THARUNKA
University of NSW’s Independent Student Newspaper

DISABLED?
Welcome to UNSW
Yeah, sorry about the disability access
No Front Desk Staff: Come Back in 2 months

THAT’S TOO BAD
Support Unit: Under-Resourced, Come Back Later

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Kathryn Ticehurst
The Real Cost of Blaming the Victim
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Dear Tharunkkaroons, outraged zealots and Andrew Bolt,

Ni Hao!

Firstly, I’d like to take the opportunity to express my thanks to Andrew Bolt. For many up-and-coming journalists, it is a well-established fact in our industry that attracting your criticism is an indication of having “made it”. We are, indeed, “contemptuous and arrogant barbarians”, Mr Bolt. Tell us more about how climate change is not a thing and how Gina Rhinehart rocks.

So this issue, what’s the 411 you ask? Well, what it ISN’T about is my response. Our fantastic Freya King brings depression and suicide amongst uni students to the fore. The magnificent Matthew Davis examines his disillusionment with our generation’s activism, I talk about my experience of Sexpo, and our lovely Novo-castrian Lily Ray ruminates over her experience with Sydneysiders.

Kathryn Ticehurst presents an absolutely brilliant piece concerning the controversial strikes currently being held at the University of Sydney. From a member of staff’s perspective, she offers a rare glimpse into the working conditions that our academics are having to contend with nationwide, to the detriment of our education. Our investigator extraordinary, Ammy Singh discusses the university’s blatant disregard for their duty of care toward the students who fall under the Student Equity and Disability unit (SEADU). Amelia Keridge also bravely speaks out about the phenomenon of victim-blaming and parallels the Steubenville case with her own experience of sexual assault.

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In your letters of complaint, there was a recurring motif. Many of you said that we would not have put such a provocative cover if Islam or Judaism was the religion involved. Let us be clear on this. If an Islamic or Jewish representative sought to impinge on women’s bodily rights, with Draconian legislation that sets to push back the representative’s perspective, she offers a rare glimpse into the working conditions that our academics are having to contend with nationwide, to the detriment of our education. Our investigator extraordinary, Ammy Singh discusses the university’s blatant disregard for their duty of care toward the students who fall under the Student Equity and Disability unit (SEADU). Amelia Keridge also bravely speaks out about the phenomenon of victim-blaming and parallels the Steubenville case with her own experience of sexual assault.

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Factional ructions at UNSW

The UNSW caucus of the National Labor Students (NLS) student political faction has been dissolved, with members likely to form a new organisation.

NLS is the student equivalent of Young Labor Left, the youth wing of the Left faction of the Australian Labor Party. NLS has historically been the most powerful organisation in the National Union of Students (NUS), the peak representative body for university students in Australia. The position of NUS President has always been held by a member of NLS since the organisation’s creation in 1987.

Delegates to NUS are elected at the annual elections of each university’s student organisation. UNSW was formerly an NLS stronghold with the faction holding the Presidency of the Student Representative Council between 2006 and 2009 and electing a majority of delegates to NUS.

As NLS’ position within NUS began to wane (it was replaced as the second-largest faction in NUS by the National Independents in 2011) disaffection with national leadership of the faction amongst grassroots members increased. Allegations of rorted preselections, cosy backroom deals and a tendency to negotiate deals with the right-wing of the Labor Party (known in NUS as Student Unity, currently the largest faction in the organisation) over other left-wing factions led to UNSW NLS members distancing themselves from the national faction.

The decision to split from NLS had been widely discussed amongst UNSW Labor Left students since the 2012 National Conference of NUS, where a number of Victorian and Queensland NLS campus delegations split from the faction. The decision to formally dissolve the faction took place at a meeting of Labor Left students in early April. It followed the dissolution of NLS at the University of Sydney and the subsequent formation of the “Sydney Labor Students” faction.

The recent events at the University of Sydney and UNSW now leave the University of Technology Sydney as the only campus where NLS still formally exists in NSW.

It is expected Labor Left students at UNSW will form their own campus-based faction.

8 candidates for Arc Board elections

Nominations for the election of two student directors to the Arc Board closed at the end of March, with eight candidates standing.

Only one nomination was received for the one position reserved for College of Fine Arts (COFA) students and as a result Laura Anthony, a member of the COFA Student Representative Council, has been elected.

Earlier in the year it was expected that new affirmative action rules, to increase the number of women participating in student elections, would apply however they failed to be passed in time by the current Arc Board. Only one of the eight candidates standing for the two ordinary student director positions is a woman – Laetitia Chua.

Other candidates standing include Richard Cornwall, a 5th year Engineering/Law student who filled a casual vacancy on the Board last September, Tom Morrison, a 2nd year Medicine student and a member of the right-wing Student Unity political faction and Sam Bason, a 3rd year Education student and formerly a member of National Labor Students. Sources say that a preference deal has been orchestrated between Morrison and Bason, where each candidate will recommend to voters that they preference the other as a “running mate”. The policy platforms of each candidate are identical, indicating close collaboration between the right-wing and left-wing Labor factions for the first time in years at UNSW.

This is the first time overt factional politics has been on display during Arc Board elections where traditionally candidates unconnected to political factions emerge triumphant.

Other candidates running for Board include Arthur Wang, a fifth year Law/Commerce student, Ben Heeney, a third year Law/Commerce student, James Roberts-Thomas, an Electrical Engineering/Commerce student and Pavel Dobronevsky, and Engineering student.

UNSW fined $100,000 for workplace health and safety breach

UNSW has been found guilty by the NSW Industrial Court of a breach of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 (NSW) and fined $100,000. The Court’s decision relates to an incident in 2009 where a 23 year old student suffered a broken wrist and injuries to her leg after falling off a boat near Darling Harbour while on a field trip.

According to WorkCover, the boat was travelling faster than the sign-posted speed limit, carrying too much weight and passengers weren’t wearing lifejackets as were required.

A spokesperson for WorkCover said the Court’s “sends a message that all workplaces, including education facilities, must have safe work systems in place”.

A University spokesperson said changes have been made following the accident to improve safety.
Hi guys,

I'm a UNSW student and just jumped on your website. I don't know if you've been hacked or something, but there is an extremely disturbing image on the right with a title saying, "Church F**ks Women". Just thought I would give you a heads up. I assume someone or something was involved.

Cheers!

— Oli

I know you are probably reveling [sic] in the attention derived from your last publication, however please take the time to consider that you are deeply offending people by this. Don't make light of it. Don't give yourself excuses. This is atrocious, sub-standard behaviour, and in our day and age completely unacceptable bigotry and intolerance. The hypocrisy is palatable. I am disgusted and really offended. I hope you come to your senses.

This is at root a case of bullying. Do reconsider, you never know how people take bullying behaviour. I can't really believe that the great progress being made in high schools against bullying is now being undercut by university publications like yours.

A public apology would not be unwarranted. Sincerely,

Oliver

Disclaimer: the three-letter word "sic" is used in square brackets ([...]) to show fault in fact or spelling/grammar. Stemming from Latin, "sic" means "thus" or "so", and suggests that the word, sentence or quote was written "as thus-like so" and has not been corrected.
Dear Vice Chancellor,

Although universities across the West are known for their pluralist mindset on most topics, your university’s newspaper, Tharunka, published what many would consider hate speech. I refer to “Church Fucks Women”, which was published in volume 59 (3). The accompanying graphic also offended me, and I shall refrain from describing the filth. You can have a look for yourself.

The timing — just before Easter, which many Christians consider to be the holiest part of the year — showed as little respect as the article itself. I wonder if your “journalists” — forgive me, Sir; for I use this term loosely and incorrectly — would respect other religious groups, for instance, Muslims. I think that Christianity is a fair game, a soft target. Other religions fight back, though. And they fight back using many methods.

I think Christians, as a whole, are starting to understand this. So we are now also fighting back and using various methods, from social media to legal action. I have already reported your paper’s article to the CDPP and numerous other interested parties — and I’m considering other actions.

To help me with my investigations, I would like you to answer the following questions:

1) Is there a committee that monitors your journalists’ ideas and articles?

2) Do you, personally, have to authorise a paper and its articles before it’s published?

3) Are your journalists bound by a code of ethics, perhaps even a legal document that describes the limits and restrictions placed on them?

4) Do you think, as a taxpayer, that my money is being used wisely in these tough economic times? Does “Church Fucks Women” represent a decent return on my investment?

5) Does your university not preach “diversity” and “tolerance”? I believe I can find many documents that claim your university prides these qualities. So what sort of tolerance (let’s not even mention “respect”) does this article show? Have you not breached your own standards?

I understand that the Left enjoys the tacit support of the double standard; however, your university — an official body that exists because of my taxpayer funds — owes me, the taxpayer, one standard. You owe me a response. I look forward to receiving your answers promptly.

Kind regards,

R

THARUNKA

Dear editor[s] of the newspaper that “represents the student voice.”

Your latest cover is so deeply offensive.

I’m not sure what motivates your hatred. They say that hurt people go on to hurt people. Clearly Ammy Singh is a very hurt person. Ammy, I am sorry for whatever has been done to you that you would go on to seek to use images of such violence and willfull [sic] intolerance [sic]. You have officially entered the highest class of bigotry, congratulations.

I imagine you are possibly suffering from the effects of your own abortion or perhaps abuse you have suffered from a so-called Christian.

Care of creation extends across all of society — for the refugee, the sick, the unborn, the environment. I implore you to become an advocate for the weak...not a bigoted member of the chattering class. Use your voice for good.

Cheers,

Jim

Dear Professor Frederick G Hilmer AO,

I am writing in concern over a recent issue of the student newspaper Tharunka. I am sure you will agree that the title “Church Fucks Women” is offensive to both Christians and women. This does nothing to enhance healthy intellectual discourse, nor does it improve the student experience at your university. In fact, it does the opposite in both cases. I would like to see Tharunka offer an apology, particularly to the Christians who attend your university, who I am sure make up a significant number of the student body.

Yours sincerely,

(A concerned university student)

Dear editor[s] of Tharunka,

I am writing to express my disgust in relation to a headline and image published by your publication on Monday the 25th of March, 2013.

Whilst I support your right to express any opinion you please in your publication, I do not, however, believe it is permissible to publish obscene and deeply offensive material.

By now I am sure you know I am referring to the image that you displayed which defiled the most sacred symbol of the Christian religion, being the Cross. I am also alluding to the headline which, at the very least, was a vulgar attempt to stir controversy and attract attention; one might say that it is a reflection of your character as a student publication.

This material, I am certain, is yet another example of an anti-Christian agenda that is now widespread. I am certain that such offensive material would not have been used to draw attention to a criticism of Judaism or Islam, for example.

I suggest that you release a public statement, either on your website, or in your next publication, apologising [sic] for the disgraceful material you published in Monday’s edition. I also suggest you remove the headline and image from your website.

