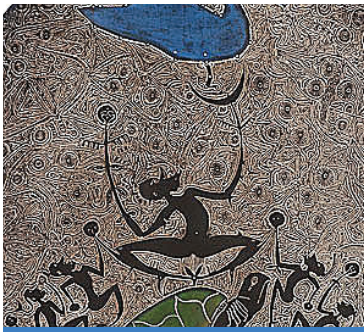




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Woroni

The Australian National University Student Newspaper | 1948 - 2008

22 May - 5 June 2008

Sliding through the cracks

Woroni reports on the Lapindo Mudslide disaster and the efforts of ANU students to help those affected.

Annabelle Craft
News

A humanitarian disaster, probably the result of human negligence, has been proceeding on our doorstep for the past two years. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people have been or soon will be left homeless, lacking food, water or medical treatment. If you haven't heard about this ongoing mudslide in Indonesia you're in good company - it has received little mainstream media coverage or political attention, despite involving one of Australia's largest gas explorers.

On the 28th of May 2006 in the Porong, Sidoarjo district of East Java, a devastating gas explosion caused hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of scolding mud to swell up and spread rapidly across the surrounding district. The mudflow has continued for almost two years and is predicted to cover ten square kilometers, rendering the land infertile and uninhabitable.

Lapindo Brandas Inc is a joint venture company that had dug a 3000-metre-deep well in a gas exploration exercise. The casing of the well cracked, causing mud to force its way to the surface and begin to spread over the surrounding area. Many scientists have argued that the mud explosion was caused by the inadequate casing around the well, though Lapindo Inc disagrees, blaming an earlier earthquake. With no end in sight, the argument over the cause of the explosion has drawn attention away from the task of establishing an effective response to the resulting disaster.

The Government initially called on Lapindo (and its stakeholders, including Australian-based gas explorer Santos, which holds an 18% interest) to accept responsibility for the disaster. Business owners claimed that the Government should declare it a natural disaster zone and allow for domestic and international governmental assistance to fix the problem. Because responsibility for the disaster has slipped between the cracks of governmental and corporate responsibility, two years on, no effective response has been mounted. Meanwhile, mud continues to spread over the surrounding



Pressurized mud has forced its way to the surface, smothering people and buildings since 2006.

area despite attempts to stop it, and the people of Sidoarjo continue to suffer.

Sarah Rennie, an Asian Studies/Law student at the ANU, recently returned from an ACICIS exchange year in Indonesia. Rennie saw first-hand the plight of the mudslide refugees. She discussed the bewilderment many of the refugees feel who believe their plight has been forgotten, or worse, ignored.

Continued page 2

Federal Labor finds a union it doesn't support

Tom Swann
News

The ACT Legislative Assembly has ceded to conditions imposed by the Federal Government on legislation recognising civil partnerships, which includes same-sex couples. The Federal Government had previously threatened to disallow the ACT on the grounds that it required ceremonies that "mimic marriage". The new Civil Partnerships Act does

not require such ceremonies.

The legislation is the same in other respects. Those living in the ACT who cannot or choose not to marry, a category that includes but is not exclusive to same-sex couples, will now be able to officiate their relationship on a 'registry'. This affords public demonstration, and identical Territorial legal status to a heterosexual marriage in such matters as wills, welfare and hospital rights, although distinct in their legal conferral. The arrangements are similar to those

in Tasmania and Victoria.

In 2006 the Coalition Federal Government disallowed the Civil Unions Act, which stated that "a civil union is different to a marriage but is to be treated for all purposes under territory law in the same way as a marriage." Labor Senators voted against the intervention, and in 2007 then Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd said that Labor policy was loud and clear: "on these matters, states and territories are answerable to their own jurisdiction."

Continued page 3

A budget for working... students?

Tom Stayner
Politics

The recently tabled Federal and ACT budgets contain some relevant announcements to universities and students, including details of the much-publicised 'Education Revolution', raising the tax-free threshold, and improvements to ACT public transport.

On budget night last Tuesday, federal Treasurer Wayne Swan

announced several initiatives for higher education, including a \$5 billion increase to form the new Education Investment Fund. This brings the fund to \$11 billion, adding to the \$6 billion already allocated by the Howard Government, and will go towards building university infrastructure.

Another \$500 million in one-off payments was announced for universities to fund the improvement of buildings and facilities in the coming months. Specifically,

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Budget roundup
From page 1

the ANU will receive a one-off payment of \$10 million this year, "recognising its unique mix of teaching and research".

