues and clientele have never been happier nor safer," confessed Mr Pumbaa.

"For too many years my business has suffered from the seedy folk that frequent the Cross and the trouble they bring. Since these enactments, my patrons can come in for a good porking with the peace of mind that they will be out of harm's way."

Regular Cross clubber, Trent from Punchy, has also been enjoying the transformation. "I used to come to the Cross looking to get hit in the face, but now my attitude has totally changed. I see the Cross as a place to sink a vodka raspberry or two and nothing more. A night out in the Cross is a night where I can get the trains home. It's a unique and exciting place to be a part of."

Tharunka has heard rumours that even Cardinal George Pell is reconsidering his post to the Vatican in light of the Kings Cross rebirth. Sources close to Pell report, "The Cardinal has been so taken aback by changes to the Kings Cross area. He is contemplating both turning down this prestigious position, or even buying into the area for when he returns - he is seriously considering purchasing the nightclub Soho and making it his future home."

One associate went one further and added, "Pell hopes to convince the Pope to implement a long-term plan to relocate the Vatican to Kings Cross, or to franchise it out. He believes the suburb has real potential to

host a Vatican."

The release of the "Safest Suburbs Index" results has been an unbelievable achievement for the O'Farrell government - and for Sydney - and has caught the attention of politicians worldwide. Reports have been sent in that O'Farrell has been doing handstands non-stop since the Safest Suburbs figures were released. O'Farrell's office failed to comment on whether or not he was going for the Guinness Book record.

## OPERATION SOVEREIGN MURDERS

Connor Mulholland (@connormul94)

*Please note that everything below is purely satire and hence fictitious, just like the Author's imaginary friends. No matter how real it may seem, it's all in your head.*

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has implored the resounding success of Operation Sovereign Borders. Mr Morrison informed Tharunka that the joint operation between the Australian Defence Force and Border Patrol had managed to far exceed his initial expectations upon coming into office.

"I thought realistically that two or three territorial breaches into Indonesian waters would be a fantastic outcome for our first few months," Mr Morrison said. "But to the credit of both the Defence Force and Border Patrol who are working in unity, we have achieved six breaches in just over the first three months of 2014."

These breaches, combined with further boat arrivals, have provided a needed boost for the Coalition government in opinion polls.

Minister Morrison hopes that such positive early results are indicative of a continued upward trend. One analyst from the Department of Immigration noted he expected further breaches to occur, coinciding with the federal government's introduction of a new \$150 million fleet of the highly popular bulbous orange lifeboats, or "Vomit Barrels" as they are commonly known.

The numbers of individuals seeking asylum are also expected to rise as peak season approaches, with many asylum seekers flocking to Australia over winter to capitalise upon the cooler climate and the possibility of gaining tickets on Clive Palmer's Titanic II.

Staff at Manus Island in Papua New Guinea are also

busy preparing for the sudden influx of visitors. Considerable renovations have been undertaken to accommodate the sudden increases. This year's theme, as popularly voted by the Australian public, is aptly titled "Limbo zone". Reg Mombassa, the creative director behind Sydney's New Year's Eve celebrations, specifically designed the tents for the Island. "Although I actually haven't spoken to any asylum seekers, I feel the people coming really want that authentic refugee experience. I've kept that in mind and really tried to maximise upon it. Dank heat, malaria and crippling dehydration were my inspiration," noted Mombassa.

It is believed many asylum seekers are thrilled and excited with the prospect of the high quality of life offered on Manus Island. Locals report some are even refusing government attempts to assimilate them into Australia.

"I don't understand why anyone would wish to leave Papua New Guinea," said one refugee. "The staff at G4S and the residents of PNG are so helpful - they are making our visit so wonderful." Another added, "My uncle often talks fondly of the Pacific Solution and I'm glad I can say I have been able to experience something similar in my life as well!"

A Department of Immigration spokesperson noted, however, that despite calls by members of the public for greater numbers of offshore processing centres, no asylum seekers would be permanently settled at Manus Island. "Those that wish to skip the queue and travel without a valid visa will have to accept reality; if you come to Manus by boat, we will tow you back to the Australian mainland," the spokesperson outlined.