Once again, I would like to say that I support your right to express any opinion/s you have, but please do it in a civil manner which promotes appropriate discourse.

One can still highlight a grievance or criticism passionately without having to use obscene and offensive material. I am sure you are doing a disservice to those who agree with your point of view (in this case, on the issue of abortion).

If this continues, I will seek further (appropriate) action.

Regards,

Charbel

Dear Professor Hilmer,

How disappointing to be shown an article from a student newspaper released by your university that publically and offensively desecrates the symbol that is so important to Christian religions — the cross.

To allow this to be represented in such a suggestive manner against the female reproductive system diagram is repulsive.

Whilst there is the right to freedom of speech, there is also the expectation for that to be presented with some amount of respect and dignity, especially in a government-funded education facility.

Of all the productive things that could be discussed in a student newspaper that may be of benefit to students, that approach and topic as presented does not appear to be one.

Surely there is a public perception of the University of NSW that will now require a little bit more PR work as a result of this. Sad that resources will have to be redirected when a simple correction before publishing the article could have prevented it.

I’m trusting that you see the unfortunate aspects of this article and do not support such unnecessary sensationalism as a way of resolving an issue that needs much more support and focus than an inappropriate heading and image.

Regards,

M

Professor Hilmer,

Are you aware that the UNSW independent student newspaper funded by my tax dollars is being used to insult our God and women through that disgusting article printed on Tharunka?

I am one of the graduates of 2011 of UNSW. Z####$. Kind regards,

William

The University of New South Wales
And then it just hit me.

Gonzalo Peralta

Thirty years ago, five points of light appeared in the Soviet Union’s early detection system for incoming ballistics. The attack was recorded 80km south-east of Moscow in a small military centre called Serpukhov-15, the western control for Oko: a satellite system designed to monitor missile launches from mainland United States.

This detection, if responded to as mandated, was to be the first trumpet blown in the brief dissonant coda to our species’ troubled life. Lieutenant Colonel Stanislav Petrov was duty officer in Serpukhov-15 when Oko spotted the end coming, and in the five minutes he had to decide on whether to press the red button, he found the resolve, or the cowardice, in himself to refrain. The unprovoked attack was nothing like what had been predicted by command; five missiles would not be enough to put the Soviets to bed, Petrov intuited. Countless lives were spared immolation because he was in equal parts lucky and right; the ballistics detected were aberrations caused by rare atmospheric conditions. We are fortunate then that what happened over Chelyabinsk, no mere aberration, happened in February of 2013. If it had happened thirty years ago, the twinkle in your father’s eye would have been the reflected splendour of ten thousand nuclear warheads setting the atmosphere off like cotton soaked in kerosene. Even Petrov would have been overwhelmed into flattening the red button by the searing brilliance of it. But maybe fortunate isn’t the word.

By now, I hope we have all gorged ourselves on the extensive footage available of the event, which frankly was to the lap of someone drinking a banana daiquiri in the middle of a night. For the unenlightened, it went like this.

On February 15th, without warning, a 17-metre wide, 11,000-tonne asteroid entered the atmosphere above Russia falling at 18km per second. The atmosphere took most of the stink off and broke the asteroid into many pieces — now called meteors — until the drag incensed the largest fragment into an explosive air burst 23.3km above Chelyabinsk. The meteor released 0.4 petajoules of energy in a concussive shockwave that injured over a thousand people and caused over US$100 million in damages. In the metric most utilised when communicating meteor events: that is equivalent to six Hiroshima blasts. Coincidentally, this happened just hours before the 30-metre wide 2012-DA14 flew between the Earth and the orbital height of its geosynchronous satellites, such as those of the Oko system, like a bullet hitting the brim of your hat. We know it was mere coincidence because the objects’ trajectories betrayed vastly different origins, but coincidences collated by our pattern-loving brains form a narrative of inevitability — and in this instance that could be a good thing. Although it would be easy to be pessimistic remembering what happened after Apollo.

The most famous astronomer in the world, Neil de Grasse Tyson, whipped up interest during 2006 for the biggest asteroidal threat to our planet: 2004-MN4. The object presented a 2.7 per cent chance of colliding with Earth in 2029, which was so unprecedented the asteroid earned the official name of Apophis, Egyptian god of uncreation. If 325-metre wide Apophis was to land on Earth it would certainly be the most catastrophic event recorded. Just how catastrophic? According to predictions made by researchers at Imperial College London and Purdue University, an asteroid the size of 2012-DA14 — the one that passed between your scalp and the satellite providing your single uncle with 16x — would have released 6 times the air burst energy as the one over Chelyabinsk; 7km across, would have released as much energy as 7845 Chelyabinsk dwarf stars — over 47000 Hiroshima blasts — and would have been wide and the same across. Tyson rendered the catastrophe well enough, in his folksy, Fresh Prince of Bel-Air sort of way, but did a better job suggesting how we might avert it. The most feasible plan was to detonate a nuclear weapon above the surface of Apophis, just far enough so as not to fracture it, but still to irradiate a layer of surface material. The material blowing off Apophis would nudge it off its trajectory. While not as satisfying as blowing it up, like in Armageddon, it does have the noted advantage of not simply partitioning doom into smaller pieces.

Tyson also proposed hovering near the rock with a ship so massive its gravitational attraction would slow Apophis’ trajectory, essentially towing it out of the way. A nudge was the objective of all solutions, including some of the zanier ones, like painting the object white (probably with chalk) to absorb mom solar radiation, erecting sails on it to catch the solar wind, stuffing a rocket onto it, and shooting it with fucking lasers. Of course, those options involve inventing many technologies, which would increase the minimum warning time needed — a decade — to perhaps multiples of that. And that’s with a good deal of luck not to breach pocket- et too. Luckily, nothing had to be researched, and no money had to be spent because further observations by NASA and others ruled out the apocalypse in 2029.

The date of impact was revised to 2036 and the likelihood to 0.018 per cent; then down to 0.002 per cent; to currently a 0.000000714 per cent chance — that’s 1 in 140 million — of colliding with Earth in 2036. Everyone was free to resume mid-thought that funding space exploration and pure astrophysical research was wasteful again.

However, with the Chelyabinsk event (the biggest impact in 100 years), and the closest fly-by in recorded history (2012-DA14) happening within hours of each other, the world realised anew that we

No Class — Class War

Kathryn Ticehurst

Twelve minutes. That’s how many minutes I get paid to mark a one-thousand-word essay: to read it, mark it, and give feedback. And then I repeat the process, once over one-hundred times. I doubt that I have ever managed to mark an essay within the given time limit, and I have spent many nights marking in the early hours, wishing I could just have ten minutes with each student to give constructive feedback and answer their questions. I am sure many students have been disappointed by my comments, and wonder if they know how much the university constrains the time I am able to give them.

This is just one of the effects of the increasing casualisation of the university workforce. Half of the undergraduates are employed by casual staff. For staff, this means more precarious working conditions, and for students, it means no consulting hours to ask for feedback or support. At the same time, restructuring in Australian universities swells the ranks of management, and the percentage of student fees that goes towards teaching is dropping in proportion to those that go towards administration.[1] Meanwhile, the university experiences increasingly truncated semesters, course cuts, staff cuts, and diminishing student-to-teacher ratios. These changes are the result of a neoliberal restructuring of the university according to a new economic model, which seeks to run universities as if they are businesses. These issues surfaced during the
live on a note of dust. Two days after Chelyabinsk, NASA put US$5million into the reassuringly named Asteroid Terrestrial-Impact Last Mission (AT-Last) but only 10 per cent of objects between 140-metres to 1km in diameter are known. Only 1 per cent in the 30-100m range are known of, and anything less than 30-meters across is all but invisible to current technology. And we have seen what 17-metres of ban- shee rock can do.

The proposals to get us and our technologies to a level where we won’t be vulnerable to sudden ruination were promptly made after Chelyabinsk, and just as promptly forgotten about or rejected. We need a truly interna- tional effort to observe, catalogue, and heaven forbid, deflect objects heading to our planet. A global effort will be the strongest weapon if the only战术s determined and ruin is inevitable. Nothing short of full scale nuclear war would elicit such dire humanitarian need.

So we are back to Petrov and his big red button. I men- tioned the story at the outset because the world Petrov lived in was one of misplaced hysteria; and worse yet, its over-reaction, and the reply from the committee chairman Lamar Smith is, “Maybe we can help you out. Don’t know” As if NASA was a burnt-out tweaker asking a dealer for an extra rock, just to get them through the Easter drought. This is a global problem and a penurious NASA hurts us all. Cuts to NASA have rewarded the haves and the proposed funding for Australia’s Siding Spring Survey, the only programme tracking near-Earth objects that may nail the southern hemisphere. Come this July, power will be shut off, and the slack won’t be picked up until Chile’s Large Synoptic Survey Telescope begins operation in 2020. That is seven years when the entire bottom half of this planet is open to cavitation. Potentially there are over one million asteroids with Earth-approaching orbits, with only a fraction accounted for. 95 per cent of the real world-enders are tracked and catalogued, and none pose a threat within a time span like seven years. For these reasons the LTG decision, and the proposals that pickets at the gates and noise protests in lecture voiced concerns about disruptive tactics. Some argue that pickets at the gates and noise protests in lecture theatres and libraries were unacceptable, because they limited students the right to choose whether to support the strike, or unfairly affected their education. I think that the short-term inconvenience of a small number of dis- rupted lectures is minor compared to the much greater inconvenience of an increasingly casualised workforce. Further, I was surprised by the language of rights and free choice used by students crossing the picket, I don’t know if they realised they were telling me that they had a right to my labour. I felt that the rights they talked of were merely of the student as service providers, paid to work for them. They making, and act full-bloodedly in ways to combat that dread. But when the adversity is truly global, truly cos- mic, we yield to cosmic ambition. It’s a pattern in the psyche of our species of ape. We struggle unthinkingly to put the match to that crotton, but in one white mo- ment none of it will matter.

Does this remind you of anything else?

[1] And by my calculations, almost enough to power the ghastly Manly LGA at 2012’s rate of electrical consumption for a whole year. A similar event which I lamentably haven’t the space to write about occurred over Tunguska in 1908 – also in Russia, but they can’t catch a break, can they? and let off enough energy to keep Manly going until 2165. Chilling.

[2] Apophis is the Greek appellation for whom the Egyptian’s called Apep. These predictions are for a stony asteroid moving at 12.7km per second, so the actual figures would vary of course.


People joined the pickets to support the NTEU’s bar- gaining efforts, but also because of wider concerns about how the university is changing. Very few, if any mainstream media outlets, have reported on these is- sues, and university management has consistently mis- represented them. Even The Australian quoted the 7 per cent pay rise claim directly from management’s email. It was hardly surprising that few of the students I spoke to at the strike had any idea why it had been called. When I started to talk about some of the reasons for the strike, many students were shocked and surprised. Many were concerned about the conditions of workers, and sup- ported their struggle, but also realised how these work conditions would impact on their own education. I sus- pect that, before the strike, they had never been able to talk with staff about how these experiences affect us all. Many students crossing the picket expressed regret, support, and real stress that they would fall behind if they didn’t attend, despite promises from management that they wouldn’t be penalised. Perhaps they felt these promises were a little hollow, and with no clear process offered by management for students to raise concerns. I think they were right to feel worried.