New maths and science students will also benefit next year, with the Rudd government judging these skills of 'highest national priority' and eligible for the lowest rate of HECS. As a result, full-time maths and science students who start in 2009 will owe \$3,250 less per year than their later-year counterparts.

The federal budget also includes \$249 million to support the phasing out of domestic full-fee paying places, starting next year. The ANU, which does not offer any full-fee places to domestic undergraduates, is not likely to be affected by this, although it

may compete to attract students to the extra 11,000 Commonwealth-supported places.

Some however, including at the ANU, have criticised the 'Education Revolution' as not going far enough. In an article published by Crikey last week, Margaret Thornton, a professor in the College of Law, said, "there is little about the substance of education" in last Tuesday's budget. Thornton, who is also ACT Vice-President of the Association for the Public University, argued against "treating education like a commodity" and ever-increasing HECS fees.

Also important for the many students balancing work and study is the raising of the tax-free threshold to \$14,000 per year. Previously \$6000, the increase means that more low-earning

students may not pay any income tax at all.

Announced already is the tax on 'alcopops', which last week's budget papers predicted will raise \$3.1 billion in 2008-9, and will see students who like their Breezers, Cruisers or Double Blacks paying an extra 30c to \$1.30 per bottle. Although this merely brings the tax on pre-mixed drinks in line with that on other spirits, cash-strapped students may still feel its effects, even if it only leads them to choose other options for binge drinking.

The ACT budget was also released earlier this month, and contains several announcements likely to affect students. The budget, tabled on May 6, includes \$49.5 million for the replacement of 100 ACTION buses with

greener, wheelchair-accessible buses, and an additional \$13 million to provide more frequent bus services.

It also provides \$607,000 over 4 years to extend the ANU Secondary College, which offers courses in maths, science and Japanese to Canberra residents.

Students may also notice changes to the City West Precinct between ANU campus and Civic, with \$3 million allocated to the area's improvement.

Finally, the ACT budget allocates funds for an extra two Liquor Inspectors to conduct 160 more inspections per year, although it is unclear whether anything short of a Northern Territory-style military intervention could coerce some local nightspots to follow Responsible Service of Alcohol guidelines.

Lapindo mudslide
From page 1

Although some aid was initially given by both the local government and Lapindo, no real strategy has been implemented to prevent the mud seepage or any realistic aid plan established for those who have lost their homes and livelihoods.

Rennie notes that many refugees, apart from losing their homes and livelihoods, are also suffering from serious health issues. Surrounding areas face polluted water supplies, and gas leaks from the earth are causing respiratory problems. Many suffer from mental health issues caused by both seeing the explosion and watching as their communities are destroyed. Homes close to the mudslide (which will inevitably be consumed if the mud continues to seep) have lost all value; infrastructure has been destroyed, with the mud consuming major electricity power lines, railways and tollways.

Motivated by the continuing humanitarian disaster, Rennie, with fellow ANU law student Arjuna Dibley, have established the

Australian Sidoarjo Assistance Project (ASAP) to support these communities in crisis. Membership has expanded to include people from all over Australia. They hope to engage with both government and corporate bodies to secure aid for the refugees, particularly Santos, which Rennie believes has a special responsibility. As Rennie notes, "we gain so much from our relationship with our closest neighbour, so we must ask ourselves, what are we giving back?" Santos has shown promising signs so far in committing to finding a solution. In their 2007 Sustainability



The mudslide has displaced 16,000 residents and destroyed important rice and fishing industries.

Report, Santos makes specific mention of the Lapindo mudslide and their commitment to contribute to a technical solution to the mud seepage. Their expertise in engineering and the specific problems causing the mudslide make them a perfect candidate. They also state their commitment to contribute to the humanitarian relief required.

Aside from Santos, ASAP hopes that the Australian government will engage with the Indonesian Government in order to bring about effective humanitarian relief and to develop a long-term solution. At a grass-



roots level, ASAP is looking to sponsor specific community projects to help the refugees who continue to suffer. These strategies will hopefully raise awareness about the Lapindo mudslide disaster and bring relief to those who continue to live with the rising mud levels.

ASAP will be holding a fundraiser and information day called 'Mud on Our Hands' at The Front on Sunday the 1st of June at 2pm. Details may change, so to register your interest or learn more about ASAP email help-sidoarjo@gmail.com.



ANU student gets word in on 2020 vision

Joe Harrison

Met with a mixture of enthusiasm and scepticism in the media and wider society, it is yet to become clear whether the 2020 summit will have an effect on the Rudd government's policy or the future of Australia.