The Department of Immigration announcement also coincided with the release of a graphic novel designed to deter future asylum seekers from coming to Manus Island. In a joint press conference with Mr Morrison, Prime Minister Tony Abbott said he agreed with his minister's sentiments, adding, "It's all about the boats, we have to stop the boats. Yes. that's right - the boats."



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



**SRC President**  
Joel Wilson

Welcome to Week Four! A quick shout out to the Education Collective, which has been busy preparing and organising for the Pre-Protest Party and National Day of Action on March 26. It is important that every student joins this cause to show the government that our education is important and that it shouldn't be treated as a commodity! The SRC will also continue to lobby the university to make sure such cuts do not affect the quality of your education or essential student services.

We celebrated International Women's Day at the end of Week 1 and recognised the numerous achievements made by women in leadership positions. I have been lucky enough to have worked with a number of inspiring women during my involvement in student life and representation. Arc Board elections are now open and I would encourage any woman passionate about contributing to the student community at UNSW to nominate.

On that note, anyone who is thinking about putting their name forward in the Arc Board election is welcome to see me if they want to learn more about Arc and how the Board works.

Finally, please get in touch or come and see me in the Blockhouse whenever you require help. My email address is [srcpresident@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:srcpresident@arc.unsw.edu.au), and you can sign up to our collectives through our website and Facebook page!



**General Secretary**  
Maja Sieczko

The Student Representative Council have had an amazing few weeks getting to know all the new students to the university and making sure that they know how exactly to get involved in the SRC! We're excited to see you all around campus getting involved and having the best first-year uni experience possible. With semester one starting, collectives will be meeting each week to discuss various issues that are happening - we have collectives running for Education, Women's, Queer, Intercultural, Disabilities and Welfare and International issues. Getting

involved in any of these is as easy as coming along to a meeting. Times and locations can be found on our SRC Facebook page, as well as downstairs in the Blockhouse. We'll be running free breakfasts throughout the semester, so if you've skipped breakfast to get to class on time, remember that our Welfare room is always stocked with breakfast so that you guys don't have to go hungry for good grades.



**Indigenous Officer**  
Rebekah Hatfield

On behalf of the SRC, Nura Gili and the UNSW OxFam Society, and the recently formed Indigenous Society, the UNSW community is invited to attend the Close the Gap Lunch on March 20.

This event is being held in partnership with the SRC, Nura Gili and the UNSW Ox-Fam Society in support of the campaign Close the Gap - a campaign to improve Indigenous health and life expectancy.

So come along and enjoy some intriguing art, relaxed music and a delicious BBQ lunch while learning more about this important cause.

Please RSVP to [indigenous@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:indigenous@arc.unsw.edu.au) - We hope to see you there!

Date: Thursday 20th March

Time: 12 - 2 pm

Venue: Balnaves Place- Home of Nura Gili LG Floor, Electrical Engineering Building, UNSW



**Education Officers**  
Billy Bruffey

Things are starting to heat up at the Education Collective. On Monday of Week Three, the Ed Collective screened the Chilean activist film *No*. We have held a couple of "crafternoons" and our weekly meetings have been fantastic, with growing numbers each week.

We are gearing up for an unforgettable National Day of Action, with all the preparations for the UNSW Pre-Protest Party on the Village Green Cricket Fields being polished off. Flags, banners, corflutes and whistles will be unmissable.

Already proposals to turn StartUp Scholarships into loans have been scrapped by the government due to concerted student pressure, with the remaining obstacle of the budget reduction to face. So come along to the NDA Pre-Protest Party at the Village Green Cricket Fields (Sam Cracknell Pavilion) at 11 am on March 26 to join in fun student activism!

Remember that the Ed Collective meets each week at 12 noon on Thursdays on Level 1 of the Blockhouse.