I had conversations with students who opposed the strike, and their comments revealed a great deal about how they viewed the university. They talked about how much money they’d spent to be there, and how they just can’t catch a break; no fair cop, no competition in people who denounced the mission as a waste – primarily on twitter, ironically. For all we can expect the Curiosity mission to teach us, it was scant investment. Here’s the perspective: the US plans to pump- out its air force with 2443 F-35 fighter jets which, conservatively, cost around US$25billion each. That’s near a decapi- tating US$60billion: enough for 240 Curiosity rovers to turn Mars into small parking lot. One we’re going to need when we’re forced to move there.

Since Tunguska.

NASA’s budget for 2013 is US$19billion, less than half of one per cent of the 2014 US federal budget.

As of now the highest known chance of collision comes on the vapour trail of 1950-DA. It has a diameter of 1.1km – only 7–11% the rock that took care of the dinosaurs, but enough to make a strong statement – and a maximum 0.33% chance of hitting the Earth on March 16, 2080. It’s only a 1 in 300 shot, but if it did land it wouldn’t come a moment too soon, to gracefully spare the world from the 949th St Patrick’s Day in a row.
The Real Cost of blaming the Victim

Amelia Kerridge

On St Patrick's Day, in Steubenville, Ohio, two high schoolers were found guilty of raping a sixteen-year-old girl at a party in August, 2012. In this case, there was a YouTube video of other high schoolers laughing about the assault, describing how they had witnessed it, and how the victim had deserved worse. Photographs were taken of the aftermath of the assault and shared widely among the internet. Though sixteen people refused to testify in the trial and the victim was intoxicated to the point where she remembers little of the night, this photographic and video evidence made the case that the two footballers — and possibly others — had assaulted the victim much more solid than many other sexual assaults. One of the attackers took a photograph of the naked victim and circulated it through the community.

There was no “he said, she said” in this case; there was clear evidence of the state of the victim and her inability to consent, as well as the recorded knowledge of witnesses that she had been assaulted. Most sexual assault cases go to trial with far less concrete evidence and far more oral evidence, generally only of the victim.

But even in this case, the fact that the victim had been drinking gave her attackers an out. On social and traditional media, America seemed to mourn the guilty verdict. The attackers were 16 and 17 — the same age as the victim — and part of the school football team. CNN stated that the guilty verdict made “lives fall apart” and described the attackers as “football stars, very good students.” Much of the focus was on the attackers, how they described the attackers as “football stars, very good students” and stated that the guilty verdict made “lives fall apart” and “be responsible for your actions ladies before your drunken decisions ruin innocent lives [sic].” Those innocent boys sexually assaulted a young woman, and she is the one to ruin their lives? The internet may bring out the troll in everyone, but sifting through the tweets makes it obvious that the attitude is an epidemic, not just the belief of a few isolated assholes.

Unfortunately, it just reinforces what a lot of people have been taught their entire lives. It’s your fault if you get assaulted when you’re wearing a short skirt. It’s your fault if you get assaulted when you’re walking home alone. It’s been said before, but that isn’t what we need people to hear. We need people to hear what rape is — that it’s not just a stranger assaulting a young, scantily clad woman in the bushes — and we need to teach people that it’s never acceptable. Not for any reason. We need to teach people the importance of consent, understanding it, and that alcohol is not a replacement for it.

But as we do that, sixteen year olds — and every other age too — will blame themselves for sexual assault when they’re the victim. They won’t report it when it happens to them, because they think that they are in the wrong, or they think that no one will believe them anyway. Because they were drunk. Because their attackers are such nice, promising boys. Because she can’t commit rape, she’s a girl.

I was sexually assaulted when I was sixteen. Like the victim in the Steubenville case, my attacker was a nice, promising boy. He was well-loved in our high school community, which was close-knit, to say the least. Unlike the victim in the above case, I wasn’t intoxicated — but there was something else holding me back, as well as the fact that he had such a good reputation. He was my boyfriend at the time. At that point, I didn’t really have the conception that rape could really happen in a relationship, and it’s because of that lack of education that I never reported the rape. I told myself that it was my fault. That I hadn’t been a good enough girlfriend. That even if I could report it, I was seen as a slut at school anyway, and there was no one that would ever believe me. Not the police, not my schoolmates, and probably not even my friends.

And if this recent case is anything to go by, I was right. If I had reported it, it’s not likely that the case would have caught the media attention like the Steubenville case did. But maybe someone’s case would have; someone who didn’t report their assault because they were afraid of the backlash that has accompanied sexual assault trials again and again and again. Sexual assaults continue not to be reported for a number of reasons; perceptions that it won’t succeed even if they report the assault, perceptions that they won’t be believed, perceptions that it “wasn’t really rape”. Survivors of sexual assault continue to suffer in silence, coping in their own way, and the attackers continue to suffer no repercussions as a result. Now no victim of sexual assault — or victim of any crime — has any obligation to report the crime, but we should be minimising the barriers to reporting crime, and not making the victims feel like they are the ones in the wrong. Because victims of crime, particularly victims of sexual assault, are not in the wrong.

It just seems like the media needs to get that message as well, before we can pass it onto the victims.

SEADU Students and Staff Disregarded by University

Ammy Singh

The culmination of ongoing student and staff concerns with the under-resourceing of the Student Equity and Disability Unit (SEADU) at UNSW will, in the space of one month, see the loss of three staff members possessing a combined 85 years of experience in disability support, to the alarm of many among the 880 students relying on the service.

SRC Students with Disabilities Officer, Joel Wilson, told Tharunka that students relying on SEADU’s operations in 2013 have inured a 30% reduction in experienced staff, in addition to the closure of the front office from late November to early January, a decision which restricted the ability of current and future students to access SEADU’s services.

Further contested changes to SEADU’s operations in 2013 have included the reduced reimbursement of student note-takers from $26 per hour to a voluntary commitment, or in return for $10 per hour. Vouchers redeemable at select outlets on and off campus.

“I’m concerned that SEADU is under-resourced and that the needs of students with disabilities may not be properly met,” Wilson said.

One student with disabilities, Luke*, shared this sentiment, citing increased stress and trepidation towards his studies as a result of the changes implemented in 2013.

“The amount of support given to students seems to have shifted from what the student needs to what the university can get away with,” he said.

Until recently, SEADU employed three permanent Education Liaison Co-ordinator (ELC) staff in addition to a fourth part-time ELC position since mid-2012. ELCs are responsible for assessing the needs of students with disabilities, recommending educational adjustments such as Braille resources and text-to-speech software for electronic texts, arranging disability support services, and advising UNSW academic staff on how best to support students with disabilities.

However, as of April this year, the fourth ELC position will no longer exist due to a lack of funds, and a second ELC with over 35 years of experience in disability support has been forced to leave SEADU following the non-renewal of their contract. A third ELC currently on long service leave, Geoff Maddox, told Tharunka he intends to resign from his position due to the unmanageable workload pressures placed on the ELCs for a number of years.

“It’s just a matter of when I put my resignation in now,” Maddox said. “I’m not interested in coming back to work when there’s only three ELCs.”

UNSW Branch President of the National Tertiary Education Union, Sarah Gregson, said the university had failed to adequately respond to immense staff workload burdens at SEADU, even following a workload review requested by staff in January 2013 in accordance with their enterprise agreement.

“The university has been overrelying students for years now, and not recognising the workload limitations on staff,” she said.

Krysta, a blind music education student, agreed that staff are not valued by the university.

“My ELC has definitely made all the difference in my university experience so far. I’m worried about what’s going to happen now as I haven’t got a contact to go to any more. Even the staff left are going to have a couple hundred more students to help, and they’ve already got a full workload as it is. When there’s people working really hard, like the ELCs who have over 80 years combined experience, this is what happens to them in the end because someone wants to save money somewhere.”

Luke raised similar concerns, stating he believes management are more interested in putting the needs of the university before those of students relying on the services of SEADU to obtain a tertiary education.

“I do not believe the university is responding to the needs of students as best as they can. They are treating us like lesser human beings who are obligated to provide services for under government legislation,” he said.

‘Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, universities are legally required to make “reasonable adjustments” for students with disabilities.”

The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training further outlines a non-binding Code of Practice for Australian tertiary institutions regrading students with disabilities. Among its provisions for good practice in disability support are an expectation that staff are provided with the support necessary to enable them to meet the requirements.
of students, and that universities consult students with disabilities to best develop an inclusive educational environment.

According to Geoff Maddox, ELC and past Chairperson, he emphasized the body for university disability advisors, the Disability Education Association NSW & ACT (DEAN), the extent of "reasonable adjustments" for students with disabilities has yet to be determined by case law. However, he emphasized the lacklustre commitment to students with disabilities at UNSW as compared to other universities in Australia.

"I was the Chairperson of DEAN for 3 years, and a member for 10 years, so I know what's going on at other universities in NSW, including the Group of 8 (Go8). I know how badly we're resourced... For example, at the University of Western Sydney, where I previously worked, there was a big commitment to equity. Senior management understood and really supported us.

"At UNSW, you do not get that feeling. From [Pro-Vice Chancellor] Wai Fong's level up, there seems to be little understanding of these issues at all. All the talk in public statements is about elite students."

Professor Wai Fong Chua, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Students), contested this assessment, citing an increase of over $100,000 in the operating budget of SEADU since 2012.

"We had a major review of disability last year commissioned to see how we benchmark against the Go8 universities. And when we looked at the data, my sense is we are not out of line when you look at the actual number of students using the service, which is 880," she said. "As student numbers have increased, our resources have increased. We have to make sure it's a sustainable increase; they all have demand that will have to be considered."

Maddox disagreed. "Everything I've been saying is based on statistics from the same external report UNSW commissioned... Our staff to student ratio (3 ELCs to 5,500 students) is the worst in the Go8.

"I talk about the ratio of the total student body to advisors because if you start comparing the numbers of registered students with disabilities, you run into terrible counting problems. Do they all have current needs now? The reliable way is to look at staff compared to the total number of students because the safe thing to assume is that the prevalence of disability in every university, as a ratio of the total student body, is about the same."

A comparison of university disability services obtained by Tharunka shows that in 2012, UNSW's employment of 2.8 disability staff (0.8 being one part-time worker) for a total student body of 52,000 was comparable only to the University of Sydney, where 3 full time and 1 part time staff members serviced 50,000 students. By comparison, close to all universities in NSW and the ACT employed at least 3 full time disability officers for considerably smaller student bodies. UWS employed 7 staff members for 40,000 students, the greatest of any university listed.