But the participants from the ANU themselves, at least, have had a largely positive reaction to the summit. ANUSA president Jamila Rizvi, who, after attending the summit to discuss the future of Australian governance, felt that 2020 "sparked public debate... that is a huge achievement

in itself - the summit got people talking."

The various discussion "streams" at 2020 brought forth a wide variety of issues and ideas, from those receiving wide media attention, most notably the creation of an Australian Republic, to the less sensational, including the extension of HECS-HELP and FEE-HELP to all students in post-secondary education and the ability of community services to reduce a person's HECS-HELP debt. Whether the ideas presented were as wide-ranging as possible has been questioned, with some delegates claiming publicly that their ideas were altered to suit the Government's agenda,

or that they were silenced with some discussion simply not permitted at the summit.

There has also been some question as to whether young people and students were adequately represented. The communique prepared by the delegates of the youth summit described it as "an historic step, allowing young people to shape our national agenda", and a delegate from the youth summit was included in each discussion group at Parliament House. Ms Rizvi felt that young people were well represented, and in fact one of the ideas she herself suggested, automatic voter enrolment, was included in the 2020

final report. But she also added that "some other young people in the group didn't feel like much of what they said was taken seriously." On other criticisms of the summit, such as the accusation that it was a purely symbolic gesture, she maintained that the summit was "both a practical and symbolic success." But when asked whether the ideas raised at the summit will result in real change for Australia, Ms Rizvi qualified that it "depends on the Government and whether they decide to take meaningful action on this list of ideas." It remains to be seen whether the 2020 summit will significantly affect the actions of the Rudd government.

New Hall Awaits Approval to Dock

Tully Fletcher
Editor

Following the return of a University and Student Association fact-finding mission to the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the University looks set to approve and begin construction of a new Hall on Daley Road, constructed entirely of modified shipping containers. It is understood that University Council will consider the matter at its meeting on the 30th of May. If

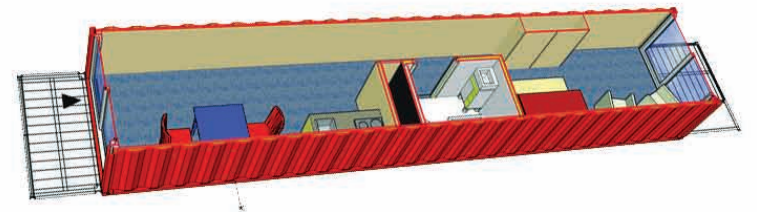
approved, the new Hall could be ready for use by January 2009.

A delegation including ANU Students Association President Jamila Rizvi, Postgraduate and Research Students Association President Melissa Lovell and the Director of University Accommodation Services Ms Marie Wensing spent two weeks inspecting modular and shipping container housing in Europe, including the award-winning 'Keetwonen' student housing complex in Amsterdam.

Shipping containers are increasingly being retrofitted into

self-contained units for a variety of uses, including apartments and hotels. A typical container development can be constructed in less than four months. The containers are stacked up to six-stories high, with balconies and walkways used to create an easily-dismantled housing complex.

University Accommodation Services (UAS) and the Students Associations (PARSA and ANUSA) will meet on the 22nd of May to finalise their submission to Council, but it is expected that they will recommend that the University immediately begin construction of a new 250-300 bed undergraduate Hall. The preferred site is the vacant land



next to Bruce Hall, and planning permission will need to be sought from the ACT Government.

The Students Associations will propose that the new Hall be managed by a full academic and pastoral care team, including Head, Dean, Sub-Deans and Senior Residential Scholars. Due to the relatively low construction costs of such a development, UAS has indicated that rooms in the proposed Hall could be rented out at rates between \$170-\$200 per week.

The construction of a new Hall would considerably ease the student housing shortage and possibly negate proposals to remove later-year residents from existing Halls.

The Student Representative Council and the Inter-Hall Council have given their support to the proposal, endorsing it at their most recent meetings and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Chubb, is understood to be a strong supporter of the plan.

Read more: Editorial P3

Labor and civil unions

From page 1

Yet at the 2007 ALP National Conference, a clause was inserted into the ALP Constitution stating that Labor would "not create schemes that mimic marriage". Threats from the Federal Government earlier this year to disallow the Bill lead to heated and prolonged negotiations on its wording and provisions.

ANU Senior Lecturer in Law, Wayne Morgan, wrote in the *Canberra Times* (Stand on same-sex unions immoral, 2 May 2008) that the Rudd Government's position is "irrational and driven by paranoia over the electoral importance of the extreme religious lobby", to whom a registry without ceremonies is amenable because it maintains the category of marriage as explicitly and exclusively heterosexual. Morgan says the position is "immoral and illegal": it emphasises that "heterosexual relationships are better than same-sex ones" and "breaches Australia's international human-rights obligations."