**Womens Officer**  
Olga Lisinska

When women graduate, they will get paid, on average, \$5000 per year less than men. This has come out of a report done by Graduate Careers Australia. This statistic highlights the giant injustices that women still face. What's more worrying is that Graduate Careers will no longer include a gender breakdown, citing "that figures used for 'raw, descriptive purposes' should have been the subject of a more detailed analysis that took in other factors, such as the types of jobs chosen by male and female graduates". The women's collective will be running a campaign to highlight this issue and consider solutions.

Thank you to everyone who attended "Make Your Own Damn Sandwich". I hope you all enjoyed the plentiful bread, meat, lettuce, tomato and rice crackers.

Thank you again to everyone who attended the International Women's Day March from Town Hall - regardless of the extremely hot weather, I hope you still found it a worthwhile experience.

At time of writing, next on the agenda is a screening of *The Sapphires*, so I'm still really excited about that, and thank you to everyone who comes.



**Environment Officer**  
Nicholas Gurieff

Students are getting involved with the Environment Collective from all corners of the university. Students from a range of disciplines are starting work on our initiatives and we're talking to differ-

ent groups including campus residential communities and the local council. We're planning social events, workshops on sustainable living and info sessions on renewables.

If you'd like to get involved, feel free to drop in on our weekly Environment Collective meetings which are held at 10 am Tuesdays in the Activist Space on Level 1 of the Blockhouse. There's free morning tea! You can also get in contact and stay informed by jumping on Facebook or on our website at [www.srcenviro.org](http://www.srcenviro.org)



**Ethno-Cultural Officer**  
Rachel Lobo

With recent events, if you or anyone you know experience discrimination based on your ethnicity, race or culture on-campus or at a university event off-campus, please get in touch!

In Week 4, you have heaps to look forward to! Celebrate Harmony Day with us at the Globe Lawn this Tuesday between 12-2PM, we'll be cooking up a storm on the BBQ, giving out free merch and chilling out on picnic rugs! From 4PM we'll be screening an episode of Q&A on the Repealing of 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act with our very first Critical Race Discussion Group. Following on from the success at Usyd, this launch will coincide with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, in which we'll discuss the contemporary nature of Multiculturalism today.

As always, come and join the collective each week! We'll be organising for our End Colonial Mentality Campaign later this semester!



**Queer Officers**  
Dylan Lloyd & Cassandra Harris

After our first few Queer Collective meetings and our start of session party we are both very excited for the year ahead. With so many enthusiastic members, new and old, we look forward to the many awesome meetings, events and campaigns to come. Right now we are teaming up with the Women's Collective to hold our No Homer's Tea Party, an we

are putting together Buff Club, which will be a body positive workout group for queer and women-identifying people. We will also have more move nights and games nights in the weeks to come!

Behind the scenes in the SRC, we have been advocating for LGBTIQ students to be included in scholarships at UNSW, and crisis accommodation on campus for students who have had to leave, or have been kicked out of, their housing. We've also written a couple emails about inappropriately named or themed programs and parties, which we have so far received a positive response to. If you see or hear anything homophobic or transphobic on campus, you can always send us an email at [queer@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:queer@arc.unsw.edu.au), and we will do our best to resolve the problem.

Much love,  
Dylan and Cassie.



#### International Officer

Emily Yichen Liu

The SRC International Office never stops seeking to best serve the interests and needs of international students by providing a variety of services and activities.

This seminar aims to point out the common problems that international students may face during their lives in Australia. SRC International invites the NSW Police Detective Superintendent, Gavin Dengate, to give a safety talk to all international students. The Safety Talk will focus on the issues faced by International Students, such as racism and violent acts that have caused students to be afraid of their well-being. We would like to teach all international students how to deal with these kind of situations, or any other safety issues, to prevent any tragedies from happening again.

Date: Wednesday, March 19

Time: 3 - 5pm

Place: Marsh Room, Roundhouse

Students also get to interact with the speaker in the Q&A session to get to their personal problems.

If people want more information, or want to get involved, please don't be hesitate to contact us at [international@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:international@arc.unsw.edu.au)



#### Welfare Officer

Brendan Byron

The Welfare department is keen to get cracking for 2014. You may have seen us around lower campus, where every Tuesday morning we're providing free breakfasts to anyone who walks past. Or you may be aware of the Welfare room, which is always there for you if you need food, a place to sleep, or if various other things go wrong. The biggest part of my job as welfare officer is letting people know these services exist. So if you're in genuine need of help - there's a place you can go.