It is understood that in the United Kingdom, the industry standard for employing disability support officers at tertiary institutions is one full time staff member for every 5,000 students.

A second ELC at UNSW, Sam*, told Tharunka the needs of students with disabilities cannot be quantified.

"It's ridiculous to say we service 800 people, because that doesn't measure what we actually do. The work is ongoing and it never stops. It's not about the numbers; it's about the impact of the conditions. There's a reason why three ELCs are working late every day. There are about 800 recurring students who come back at various points of their academic life, and 100 students who need constant attention."

Maddox said the impact of this workload on his life was instrumental in his decision to resign from SEADU. "I'd be working at ten o'clock night after night, the rest of my life falling to pieces. It's just disastrous. At the beginning of last year, while the big rush was on with registering students, I'd be standing there doing the washing up at eleven o'clock at night, thinking, 'How can I live like this?' I can't do it anymore."

Following the staff workload review conducted in January 2013, ELCs were advised to limit their work to seven hours per day, irrespective of student needs. Professor Chua told Tharunka additional measures have been implemented to assist staff in managing this workload.

"We were always keen to ensure staff are working within our Occupational Health and Safety regulations," she said. "And part of the answer to them working within normal, safe hours is to ensure we do look at the workload and provide extra administrative support to offload generic tasks to other people so ELCs can be preserved for their specialist role."

Both Maddox and Sam criticised the directive to limit staff working hours as a solution to their workload problem.

"Maybe when resources are tight, that's the only route for management to take, because properly supporting students with complex disabilities is very time consuming," Maddox said. "But it can be very hard to know if you say you can't meet a student anymore, who's going to survive, fail, attempt suicide, or drop out of the program."

Sam agreed. "It's common sense that when students are struggling, we work with them. We can't do half a job. If their condition is not managed, it will impact on their education. As social workers, we have this duty of care, and it's all about the wellbeing of students."

A third ELC, Jamie*, said management had failed to adequately consult staff when making these decisions. "There's no discussion or dialogue. When we've said what would help us, that's completely ignored. They just keep doing things that make our lives more difficult, not easier," Jamie said, referring to the decision to employ various casual administrative staff for the entirety of SEADU, as opposed to the preferred option of one administrative staff member responsible for the ELCs.

When asked whether the university would be responsive to concerns with the suggestion to limit staff hours, Professor Chua said changes would only occur "if we had systematic data showing that students are disadvantaged," suggesting a large spike in complaints from students would be an impetus to change operations.

The three ELCs told Tharunka this approach is patently irresponsible.

"Because we're so busy trying to stop students being disadvantaged, we're having to put in the extra hours. If we actually worked to the time we're supposed to, there'd be a waiting list that goes back half a semester," Jamie said. "You won't see the disadvantage until we've gone down the drain... Maddox agreed. "A university which has the resources and expertise to prevent harm from happening should do so. A lot of harm will be done 6 or 12 months later if rates of subject failure are higher among students who've identified as having a disability."

One student with disabilities, Luke, said the increased bureaucratisation of SEADU has already led to significant delays in students receiving the services they require, or not receiving these services at all.

"Everything seems to need approval from the Director of [SEADU] these days. The ELCs who know their students the best don't have any autonomy in making decisions... Needless to say, the quality of disability support services has deteriorated significantly as a result of the under-funding. Over the years, services were usually put in place from the very start of the university semester. In Week 4 this semester, some of the services my doctor recommended for me had yet to be put in place."

Another student, Lisa LeVas, said she felt supported by SEADU despite minor delays in acquiring a digital format of texts, a problem shared to a greater degree by another visually impaired student, Christine Boutsikakis. LeVas identified less flexibility in the services offered by SEADU in 2013, but regarded her needs as having been met very well.

ELC Jamie noted that before the 2012 external review into disability services at UNSW, ELCs had been able to successfully run the service with little intervention and greater professional discretion.

"Really, it was from that point on that our service started to suffer," Jamie said. "[Professor Chua] started saying we were over budget, and then they decided to change the way note taking was paid. Even when we paid a good hourly rate, we struggled to get note takers."

Another service which suffered was offering a couple of hours tutoring to students who, for example, had mental health conditions and struggled with the effects of medication. The external reviewer framed it as 'coaching', when it really isn't that at all. We used to be allowed two hours tutoring per subject, and this year we're down to two hours total general tutoring, when we're looking for subject-specific tutoring."

Expressing concern with the university's attitude towards students with disabilities, Krystel told Tharunka she did not feel she was being treated equally by UNSW.

"I pay the same amount of fees as everyone else, but I definitely don't feel like my needs are being met or even taken into consideration. One thing you hear over and over again is it's because of cost-cutting, but whose money are they saving? And what's more important than the 20% of the population that has a disability? People who want a further education are being put under ridiculous amounts of stress, not reaching their full potential, and as a result not getting jobs and being valued by society."

Another student with disabilities, Christine Boutsikakis, agreed. "I don't want to be spoon fed. I don't ask for handouts, I work hard, I'm paying for a university education, and I just need a little extra help."

Geoff Maddox told Tharunka he believes the only recourse for students is to exercise their legal rights under the Disability Discrimination Act.

"I urge every student disadvantaged by not getting an adequate service to go to the Human Rights Commission. It won't cost money, and you've got nothing to lose."

The Director of SEADU, Ann Jardine, declined to comment on funding and staffing matters within SEADU.

*Name changed
More Young People Die From Suicide Than Car Accidents

Freya King
Follow me @ twitter.com/freyaoking

Ruby Rose, Australian media personality, DJ and television presenter, recently cancelled a string of shows and media commitments, citing her battle with depression as the cause.

Rose tweeted “It is with great sadness that despite everything I have tried in the short time I was given I am still losing my battle with depression ... It is because of this that I will be making it my priority to take some time off work.”

Rose is already an advocate for increased mental health discourse in Australia; having been a longstanding Headspace ambassador, she particularly focuses her efforts on the younger generation.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics released figures that show more than 320 Australians aged between 15 and 24 took their own lives in 2011.

Beyond Blue CEO, Kate Carnell, said of the statistics: “This is very concerning. This means that a quarter of all deaths in this age group are as a result of suicide and that more young people take their lives than die in motor vehicle accidents. This is far too many.

On average, one in six people will experience depression at some stage in their lives; one in four will experience anxiety.

A study conducted by Dr Helen Stallman from the University of Queensland showed that university students have an even higher percentage of their population affected by mental illness.

Professor Florence Levy, Head of Child and Family East, Prince of Wales Hospital and Sydney Children’s Community Centre, says:

“In general, adolescents are believed to be vulnerable to the onset of a number of psychiatric problems, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression.”

Annie Andrews, Director of UNSW Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS), says:

“Being a student is a rewarding experience and is great for personal development, but our UNSW and other HE sourced data tells us that being a student can also be a very stressful and sometimes debilitating experience for between 19-25% of students.”

With such a large proportion of the student body experiencing some form of poor mental health, it is interesting to note that, when compared other health ailments, these types of illnesses have developed quite a stigma.

Tamara Beasley, a third year Linguistics student at UNSW, has struggled with depression and anxiety to varying degrees since 2011. She said that the stigma surrounding mental illness and depression is “everywhere”.

“It exists and it is strong. Even commenting on this article, it took me ages to decide whether I should be anonymous or not. In the end, I decided I’m just playing along with the stigma if I hide my name,” said Tamara.

Annie Andrews says that encouraging public discourse surrounding mental health is necessary to change the stigma.

“Many celebrities, elite sportsmen and women, and politicians are volunteering their time to be ambassadors for institutions, NGOs and causes related to mental health. Their voices are noticed and they can do a lot to reduce the stigma,” says Ms Andrews.

Rose Baulchland, editorial assistant at the website Mamamia, recently wrote an article hailing Ruby Rose as a hero for opening up about her mental health.

“Ruby Rose tweeting about her depression was really encouraging, as it is when any celebrity is open about mental health issues. Like it or not, those with high profiles are in a position of influence, so I welcome any kind of open discourse around mental health that begins with them,” said Rosie.

Rosie first started experiencing panic attacks, suicidal thoughts and emotional dysregulation when she was 17. She was diagnosed with Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and has spent the last ten years working on her recovery. She agrees that the stigma surrounding mental illness needs to change.

“If I had been dealing with diabetes for the last ten years, people would be asking me about my struggle with the illness itself — not the stigma around it. When we don’t have to do these kinds of interviews anymore, that’s when I think the stigma will diminish.”

One student at UNSW spoke of the difficulty of watching a friend go through depression. Brigid Hall said that when she first moved onto a residential college, she thought one girl was just having trouble adjusting to the college lifestyle and was a bit quirky.

“Her mood swings, fits of complete despair; eating too little but drinking too much and sleeping erratically worsened, until one night I caught her self-harming. She tried to hide it from me. That was a pretty scary, confrontational time [to deal with] for me and our other friend as teenagers in a new city with a relatively poor support base.”

Brigid spoke of the toll depression can have on those surrounding the person if they are young and unsure of how to get help.

“There was a period where we scared to leave her alone, nights when we swapped beds because she was scared of the mirror in her room which she had broken to use to cut herself. I began to get in the habit of falling asleep only after she was. It was full on. Looking back on it, I wonder how we coped with all this and a full-time course load,” said Brigid.

Tamara Beasley said that when she was 17 she was scared to tell anyone about the mirror but was put in touch with a trained counsellor who helped her. She says it is “everywhere”.

“Many celebrities, elite sportsmen and women, and politicians are volunteering their time to be ambassadors for institutions, NGOs and causes related to mental health. Their voices are noticed and they can do a lot to reduce the stigma,” says Ms Andrews.

“Now I try not to have a preconceived notion about who is likely to suffer a mental illness — in my experience, it can be anyone and has been the beautiful, vibrant, smart and outgoing among us. Your best friend, your mum, your neighbour, your teacher.”

Tamara similarly stressed that the most important thing is to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health in order for more people to get the help they need.

“As with body types, our mental weaknesses and strengths are so vastly different, we should be sending out the message that if you need help, get it. I got the help I needed, and I am better for it. People shouldn’t be afraid to ask for help, just like asking for directions in the supermarket,” said Tamara.

Beyond Blue is running National Youth Week from the 5-14th of April. Their campaign aims to raise awareness about good mental health and encourage young Australians to look out for each other. If you or any of your friends are struggling with depression or any other mental illness, you can call their support service on 1300 224 636 or access their website, www.beyondblue.org.au

CAPS is open Monday to Friday, 9-5 and located on Level 2, East Wing, Quadrangle Building at UNSW. For further information, access their website: www.counseling.unsw.edu.au

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*THARUNKA*
Classifications Under Fire

Elena Assargiotis
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The Australian Classification Board has been criticised by actor and director, James Franco, as well as gay rights activists because they did not allow a "sexually explicit" film to be shown at film festivals.