While there is some relief in the queer community that this compromise has allowed the legislation to pass, some feel it is not enough. ANU student Rebecca Leighton, spokesperson for ACT queer rights activist group the Campaign for Civil Unions, laments that the new civil partnerships are not only discriminatory, but "stripped of all symbolic recognition, which is half the point. ... The Christian Lobby supports it, the Liberal Party supports it. We were never going to do worse than this, so it is not particularly something to celebrate." She, and others in the CCU, were "really annoyed" with Morgan's article, because in it he allegedly encouraged the ACT Legislative Assembly to remove ceremonies from the legislation.

Wayne Morgan told *Woroni* that "I have never encouraged the ACT government to drop the ceremonies. I encouraged them not to sacrifice the practical benefits of the law over the ceremonies issue." The old version, he points out, "left no room

for choice at all in the form of ceremony couples might want", specifying even the "vows" that would be used. "People can have whatever ceremony they want now, in front of their family and friends, and I would have thought that this was the important part of the symbolism. The only thing they don't have is a government appointed celebrant to conduct the ceremony. I really don't see why so much importance has been placed on this."

In response to the controversy, Federal Attorney General Bob McClelland has pledged to make over 100 changes to Federal legislation to remove legal discrimination against same-sex couples. Both Rebecca Leighton and Wayne Morgan say McClelland has refused to confront the claim that banning same-sex marriage is itself discrimination.

The amended legislation was passed during ANU Pride Week. Rebecca Leighton said "the timing was pretty ironic", but that it failed to dampen the mood. Pride Week is an annual social rather than political event, organised by the ANUSA Sexuality Collective and queer group Jellybabies, which aims to "celebrate sexual diversity and tolerance on campus." Marina Salas, ANUSA Sexuality Officer, says the event is important because "the more the queer community is 'seen', the more accepted it becomes."

This year it involved a "queer movie night, sports games, a champagne picnic, a pancake breakfast in Union Court and of course a big night out at Cube." "Not to say we are not affected or touched by [the week's events]...", Marina said, "but many of the queer students at ANU prefer to separate politics from fun." Nevertheless, politics has found a place on campus too. ANUSA Education Officer Anya Aidman explained to *Woroni* that "both queer and non-queer students and the university community at large have been highly vocal in supporting civil unions with ceremonies, and many attended a rally on Saturday with Minister Andrew Barr for the cause."



Llewellyn Hall returns

\$10m later, students have somewhere to perform

Charles Prestidge-King
News Editor

15 months after its almost total destruction by storm, Llewellyn Hall has re-opened following a \$10 million repair and refurbishment. Extensive visual and acoustic changes were made, with adjustable stage backings, new seating, and new side walls introduced.

Amongst improvements considered was the Hall's ceremonial function as the University's Great Hall, a job for which it is now better suited. The Hall's refit had long been on the agenda, but the storm moved forward proceedings, leading Head of the School of Music Professor John Luxton to last week comment that "every cloud has a silver lining."

Nevertheless, the School's refurbishment came at a significant cost to the university. Of

the \$10 million cost of refurbishment, only \$3 million came from insurance, said Vice Chancellor Professor Ian Chubb.

The Hall underwent a dramatic visual overhaul, which sees the 'concrete and rails' aesthetics of the old hall replaced with modern furnishings and acres of blonde wood, lending an air of warmth and inclusion that improves intimacy between musicians and the audience. "You can see the effort everyone has put in, there isn't a screw or nail ... out of place", said Professor Luxton. "It's looking like it had ten million dollars spent on it", added Professor Chubb, sardonically.