Other than that, I'm looking forward to representing student's welfare on issues like accessibility and affordability, and I'm always interested in meeting people who are willing to help. Feel free to contact me at [welfare@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:welfare@arc.unsw.edu.au) if there's anything I can do for you.

disability policy, and has been pressing for more international opportunities for postgraduate students.

If you'd like to get involved or provide us with feedback, simply shoot us an email at [pgc.info@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:pgc.info@arc.unsw.edu.au)

Happy March from the entire PGC Team!

- The PGC



#### COFA Report

Great news from COFA Council. We are now official, and an independent body under Arc. We are now able to provide support to students, as well as enrich student life through different engagement activities and representation for students.

Let us know if you have any big ideas, wishes or suggestions.

Even more importantly, nominations are now open to join the new COFA Council. We are looking for eight Councillors and six associates to join us in helping to make Student life better on COFA Campus.

We are holding an information session at 3 pm on Monday, March 17. Alternatively, you can come and see us in the Courtyard on Wednesday for free breakfast smoothies, or just drop by the Arc office and you will catch one of us there.

Cheers,

you can catch us at

[COFA.council@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:COFA.council@arc.unsw.edu.au)

COFA Council on Facebook

- With love from Your COFA Council.



#### PGC Report

Hey Postgrads -

March has been a busy month for the PGC, with Vice President Bruno Dampney welcoming new students at O-Week this year. The entire PGC would like to send out a big "Welcome to UNSW" - and a thank you to all of you who had a chat with us at our O-Week stall.

In March, PGC will be organising Speed Dating for March 20 - we'd love to see postgrads (and their friends!) come along for nice food, a couple of drinks and a chance to meet some of your fellow postgraduates. See our Facebook and Arc webpage for details, and make sure to register.

PGC will also be welcoming new Graduate Research School students next month during inductions with a wine and cheese night and will be helping out with the Coursework Student Inductions, so keep an eye out for our volunteers.

April will also see free lunchtime yoga relaxation sessions and the start of monthly trivia nights - so if you'd like to get involved and updated on great events like this, simply like our page on Facebook @ /unswpgc

On the policy front - PGC will be representing your interests in the SSAF consultation, the review of the University's

#### SRC Collective Times

Collectives will be held in the Activist Space except where noted.

*Monday*

**1-3pm | Women's collective**

Women's room, 1st floor, Blockhouse

**4-7pm | Queer Collective**

Queerspace (Room 9.21), Level 9,  
Chemical Sciences Building

*Tuesday*

**10-12pm | Enviro Collective**

**12:30-1:30pm | Intercultural Collective**

*Wednesday*

**1-3pm | Women's Collective**

Women's room, 1st floor, Blockhouse

**4-7pm | International Collective**

*Thursday*

**12-2pm | Education Collective**

**2-4pm | (Dis)ability & Welfare Collective**

Disability & Welfare room,  
1st floor, Blockhouse

**4-6pm | Queer Collective**

Queerspace (Room 9.21), Level 9,  
Chemical Sciences Building

## Will Anderssen and UNSW's Cycling and Triathlon Club



Sam Davies @spdavies

"Racing bikes is definitely a thrill as it's so fast and the adrenalin is pretty much always pumping!"

Twenty-one year old UNSW student Will Anderssen is clearly passionate about his sport. And who can blame him? Since his first competitive race at the 2012 Uni Games Will has enjoyed something of a meteoric cycling rise. Since then he has ridden to third in Sydney Road Titles, 59th in the National Road Race, and has competed in the National Capital Tour. He is now racing in the National Road Series.

Quite some achievement in under two years of racing. So what got Will started, and what keeps him motivated? "I became involved with cycling when I started uni as I had less time for other sports", he says, "I could still ride my bike in the early morning or late afternoon and still feel like I'd had a solid workout".