Franco posted a video on YouTube criticising the Board for their decision regarding the film “I Want Your Love”, directed by Los Angeles director, Travis Matthews. He insisted that the Board has double-standards for classification of sex and violence.

The film follows the final night of a gay man’s life before he moves from San Francisco back to his hometown and includes several explicit sex scenes.

Franco and Matthews previously co-directed the film “Interior. Leather Bar”, which screened at the Sundance film festival to great acclaim, with Franco insisting that he decided he wanted to work with Matthews after seeing “I Want Your Love”.

Online newspaper, Ciskey, reported that “I Want Your Love” was Refused Classification, with one of its columnists criticising the Board’s decision.

After Tharunka contacted the Classification Board to find out why the film was refused classification, they replied, “I Want Your Love has not been Refused Classification. It has not been classified.”

This means film festivals which had planned to show the film were required to apply for an exemption from the Board. The Director of the Board, Lesley O’Brien, commented that the film was unlikely to be exempted and shown at the festivals, as it was probably to be given an X18+ classification, making it ineligible.

In this case, the film contains detailed and prolonged scenes of actual explicit sexual activity, such that it is likely to fall within the parameters of the X 18+ category,” she stated.

The X18+ classification means that it is illegal to import, distribute, screen or view the film in Australia, although this may not stop many from downloading the film off the internet. These films are only available for hire in the Northern Territory or the ACT.

The film was refused exemption and the festivals which were to show the film were required to provide a synopsis of each film to be screened and can request any film to watch and decide on its classification.

Some of those opposed to the banning of I Want Your Love have used this decision to criticise the Board.

Professor Molloy believes that, despite the classification guidelines, “film festivals should be excused from normal classification simply because they are specialist audiences and people should know what to expect. I don’t think film festivals should be subjected to the same classification and legal processes intended for public exhibition, as long as they are not shown to those who are underage and audiences are informed.”

Despite the Board’s decision, I Want Your Love was previously screened in other queer film festivals all over the world, with no other governments raising concerns about its content. The Vancouver Queer Film Festival screened the film in August and the Queer film festival in Stockholm in May. Included in the list of places it has been screened in are Tel Aviv, London, Bologna and Milan, as well as all over America in the past year, to pick a few.

It enjoyed success and a good reception at the majority of festivals, and Matthews has now entered into a deal with the company NakedSword, a website which has previously specialised in distribution of gay porn.

The site will distribute the film to audiences worldwide from their website. It is the first non-porn film which the company has ever distributed.

President and CEO of NakedSword, Tim Valenti, also came out against the decision in his column on the Huffington Post website, calling I Want Your Love a “tremendous film, part meditation on gay identity, part love letter to San Francisco.”

He thinks that it “offers the way forward for gay film” and that video-on-demand services could be beneficial to the future of gay filmmaking.

He, like Franco, thinks that the banning of this film is preventing independent and gay filmmaking from moving forward.

One member of the public set up a petition on change.org to challenge and attempt to reverse the decision. Others have commented on news websites and blogs that they oppose the decision, with the majority of comments on these sites in favour of the film.

This is not the first time the Classification Board has come under fire from the public for a decision regarding a film, television show or game. The game The Walking Dead was given an MA15+ rating, due to its lack of offensive language, but fans later found the presence of such language during the game with gaming site Kotaku pointing out the Board’s flawed decision.
Putting the boredom in BDSM: A review of Sexpo

Renée Griffin
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I don't know about you, but I find the concept of Sexpo fascinating. What could be more interesting than bringing something that is (generally) extremely private out into the public sphere, complete with neon-lighting, standards, and Russell Gilbert.

After attending, I decided the answer to that is almost anything. Don't get me wrong, sex is a pretty good thing. Although I shudder to think of it, sex is the reason I, and you, dear reader, are here. I'm entirely sex-positive. But the overriding feeling I got from Sexpo, was that it was there to make the Benjamins for faceless multinational conglomerates, not celebrate the strange and unparalleled phenomenon that is human sexuality. Whilst advertised as providing a "fun, vibrant and positive atmosphere for for like-minded people to enjoy all things adult", the only agreement I have with that heading was that it was "adult". It's hard to be positive when you're bombarded with multiple stands promising a "designa vagina" for $9999, or group bookings to Thailand for cheap "cosmetic treatment".

As I watched "Trinity Porter and the Wildest Women in the West" stack three-high on top of each other, finger-flashing and probably going down on each other (I wasn't paying too much attention) naked on stage, I actually found it dull. In fact, I found it so scintillating that I thought I yawned, because it's contagious, and I saw my companion yawning seconds before me.

If all Trinity and her work colleagues appeared to enjoy their performance, and not just look like they were trying to get enough dough to enter rack city, bitch rack rack city, bitch, then I would have thought "hats off to you, sisters", but their botromised eyes, magnified on two big screens and cast out to the grandstands sang a different tune. And that tune was flat. These women were clearly just doing the rounds.

Many adult entertainers develop dissociative syndrome to be able to psychologically cope with their jobs, and these women were displaying all the right symptoms. I once spoke to a sex worker who told me she did things like trying to memorise all the Chinese dynasties in chronological order whilst "on the job". I suppose that's the case you crawl into when your life consists of touring around from city to city having your vagina spat on by two other women in front of large crowds of strangers.

Looking around and surveying people's reactions to this, I doubt anyone got amused. Even the rambunctious group of acne-clad 18-year-old boys next to me didn't seem to be diggin' it. If Ricky Gervais and Steve Carell were somehow able to procreate, this event would have been their progeny. It was just so damn awkward. I thought it interesting that the male strippers only got a taste of being pissed on, being sprayed in the face with mist coming out of a dummy's penis, a guy on all fours shitting out of a light-up tube and a whole bunch of other things.

Maybe that's a good thing, maybe it's normalising some people's sexual habits so we can work toward one big happy sexual world where pissing on people for sexual gratification is accepted, or maybe it's just homogenising and commercialising fucked-up stuff that porn is perpetuating.

 Whilst I find a lot of the stuff that people are into doesn't exactly float my boat, I try not to judge. For previous articles and some fairly extensive quantitative research for major assignments etc, I've probably seen more porn than your average 15-year-old male. (Try explaining THAT to your computer-fuxy guy when you come to him with a virus-laden laptop and a search history that would make Jenna Jameson blush. He won't believe you, but whenever you run into him randomly at the bus stop, he'll smirk at you and give you a look that says "I know what you're into").

As a result of said psychologically-damaging porn-viewing, I figured there wasn't much I haven't seen. Having said that, watching an overweight guy dressed as a cat having the absolute shit flogged out of him by his boyfriend in the BDSM stand made me a little bit uncomfortable, my companion was almost convulsing Jedi-style after "after" actually would need surgery, as they had extreme deformities, out of the 15 or so, only two could be indicated of me disregarding the pain, he assured me that turning it up to 100 per cent is no longer a walk in the park, but that it looks really cool in the dark because you can see the electrical current?

In that way, I feel that Sexpo could offer a kind of refuge for those who feel like they're abnormal. On the other hand, I felt lot of the stands were just out to make money by telling people that they, or the sex they're having, isn't good enough. I know a lot of female friends who do things they're not comfortable with or that hurt them because they're too scared of being seen as odd-fashioned or uptight. These are normally empowered and intelligent women. I work with a guy who thinks that ejaculating on a passed-out woman's face and taking photos of it on her phone is an acceptable, see-brag-worthy accomplishment, but alas, I digress.

Leaving the Sex Maze, a collection of mirrored walls, I navigated my way through with the labyrinth with the encouragement of an unconvincing voiceover telling me "Oh baby, like that". Like WHAT, exactly? Navigate through the maze "like that"? I was glad our media pass meant we didn't have to fork out the two or so bucks for entry. Making our way to the fetish demonstration exhibition, we ran into an obstreperous and very caustic dominatrix woman in lingerie and thigh-high boots parading around harassing men by physically blocking their path whilst ululating how they're "guaranteed to see a pussy for two bucks" over a microphone. To me, it seemed more like a fishmonger selling their catch as a sexy romp, or general exploitative practice.

Probably the most offensive and pernicious part were the "Designa Vagina" stalls that promised to increase male and female enjoyment. Given that some of the poor women pictured in the A4 folders of "before" and "after" actually would need surgery, as they had extreme deformities, out of the 15 or so, only two could be considered to be outside the normal range for the size of their vaginas (that's 2-10cm, girls).

Hiding my media pass lapband, two young guys were looking at the pictures: "Is this not normal?", one of them asked the woman at the stall "God no, that's gross", the obviously professional stand-operator responded.

So, would I recommend Sexpo? If it was free, maybe once — just to check it out — but I wouldn't pay for it. I was that curious/dumb kid who licked the metal freezer door and super-glued my fingers together, I totally get curiosity. But, at the end of the day, the overriding theme of the day for me was indifference. At least you get street cred when you super-glue your fingers together. I'mma stick to that.
Ray by Day

Lily Ray
Follow Lily @twitter.com/lilydray

I was very lucky growing up. My childhood was ideal. And I’m not just saying that because my parents read my columns – in fact, I don’t think they even read the last one, and were mostly distracted by the cover. I have thought about this a lot, because I don’t get along with a lot of the people I meet in this city, and I’ve been wondering why.

When I was five, my parents bought a block of land in Barrington, NSW, which is kind’ve near Taree and Forster. Over the next four or so years, we built a mud-brick house on it. My parents, a variety of relatives and some guy called Trent, who we found on the side of the road in town, built the house over weekends, school holidays and all manner of other days off that we had over the course of my primary school career.

Barrington is rural. I have fond memories of throwing rocks in the river for hours (before I learned how to skip them), canoeing around the little billabong – occasionally falling into the stagnant water. We climbed all the trees in the bush, made pretend food out of moss and other bits of nature. It was a proud moment for the trees in the bush, made tasty food out of moss and other bits of nature. It was a proud moment for me, the day that my parents let me lay one of the bricks and other bits of nature. It was a proud moment for me, the day that my parents let me lay one of the bricks and other bits of nature.

When the house was finally complete, we had the comforts of hot water and electricity. In the evenings we would gather kindling to bring a fire to life in our old, iron potbelly stove while Mum made some sort of delicious stew and Dad finished fencing the perimeter off to keep out the neighbours’ goats and cattle. We had warmth and light, but the house still doesn’t have a phone line, mobile reception or television. We played board games, walked through the bush, made cubby-houses, tamed bush-turkeys and invented thousands of strange games to pass the time. A few trees covered in flood-rack provided a house for fairies, Nozah and Alytina who ate from round leaf plates, which dropped from one of the weight-bearing columns. Needless to say, we weren’t the best-dressed kids at school, back home. Most of our wardrobe consisted of very practical, but somewhat daggy overalls, tracksuit pants with ankle-cuffs, and skivvies. Mum made a lot of our early clothing and it always fit pretty well.

I guess where I’m going with all of this is that my experiences in the Australian bush are, quite possibly, more important to me than I can really relate through a column like this. The separation from city and suburban living, our learned appreciation of willy-wagtails and water-rats is absolutely invaluable. I still go to that house with my friends, housemates and colleagues whenever I have the chance, and I show them the cows being milked at the dairy farm, we canoe down the rapids in the Barrington River, and we talk about how very lucky we are to really have a break from this smoggy jungle of skyscrapers. When I ask for company to drive up the hill and get reception, send a text or check our emails, I rarely get a taker. Everybody needs a break, and there’s no place better than in a house in the bush, made from mud, overlooking a billabong and 50 species of bird.

Why Our Generation Sucks

Matthew Davis

Apathetic Activism

"Your generation is too politically apathetic." Of course, I rejected this allegation at the time, thinking that everyone believes their generation to be superior to the ones that follow. However, I have since realised that the apathetic Gen Y stereotype is true (on average, of course).

Maybe you’re reacting to my disillusionment with that same disbelief. Maybe you’re thinking “we’re just as active and passionate as previous generations, we simply focus our activism online instead of through traditional methods.” Whilst we do “like” certain posts on Facebook, retweet an article wherever possible and occasionally passively follow a group of activists on Twitter, we are still more interested in our hobbies, our relationships and our music than the political issue of the day.

Wednesday of Week 4 was the "National Day of Action," a protest against defending our education against rising fees and staff cuts. On the day of the protest, I tested a friend of mine to find out if she was coming along. Her response was “I came, I saw then decided it was lunch time.” I struggle to comprehend how someone could walk away from a protest for a cause they care about. Support, when they have nowhere else they have to be. It’s time we actually start caring about the issues that matter to us. Too often people shy away from political discussions out of fear that the other person may disagree (myself included). “That person is religious, so I better not mention marriage equality, because I don’t want to get into one of those debates.” So what? We need to start telling people if we think they’re wrong. You won’t lose friends over it if you do it tastefully.

Some spectators were far from passive, shouting at us watching passively from a distance. Dozens stayed and watched for an extended period of time, which meant they had no other pressing commitments preventing them from participating. I explained to some what we were fighting for, however the response from all of them was the same (and it wasn’t one of disagreement). All I saw was blank faces, behind which I can only assume sat blank minds. Some spectators were far from passive, shouting at us to “get off the road” (we had been blocking traffic for about 20 minutes). I suspect that our disruptive nature may have pushed such people onto the opposing side of the fence. However, this isn’t really a terrible thing, because it means that they are no longer indifferent.

Some people explicitly permits restricting the right to vote based on race. Most young people don’t know that private schools in NSW are legally allowed to expel students and sack staff simply for being gay. They don’t know that our constitution does not even acknowledge the existence of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, and that it explicitly permits restricting the right to vote based on race. Most don’t know that the majority of tertiary students live below the Australian poverty line, and are unaware that the people who are deciding to increase our university fees got their degrees for free.

So, what’s the solution? What is going to make our generation start to care? I don’t know the answer, but a simple step is talking to your peers about the issues that matter to you. Too often people shy away from political discussions out of fear that the other person may disagree (myself included). “That person is religious, so I better not mention marriage equality, because I don’t want to get into one of those debates.” So what? We need to start telling people if we think they’re wrong. You won’t lose friends over it if you do it tastefully. If you don’t convince others of your way of thinking, don’t worry. You have still made them think about the issue deeply, which is a step away from apathy and a step towards progress.
An Already Unbalanced Debate

The front cover of Tharunka Vol. 59, No. 3 was posted on Facebook. We analyzed the comments that were made on that post to bring you this infographic. The post can be found here: bit.ly/FoetalRightsBill

126 likes on facebook  43 shares  166 comments

Which gender commented the most?

72.15% 28.57%

2.53% Other or Undetermined

Individuals Commenting and their stance on the front cover

111 Comments by 57 Men

31% Misc.

26% Positive

42% Negative

More men were Negative about a front cover that related to a women's issue than the total number of women who commented.

42 Comments by 21 Women

14% Misc.

66% Positive

19% Negative

Emails sent to the Vice Chancellor

7 Emails  3 Emails

1 E-mail Other or Undetermined
Most of my columns tend to be about "topical" issues. Issues that have been discussed in the mainstream media and are being debated in bars and cafes across the nation. The issue of refugees is often topical, but it hasn’t been for a while. I decided that I don’t want to wait for The Daily Telegraph or the Liberal Party to make the issue topical, on their terms. It’s too important to only be discussed at the whims of bigots and reactionaries. I want to talk about it now.

Deterrence. That one word sums up the Australian political class’ entire approach to refugees. It’s a technocratic way of saying we will treat refugees, so badly that they will want to stay in countries where they are being persecuted and even bombed.

The question asked by many of us, following the passing of legislation by the Australian Labor Party and the Coalition to reintroduce offshore processing, was how did we get here? We threw out John Howard in 2007 and replaced him with Kevin Rudd, who was elected on a platform of abolishing the Pacific Solution and shutting down offshore detention centres.

What changed in the last five years? Why was offshore processing so abhorrent in 2007 but so necessary in 2012? The real answer is nothing. Nothing has ever changed when it comes to the movement of people fleeing persecution and injustice right around the world, and it’s incredibly unlikely things will ever change.

I have read too many columns written by well-meaning refugee advocates that focus on numbers, facts versus myths, international comparisons and "push and pull factors". I can recite refugee arrival numbers for every year going back decades, I can compare Australia’s refugee intake to Italy’s and the United States’, and I can talk about how war, not immigration policy, is the bigger factor determining how many refugees seek asylum in Australia.

The truth is that all of these facts and figures are irrelevant. They’re irrelevant because the refugee debate is a smokescreen for much broader questions about our society and how we treat each other across the globe. Xenophobia and racism play a strong role in shaping domestic attitudes to refugees. Racism explains to a certain extent why we are terrified of a few thousand (largely) brown refugees, but hundreds of thousands of European migrants barely cause a stir.

The real reason why the refugee debate disproportionately dominates our political space is quite simple but incredibly depressing. Accepting the legitimacy of the right of refugees to move from one nation to another means accepting a couple of things that our political establishment isn’t quite ready for yet. It means accepting that the two biggest causes of human displacement, war and economic injustice, are actually quite awful things and we should do something about them.

You can see where the problems lie. For a country (and this applies to most Western developed nations, not just Australia) that has a pretty solid history of taking part in overseas invasions and bombings and relies on the labour of millions of people in sweatshops around the world for our standard of living, accepting that our actions have incredibly negative consequences is tough.

So tough that it means we would probably have to stop going to war. So tough that we might have to treat the developing world as something other than a large-scale Dickensian textiles factory.

Viewed in this frame the refugee debate, although still abhorrent, begins to make a bit more sense. It’s not that surprising that a country that supports killing innocent men, women and children with drone bombs would indefinitely lock up innocent men, women and children fleeing those drone bombs behind razor wire on remote Pacific islands. It’s not surprising that a country whose standard of living currently depends on having a vast pool of cheap, overseas labour is preventing cheap, overseas labourers from coming here to improve their standard of living.

The refugee debate is about how to manage an orderly flow of asylum seekers into Australia, but only at the margins. At its core lies the fundamental question of how long can we continue to bomb and exploit the rest of the world while building the walls higher and higher.
THE SRC ARE YOUR ELECTED STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES — YOUR VOICE ON CAMPUS!

SRC President
Ross Willing

Each year, the university has to consult with students about the way its spends the Student Services Amenities Fee — the fee you can defer at the beginning of each session that has to spent by the uni on student services.

The SRC strongly believes that the most effective outcomes are achieved when students have control of student money rather than getting caught up in university bureaucracy.

Each year, some of this money goes to Arc, our student organisation, but an enormous proportion remains with the university. It’s my role, along with other student leaders, to lobby the university about where to spend this money. For example, last year we lobbied for the microwave stations on campus, which should be opening in the coming weeks. Last year we conducted an extensive review, but we need to hear from you about where you think the money should be spent — I urge any interested student to get in contact and have your voice heard — srcpresident@arc.unsw.edu.au

Students with Disabilities Officer
Joel Wilson

Be Brave and support children with disabilities! A big shout out to the Hulk’s Fundraising Team for raising money for Variety, a charity for children with disabilities. We hosted an Outdoor Cinema screening of Pixar’s Brave with all the proceeds raised from the food, drinks and donations going to the charity Variety! Now for an update — the new and improved Students with Disabilities website page has been launched! It now includes articles detailing ‘A Day in the Life’ of a student with a disability and information about the ‘Smash the Stigma’ Mental Health Campaign and Disability Service Audit. I recommend you check out our website to keep up to date with the events and programs we will be running throughout the year. If you would like to get involved in some of these great initiatives, please send an email to disabilities@arc.unsw.edu.au

I would like to thank all the students who have sent me emails detailing their concerns and questions regarding SEADU. This includes information on notetakers not having been assigned to students, concerns that valuable education liaison officers are being let go, and concerns regarding the under-resourcing of the unit. Without your help, I would not be able to properly address these issues. All of the concerns raised have been forwarded to SEADU and I am waiting for their response.

Co-Education Officers
Lauren McCracken & David Bailey-McKay

The National Day of Action was held last week as part of the National Union of Students “Where’s our education revolution?”. The SRC held a free breakfast where we gave out over 150 free pancakes, with about 300 students turning up. The rally from UTS to USYD went well, with the contingent blocking traffic on Broadway and City Road. This is in the lead up to the federal election, where NUS will be fighting for student’s rights.

Last week as part of the National Union of Students New Schools, we also held a photo competition on the NUS Facebook page. We have also received reports about cuts to the Student Disabilities And Equities Unit. What we understand is that there has been an increase in students using SEADU without an increase in caseworkers. This has seen many students without access to support or special considerations. If you have any information or want to get involved, please contact the SRC.

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Environment Officer
Jeremiah Szczko

Right now our university is being powered by about 2.5% renewable energy. That means that around 97.5% of the electricity our university is consuming comes from dirty carbon emitting power stations. For a university that prides itself on its environmentally orientated degrees and research it’s crazy to think that so little of the energy it consumes is coming from environmentally friendly sources. Other universities all around the world are already making an effort to emit less carbon; the University of Melbourne has already reduced their carbon emissions by 50%. Australia’s National University is aiming for 35% reductions by 2020 and Monash aims to use 15% renewable energy on its campuses. But UNSW has no long term or short term goals to reduce the amount of carbon emissions we’re consuming or the amount of renewable energy we are using. This simply isn’t good enough for one of Australia’s leading universities, we need to be setting an example by putting what is being research at UNSW into practice and stop contributing to climate change through carbon emissions. The RenewUNSW Campaign was started last year and aims to encourage our university to do better and aim for 100% Renewable Energy on our campus. In the coming weeks you’ll start to hear and see more of the RenewUNSW Campaign so make sure you come along to our weekly Enviro Collective meetings at 12pm Thursdays outside the Blockhouse to learn more!