But what really started it for Will, as with so many of UNSW's best athletes, was the Uni Games. That's what got him really immersed in the competition he clearly thrives under. "I really got hooked", he says, hooked on that adrenalin rush.

He hasn't done it all on his own either. UNSW's Cycling and Triathlon Club have been the catalyst for his success and Will can't speak highly enough of them. As well as providing training, equipment and advice for the likes of Will, the club is open to all abilities and is only as serious as members want it to be. "The club runs social evenings, barbeques and group rides, so there is definitely a heap of fun to be had!"

Not everyone can be as dedicated as Will has been, but the Cycling and Triathlon Club offers a way into the sport, whether it be with competing and winning in mind, or just to stay healthy and socialise. As club President James Miller puts it, "Cycling is a great way to see the world around you, and really appreciate the beauty of the city or the quiet country roads, while keeping fit and staying social."

Officially formed in 2013, the UNSW Cycling and Triathlon club represents the continuing growth in popularity of the sports in Australia, and particularly among young Australians. Students that join can expect a relaxed atmosphere where they can take riding as seriously as they want, and enjoy regular socials and events.

And that's not even the highlight! "Most of all", says Will, "the best bit is the shaved legs and lycra".

## On Your Mark, Get Set... And Come Out



Reylene Galloway

Acceptance of homosexuality has increasingly become a norm in modern society. Although challenges are still evident in the LGBT community, societal norms towards individuals identifying as LGBT have transcended due to education and shared acceptance. This is in part due to events in the global community, which have allowed for more common awareness, education and advocating.

So what does LGBT have to do with the sporting world – after all, this is a sports article?

Answer: A LOT!

In fact, you should already know this, unless:

- You have been on that long-ass vacation to Fiji most uni students are going to these days, or,
- You've been living under the same rock as Patrick Starfish.

But if you identified the most with that vacation or as Patrick Starfish, here's the go.

In recent weeks, two prominent American athletes have come out to the media announcing their true sexual identities. Both examples have caused quite a stir in the media. These athletes are Jason Collins and Michael Sam.

Jason Collins has been a veteran of the NBA and still competitively plays in the high ranks. Having just signed a 10-day contract with the Nets, his signing comes at a significant point in NBA history – he will be the first openly gay athlete to play in the competition. Just having come out the season prior, this milestone is further heightened as it "represents a significant step toward transforming North American professional sports into a more welcoming environment for gay athletes," the *New York Times* states.

At an NBA press conference, Collins maintains that "Right now I'm focusing on trying to learn the plays, learning the coverages and the game plan and the assignments. So I didn't have time to really think about history". Jason Collins's story coincides with Michael Sam's.

Michael Sam is a collegiate football player and considered to be a potential star pick for the NFL's draft in May. He publicly came out as being gay in an interview with the *New York Times* in February. His coming out story created controversy, as he could become the first openly gay player in the NFL. An article in *Sports Illustrated* has drawn out critics, as "eight

NFL executives and coaches told SI.com" that "from a purely football perspective, his decision to come out prior to May's NFL draft will make his path to the league daunting".

Although both testimonials show a remarkable amount of courage and bravery, do their actions challenge the hegemonic masculinity that is often represented and maintained in sport?

Several studies have been conducted in recent years which highlight this growing issue in sport. Findings from a study carried out by the University of California show a massive phenomenon for athletes to come out during high school and collegiate sporting years. Athletes interviewed were initially scared to come out due to public perception and "saw their sport as being highly homophobic".

There was also the issue of *Segmented Identities* where "a compromise [exists] that allows gay athletes to reveal their true sexual orientation (at least once) but allows heterosexual athletes to pretend that nothing has changed". Prejudice and discrimination is also evident as "women's athleticism in itself is a contradiction to femininity, so female athletes are frequently assumed to be lesbians".

Another study from the *Journal of Homosexuality* showed that supporters of a certain sporting team were less discriminatory (biased) towards the gay athlete that was on their team. This coincides with the recent shift in attitudes towards gay athletes in sport due to social acceptance and an awareness of homosexuality. The study states, "Most of the negative comments regarding gay athletes in professional sports stem from select interviews with coaches and players, rather than reactions from fans."