Womens Officer
Amelia Kerridge & Dean Mattar

Hey guys! I hope you enjoyed your break from uni and had some time to sit back and relax, especially after the number of activities we had just before it. We’d like to say a big thank you to Louise for coming and giving us four fantastic workshops on safe sex and sex positivity. If anyone who wasn’t able to attend would like to learn about anything that we did, please come and talk to one of the queer officers, we’ll be more than happy to fill you in. It was a great time and Louise exceeded all the expectations we had, if that’s at all possible.

But onwards from the past to the future: what do we have in the coming weeks? Tuesday April 9, 2pm, we are hosting our first Queers Talking for the year, about Domestic Violence and Consent in Relationships. On April 15, we’ll be screening “Sistergirls”, a documentary donated to us by AGONIt dehives into the experiences of transgender Indigenous Australians. Our next zine will be published for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, so get your contributions in to charlee@arc.unsw.edu.au by May 6th to get yourself published!

As usual, our meetings are 4-6pm Mondays and 2-4pm Thursdays — come along to level 9 of the ChemSci building and get involved in the queer collective!

Indigenous Officer
Jacob Hyland

Session is in full swing and we have had our first big event, Close the Gap with the help of Oxfam and the Rural Allied Health Medical Society (RAHMS). We started the event with a BBQ on the Library Lawn, promoting the panel talk in the afternoon along with supporters writing down three things about Indigenous health that they’re appalled by with Oxfam. In the afternoon, we were able to use the facilities at Nurri Gili for the first time and held a panel discussion on Close the Gap! Keesha Morris from the Kingsford Legal Centre and Warren Roberts, the CEO and Founder of YARN, were both able to talk about actually closing the gap.

The next YARNs are held most Thursdays, so come along! It would be great to
see new faces there!
Feel free to contact me at any stage at indigenou@arc.unsw.edu.au
Cheers, Jacob

Co-Welfare Officers
Anna Zhou & Brad Lorge

Hey guys! Hope you enjoyed a well-deserved and relaxing mid-sem break. It’s been a busy few weeks in the Welfare department! In the midst of fighting for student affordability and keeping in check with overpriced retailers on campus, we have been figuring out what types of breakfast food uni students like the most! Help us out by emailing what you would like to see on the free breakfast table and we will try our best to make it happen! Or, even better, tell us in person when we are running the free breakfasts every Wednesday from 9:10-9:30am outside the main library. If you happen to miss it or have class during that time, don’t worry! If you’ve been keen for free food, drop in at the Welfare room on Level 1 at the Blockhouse (opposite the Roundhouse). We are also holding our Welfare Collecive AGM soon, so if you’re interested in being part of an active, diverse, passionate student collective, keep an eye out on events coming up. In the meantime, here are some short and sweet tips to save you money on campus:

1. Microwaves on campus! By bringing your own lunch and reusing water bottles (at water stations all around campus) you can save around $50 a week!
2. The UNSW Second-hand Bookshop: where you can buy and sell textbooks. (They will buy your current texts at 35 per cent of the Recommended Retail Price (RRP) and sell them with at least 30 per cent the RRP)
3. Help yourselves to free Mi-goreng and instant noodles in the Welfare Room.
4. Running out of paper to write your lecture notes on? Need a folder to put all your books in? Need a microwave to heat up food on campus, three microwave facilities have been installed on lower, middle and upper campus! The first microwave facility is next to the Coffee Republic in the Blockhouse. On middle campus, find room G042 in the Quadrangle! The upper campus microwaves can be found on the Level 1 of Matthews, next to the food court.

If you’re looking for a microwave to heat up food on campus, three microwave facilities have been installed on lower, middle and upper campus! The first microwave facility is next to the Coffee Republic in the Blockhouse. On middle campus, find room G042 in the Quadrangle! The upper campus microwaves can be found on the Level 1 of Matthews, next to the food court.

Speaking of food, the PGC wants to hear what you have to say about the new food retailers opening up on campus in our 10-Week Food Retailers Challenge. Give them your score and have your say on our online Facebook Page poll at facebook.com/unswpgc

The latest news from SRC International is that a UNSW PhD alumni is excited to come and talk at “Academia meets Industry”. Happy Easter!

Ethnic Affairs Officer
Charlotte Lewis

Well, the mid-semester break is over and the Easter/Passover festivities are done and it’s back to uni for us all. Hooray (Is there a way for me to input a sarcastic tone in my words so you all realise I’m being completely sarcastic?). Coming back to university, I have a meeting planned with the Student Life and Learning Director for the university during this week: This meeting will basically be the make-or-break for my campaign to hold an Interfaith Week in Semester Two of this year. Fingers crossed for all of us! It has also come to my attention that some ethnic-related groups are possibly not allowing students into their society due to their gender or sexual preference. I don’t think that clubs and societies at UNSW need to be told that this will not be tolerated, as it is a given! We accept and love one another, remember?

There’s not much going on in the land of the Ethnic Affairs Collective (still me, myself and I!), but I still hope to make the anti-racism campaign a big thing, with the support of UNSW’s students, of course!

As usual, if any of you have ANY questions or suggestions, please email me at ethnic@arc.unsw.edu.au

International Students’ Report
Van Hung & Daphne Huang

Our introduction email and information regarding upcoming events has been sent to 600 previous members and 200 new members of UNSW International Students collective.

VINPLE web page
The UNSW International Student Collective VINPLE web page has been set up, which is the network for existing members from global universities (Harvard undergraduate council, RMIT etc) and many student unions. We upload recent news, events and policies about ARC International every week.

Event and campaign ideas
We keep connecting with other International Student Officers and collectives from other universities; in return, we receive event and campaign ideas which should be benefit for International students. We are going to meet up with the president of International Students and Business (ISAB) to discuss and negotiate ideas for the coming months.

Upcoming events
- IELTS WORKSHOP
  - Free training program, sponsored by the City of Sydney: “Gents and Sensibility”, “Planning Your Future” and “Multicultural Mix”

PGC President
Josh Yen

Events | Information | Advocacy | Advice
We hope you had a great Easter long weekend and, for our coursework students, an exciting and productive mid-sem break! I’ve been working with Arc Membership to help formalise representation through the PGC for our 300 or so UNSW Canberra postgraduate research students who are located at ADFA. This is an exciting time for our Canberra students, as elections for the Arc Canberra Committee are just around the corner!

If you’re looking for a microwave to heat up food on campus, three microwave facilities have been installed on lower, middle and upper campus! The first microwave facility is next to the Coffee Republic in the Blockhouse. On middle campus, find room G042 in the Quadrangle! The upper campus microwaves can be found on the Level 1 of Matthews, next to the food court.

Speaking of food, the PGC wants to hear what you have to say about the new food retailers opening up on campus in our 10-Week Food Retailers Challenge. Give them your score and have your say on our online Facebook Page poll at facebook.com/unswpgc

More information at arc.unsw.edu.au/pgc/retailchallenge

The new Level 4 COFA Postgraduate Study Space recently opened and COFA students have already begun to settle in. Amidst rumours of the space being reconfigured, we got back to work on the development of a better policy framework to address the situation of coursework students undertaking research.

Hello Higher Degree Research students! The video team just wrapped up productions on our third PGC-featured Researcher video, so please keep an eye on our news letters and the Facebook page over the next week. Additionally, we have started interviewing for the next research video. The most exciting news is that a UNSW PhD alumni who launched his own business based on his research project is excited to come and talk at “Academia meets Industry”. Happy Easter!

PGC International Office Bearer
Johannes Luetz.

The new Post Study Work Visa (PSWV) regulations have entered into force on 23rd of March 2013. Regrettably, students who applied for their initial student visa before 5th of November 2011 are not eligible for the PSWV. I have already written to the Minister on behalf of affected UNSW international postgraduate students, requesting that all students be eligible for the PSWV. If you are disadvantaged by the new rules or want to express solidarity with those who are, please write to the Minister and let him know how important this issue is to international students.

I continue to work with my colleagues to develop Arc’s student wellbeing project, with a primary short-term goal of gaining funding to pilot the program. I have also worked with our PGC Coursework Officer to develop and update policy for coursework students that provides protection and guidance for coursework students undertaking research projects as part of their program.

Hey postgrads! Hope you’re ready for to get your fun on and attend PGC’s biggest postgraduate networking session: The Bi-Annual Wine and Cheese Night! Come for nibbles and drinks on us at Club Bar, 6:30pm on April the 11th. Hope to see you there!

PGC Coursework Office Bearer
Maria Lobato

Hello fellow coursework students! I hope you are all getting settled into the semester: The Bondi to Coogee + BBQ was a fun way to start the semester and get to know other postgraduate students! I continue to work on the development of a better policy framework to address the situation of coursework students undertaking research.

Hello Higher Degree Research students! The video team just wrapped up productions on our third PGC-featured Researcher video, so please keep an eye on our newsletters and the Facebook page over the next week. Additionally, we have started interviewing for the next research video. The most exciting news is that a UNSW PhD alumni who launched his own business based on his research project is excited to come and talk at “Academia meets Industry”. Happy Easter!
COFA Council would like to welcome three new members of the SIC: Jason Phu for Ethnic Diversity, Salman Afzal for International and Beth Dillon for Disabilities.

These last few weeks have been even busier for the COFA Council than the first part of semester. We have been busy with new initiatives directed at making our new campus more of a community, more friendly and more accessible.

These include:

- Weekly Yoga, weekly free breakfasts in the courtyard and weekly stitch and bitch sessions. There is a new student publication called Manifesto. We are running a queer feminist book club. The Queer officers have been working on events, including hosting origami and sushi sessions and a tea party.
- We are working on reclaiming the courtyard through an installation collective (the next meeting of which the Dean is planning to attend). A community garden and memorial to students who suffered through the redevelopment will be made.
- Currently, the local ARC-owned cafe offers $5 meals, and we are working with other local food retailers to offer the same. The common room will have new artworks hung by the time students return from Easter break and we are organising couches, tables and cushions for more varied seating.
- We are conducting a survey of shuttle bus use so that we can work with facilities to optimise the service for both main campus and COFA students.

Andrew Roberts
SDC Convenor

SDC Convenor
Andrew Roberts

We are almost halfway through the semester and our volunteer programs have gotten off to a great start. The Student Development Department currently runs twenty different programs, ranging from the Volunteer Army, which provides casual volunteering opportunities, to the Mob, which orientates international and rural students to life in Sydney, to Walama Mura, who spend a week volunteering in a remote aboriginal community each year.

Our programs provide a variety of opportunities including philanthropy, skill development and provision of important community services. So far this year, we have had around 500 people apply for our volunteer programs (that’s not counting the Volunteer Army, which has over 2500 registered participants), but there are still some spaces left. If you are keen to get involved, contact volunteer@arc.unsw.edu.au or visit www.arc.unsw.edu.au/volunteer.

Or, if you have a great idea for a volunteer program, get in contact! We are always looking for new ideas and would love to discuss them with you. You can contact me on sdc.convenor@arc.unsw.edu.au.

Andrew Roberts
SDC Convenor

The Next Day
by David Bowie

Album Review
by Sarah Fernandes

David Bowie, staying true to his enigmatic and mythical style, has appeared out of the woodwork with his newest album in 10 years. ‘The Next Day’ is a portrait of a man with the anarchical spirit of youth, the wisdom of time, and the eclecticism of an earth-bound rock ‘n’ roll spaceman.

Title track and opening song The Next Day is incredible. Bowie’s voice is as strong as ever as he conjures up apocalyptic imagery to the tune of his signature glam rock style. His music continues to perfectly toe the line between catchy pop and artful rock. Here I am/not quite dying’ he shouts in the chorus, and by god you believe him - this work is not the production of a man close to the grave. Dirty Boys is just that - dirty. It’s full of greasy saxophone and wailing guitar that transforms the world around you into a 1930s speakeasy. The Stars (Are Out Tonight), like the rest of the album, is reminiscent of the sound he forged on the Berlin Trilogy – ironically fitting for an album that defaces the cover art for ‘Heroes’. The song plays with the double meaning of ‘stars’, painting them as the satyrs of our time. Bowie’s renowned intellectualism is clearly still in top form as his biting criticisms of society hit close to home. The first single from the album, Where Are We Now?, is a slow song depicting Bowie wandering around the lonely streets of Berlin. Despite the song’s strength, it seems an odd choice for a single – it’s very mellow. In the past when Bowie has released lamenting singles, they’ve always at least come to some kind of musical apex (think Life on Mars), but this track is much more like a ballad than anything else. Still, the fact that he has already demonstrated such a wide musical scope in just the first 5 tracks of his album is evidence of his astounding skill. The opening of If You Can See Me sounds like a Radiohead song as Bowie walks over syncopated percussion. The song is driving and intense, and Bowie again summons apocalyptic imagery with lyrics like ‘The dust of cold flowers/drizzle of cold ashes.’ In a mix of cynicism and nostalgia for his youth, I’d Rather Be High is the tale of a young boy who’d rather be stoned, dead, or in a psych clinic than be part of war. While this song is evocative of his rock days, Dancing Out In Space is much more geared towards (you guessed it) dancing. For Bowie, the crazy pitch-bending guitar and space imagery is worship to the spiritually redeeming qualities of dance. The album ends with the rather ominous Heat, which almost sounds like Bowie decided to do a surprise collaboration with Michael Gin.

The Next Day is one of those albums where nearly all the songs are outstanding, and even the weaker tracks are miles ahead what you could call average. With such a long time between releases, this album had the potential to either be a disappointment or a triumph. It is definitely the latter.

The Next Day is out now via Columbia.
Push The Sky Away
by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds

Album Review by Dylan Chawell

When I told my dad I was writing a review of Nick Cave’s latest album, he boasted that he could tell me stories about the Australian musician so old that “you won’t find them on the internet.” Given that I suffer from an acute inability to take off-handed comments at face value, I naturally interpreted Dad’s words as a profound diagnosis of Cave’s character and style. After all, Cave operates as an analog artifact in a digital world. And in Push The Sky Away, he demonstrates the power and fragility of language to a generation of people who believe that every single piece of information can be distilled into zeros and ones and then zapped across the globe. Not true, says Cave, not true at all.

The slow opener “We No Who U R” establishes as much, with the ethereal flute melody, sinister anthropomorphism and ambiguous lyrics contrasting with the crispness and confidence of Cave’s delivery. The title is a joke on us: we’re allowed a little string of information that we can text to a friend or chuck up on Twitter, but Cave keeps the full meaning to himself. What is clear in the opening track? Well, for one, the new direction that Cave has taken his band. Mick Harvey’s departure has increased the importance of Warren Ellis, who plays violin and does whatever it is one does to a synthesizer to make it to sounds. Ellis is now instrumental – hey, that’s a pun! – in replacing the ferocity, rawness and grunginess of previous albums with a vast, desolate soundscape.

“Lazarus” is a provocative title for a protest song, as an analog artifact in a digital world. In “Higgs Bosom Blues” the contemplative rather than ecstatic, and the song fades into silence. The penultimate track is a lampooning of the clutter of our modern world. In “Sky Away, he demonstrates the power and fragility of language to a generation of people who believe that every single piece of information can be distilled into zeros and ones and then zapped across the globe. Not true, says Cave, not true at all.

As for Cave, he’s decided to stop yelling at people he doesn’t know, which is nice. It means that the emotional intensity must come through other avenues, which is “Ju-bilees Street” he proves himself capable of doing. In the song, an encounter with a prostitute is relayed through layers of sound. The sparse tambourine and Ellis’ scratchy, creased the importance of Warren Ellis, who plays violin and does whatever it is one does to a synthesizer to make it to sounds. Ellis is now instrumental – hey, that’s a pun! – in replacing the ferocity, rawness and grunginess of previous albums with a vast, desolate soundscape.

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Amour

Movie Review
by Stephanie Squadrito

Honesty is the best policy, right? I’d always thought being brutally honest was better than prettying up the truth with bells and whistles, but after watching Michael Haneke’s latest film, Amour, I’m not so sure anymore. There’s one thing I am sure of however: the German auteur doesn’t let his audience off easy in this Oscar-winning flick.

The crux of the film can be summarized very simply: Amour tells the story of an elderly French couple in their dying months. Retired classical music teacher, Anne (Emanuelle Riva) suffers a series of strokes that render her almost completely physically immobile, leaving her husband, Georges (Jean-Louis Trintignant) to look after her, which he does so willingly and without complaint, catering to her every need, whim and footstep. They deign to shut the world and even their daughter, Eva, out of their small Parisian apartment, in an attempt to cope with what is happening. This simple premise is explored deeply showcasing the couple’s love and devotion to one another.

Anne’s death is foreshadowed in the film’s opening moments, an end we almost sado-masochistically come to hope for throughout the movie’s duration. This hope stems from Haneke’s affronting, and sometimes even disturbing, portrayal of the couple’s pain and suffering. Nothing about the movie feels contrived — the performance by the two leads is flawless and the way Haneke hastens to spoon-feed the audience is liberating. The film’s style is starkly European in that sense; it allows us to make up our own minds about what is being played out before us, rather than dictating it all to us. The film has no score and instead it relies on the raw emotion of each scene to carry us through, which is a brave move and one that worked very well. Through a multitude of lengthy mid shots, we observe how these people deal with the situation forced upon them. We experience what it is like to slowly lose your grip on life and simultaneously lose your grip on someone you love — both delivered with almost brutal honesty. Not a hint of sugar coating in this film.

The beauty and simplicity of such an honest portrayal of life’s struggle towards death does have a flipside, though. To completely engage in a story as sad as this one, there need to be glimmers of light, which I was left searching for. The only warmth here stemmed from Georges unwavering devotion to his wife and tiny moments in between, where flecks of happiness could be found. Beyond that, the film seemed to drag from one scene of suffering to the next, plodding slowly from struggle to struggle. The mid shots became distant at times and it seemed as though I was detached from the characters completely. Perhaps this is what stops Amour from being as moving as Haneke might have hoped it to be.

Haneke’s minimalistic and unsentimental approach to dealing with the subject of love is admirable, but a balance between light and dark could have made it riveting. Amour simply begs the question: is there such thing as being too honest?

3.5/5 stars
Crossword by Jim Fishwick

Across
5. Starting someone else’s wedding – I need gowns mending (6)
6. Oil said to be the cause of economic crisis (6)
9. Looks around beach to begin to tear flag of Theme (5,3,7)
10. Supermarket in the Maldives (4)
11. Where noise becomes leader of Theme (10)
12. Ladykiller man and two queens (11)
17. Small top to piss in New York, New York (5,5)
20. Josh Dixon seconds out from state of Theme (4)
21. Celebration in Theme is deepened in candy bananas (12,3)
22. Choose to vote after campaigns end (6)
23. Ms. Spektor is in gear, perhaps (6)

Down
1. 500 fighting carp are small (8)
2. It’s natural in Mr. Silver the statistician (6)
3. Falsification before grammatical time (8)
4. Country south of Theme where I have colour, briefly, after 11 (6)
5. Theme city loses a way to make a resolution (6)
7. Cricket team for the Spanish aren’t odd (6)
8. Don’s dad’s den repaired by miscellanea (4,3,4)
13. Jennifer of Arabia? (8)
14. Arcane coteries disturbed (8)
15. Big-government economist’s essential three points (6)
16. Model country with a European capital (6)
18. Point is unnecessary without a ship (6)
19. One who’s pulled by Theme citizen (6)

Dear Agony Ibis,

I am a middle-aged MALE who identifies with being Christian who is in no way affiliated with the University of New South Wales. I am outraged and disgusted about the front cover of issue three. This may or may not be due to my religious leanings.

— Middle-aged MALE who is in no way affiliated with UNSW

Dear middle-aged MALE who is in no way affiliated with UNSW,

You’re probably asking the wrong Ibis, considering sometimes I eat my own eggs. Basically, I have nothing more to say to you, as there is no way I can enter an intelligent debate with you when your standpoint is so clearly bonkers. And not in the Dizzee Rascal “Bonkers” way, the bad way...Come back to me when you allow women to become priests, they’ve copped enough shit already.

Tepid regards,
Ibis

Dear Agony Ibis,

I, like many other people, enjoy the thrill and excitement of moulding leftover bathroom soaps into Christmas and birthday gifts for friends and neighbours. I find this creative art form is a very cost-effective way of decorating the compact bedsitter that my roommate and I share. My problem is, unfortunately, that my roommate has no taste and is unhappy with the life-sized statues of Patty Newton which adorn our lovely apartment. My question is: with this lack of appreciation, how can I continue doing what I love in such a climate?

— Creatively Controlled

Dear Creatively Controlled,

I know exactly how you feel. My first wife used to sneer at the way I used to arrange the scavenged food I’d acquired into miniature cameos of Richard II for our chicks. I put my heart and soul into those arrangements. It really hurt me that she thought I was wasting my time. Sometimes an ibis just needs a hobby, man.

You need to confront your roommate and tell them how their stifling of your creativity is making you feel. Also, cite the sustainability aspect of such thrifty gift-making. If that doesn’t work, maybe compromise and offer to pick out the hairs attached to the soap. I know they are the bulk of the statues, but as Bono says, “Compromise is not a dirty word”. What a man. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’m off to my macrame class.

-Agonia Ibis signoff
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