With the increase in athletes coming out with their true identities, does this challenge the idea of hegemonic masculinity in sports? Is coming out even a good idea for athletes who are in the peak of their careers? You be the judge.

Other notable sport stars who have come out:

- Martina Navratilova
- Gareth Thomas
- Ian Roberts
- Belle Brockhoff
- Matthew Mitcham

THARUNKA • SPORT

# UNSW SPORTS PREVIEW



## Great future afoot for UNSW football clubs

Niko Pajarillo (@nikopajarillo)

There's never been a better time to play any code of football at UNSW. According to some of the university's sporting higher-ups, clubs are working towards being more inclusive across the board, with participation and development at an all-time high.

UNSW Rugby club president John Sciberras said he's excited that 40 – 50 more players seem to be turning up to his club's pre-season training.

"Generally, a lot of the players don't turn up until a couple of weeks before the start of the season, so we've had a huge increase in numbers," he told Tharunka.

"This year really is just about having a much more positive vibe and people wanting to participate."

UNSW Soccer women's club captain Shani Lauf agreed, claiming that interest couldn't be better.

"We've had enough interest at O-Week from students that we've managed to introduce a whole new, third women's team in our eastern-suburbs competition," Lauf said.

"We offer levels of soccer to everyone, men and women, from really social levels to premier league teams who compete in national competitions."

While player enthusiasm is undoubtedly a vital facet of all sporting endeavours, instilling a positive club culture is also paramount to a club's success. Following interviews with numerous club leaders, it became obvious that UNSW's football clubs already have some wonderful, well-established customs in place.

UNSW Touch Football club captain Sophie Connelly

said her club has a very encouraging environment and it's an ideal way to make friends.

"What's special about our club is that everyone in the club really ends up considering each other like family," Connelly beamed.

"Your teammates end up being your best friends, and I'm not exaggerating. It's a really big social club."

Shani Lauf (soccer) said of her club, "We've got a really good club atmosphere. Players love the club and they just keep coming back to play every season. It's really social and it's a great time."

UNSW AFL club president Stephen Ray agreed, but he also called attention to the level of responsibility bestowed upon clubs.

"We work very hard on being a club that is responsible in taking care of players who are sometimes as young as 16," Ray pressed.

"But our club is very inclusive, we welcome everybody. When a first-year student walks in, he or she sees the spectrum of people we have: male; female; parents; young people, so it's good."

Socially, UNSW sporting clubs are well known for being very active. The involvement in social functions has the potential to benefit not only a club's promotion, but also a club's membership appeal. UNSW's football clubs are all very heavily engrossed in social activities, as explained by the club's leaders.

John Sciberras (rugby) said, "We're in a position where we're both part of the university and the further community. We have players of all levels and one of the things to remember is that it's about the participation and having fun, not necessarily the glory at the end of the season."

These sentiments were echoed by Ray (AFL): "As you probably know, you're not going to win a comp every year; you might only win a comp once every 10 years, so you've got to have other reasons to play and good social activity, participation, good sportsmanship, fair play and ultimately making friends are the driving force of this club."

This is not to say, however, that the performances of UNSW's football clubs are, by any means, substandard. All four mentioned clubs have enjoyed exceptional levels of success in recent years.

The Rugby club consistently manages to get two or three of its teams into the finals every year, while the AFL's premier division side just recently won the grand final in 2012. The Soccer club's women's team was just promoted to its competition's premier league for the first time in 15 years. And for our Touch Football club last year, its men's team played in the grand final, the women's team made it to the quarterfinal, and the mixed team reached the competition's semi-final.

But they don't want to brag.

As the interviews with the four club leaders went on, it became increasingly evident that the primary message they wanted this writer to relay was again, about involvement. All four wanted Tharunka readers to know that their clubs were growing and thriving. They stressed that men and women of all skill levels were welcome to either join or push for new teams to be opened, and that enthusiastic social activity was very highly valued and always a lot of fun.

So get off your posteriors, Tharunka readers, and sign up to a club today!

<http://sport.arc.unsw.edu.au/joinclub>