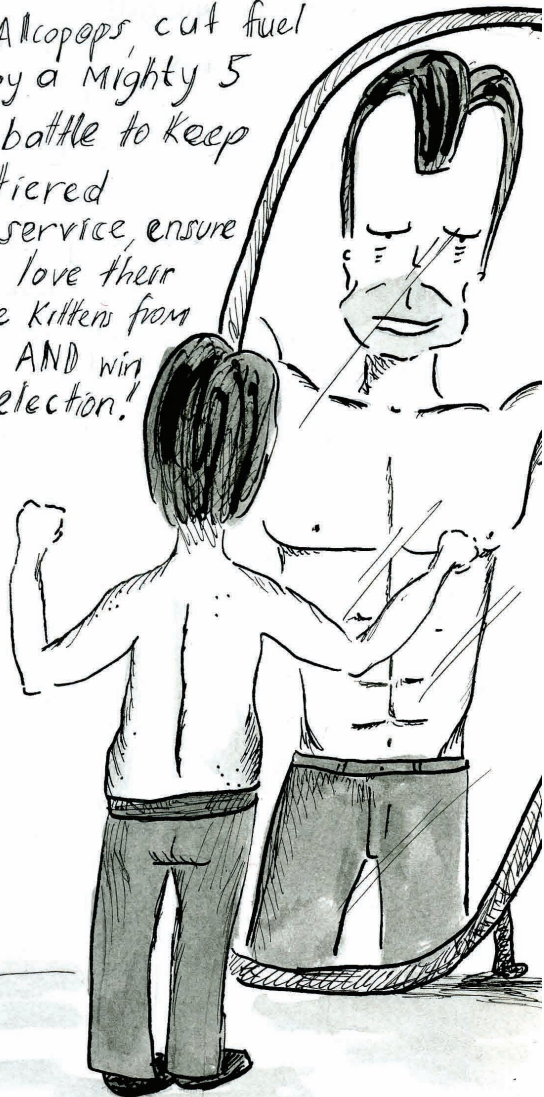
The Hall was also treated to a major acoustic overhaul. Andrew Nicol, an engineer at Arup Acoustics, the company that designed the new acoustics, explained that the goal was to keep the the acoustic quality of the hall "the same, if not improved".

Virginia Taylor, a flautist at the School, gave the project the big tick, saying that Llewellyn Hall had "always been a good hall for music", and that the acoustic refit would make it competitive amongst Australia's best, if not perhaps the best itself.

A black-tie gala concert was held on the 9th May to celebrate its re-opening, with dignitaries, staff, and School of Music students invited. After the concert, however, controversy emerged as bar staff were given instructions not to serve alcohol to students after a certain time. This situation – where students are at once treated as worthy of playing in a \$10 million concert hall, whilst considered unable to moderate their own behaviour – is unfortunate, but appears to be the only blot on what is otherwise a significant achievement both for the School of Music and the University.



And I will block the outrageous tax on Alcopops, cut fuel excise by a mighty 5 cents, battle to keep a two tiered medical service, ensure all Mothers love their babies, save Kittens from tall trees AND win the next election!



Objects in Mirror may appear larger than life

14/5/08
M. Talley

LETTERS

Sex work fun and lucrative

Dear Woroni,

Umm... Is it just me or did other people also get a whiff of deja-vu with Jane Outteridge's article on students in the sex industry last issue? Hello - that was, like, so last year: *Woroni* already published an article on the same topic in 2007.

Anyway, I am one of those students you journos seem so fascinated about - whilst completing my degree, I work part time as a stripper in a well-known Canberra club. However, unlike most uni students, who earn shit pay for long hours in a repetitive and soulless job with an ego-tripping boss, my job allows me to have fun, express myself through dance and drama, stay fit and earn great money in short hours, leaving me time to concentrate on my studies.

I wonder why it is that *Woroni* doesn't publish articles about the moral depravity of working as an underpaid bar attendant or waitress - I can hardly imagine the emotional damage they must suffer being told they are only worth \$15 an hour, LOL. Just kidding. But seriously, Outteridge refers to the "social stigma, rejection and persecution", which some students in the sex industry might suffer - but what about the stigma of being a check out chick? Surely those Supabarn outfits are enough to make one a social pariah?

But anyway, thanks *Woroni*

for reminding me how much I love my job!

Yours, Sasha Tonnitto

Get a girlfriend, stop whining

Dear Woroni,

Reading David McGill's review of the Big Night Out, I could not help but wonder if perhaps he may have missed the point of the event? It should be remembered that the Big Night Out was never intended to be an exercise in artistic excellence and musical virtuosity, but rather an evening of fun and dancing in which Daley Road residents could meet their counterparts from other colleges, and those musicians amongst our number who had ceased guitar lessons at the end of year twelve could drag our dusty axes from under our beds and give them a brief and entertaining airing.

We do not expect World-Cup-worthy performances on the soccer field for the Inter-Hall sports shield and, similarly, we do not require our Inter-Hall band competition to produce acts worthy of a Grammy nomination.

My advice for your reviewer should he attend the Big Night Out again? Wear a jacket, buy a drink, and get a girlfriend.

Yours, Laura Wynne.

Alcohol taxes a wise choice

Dear Woroni,

Regarding David Butler's article, I fully agree that increasing the tax on alcopops won't solve the problem. But your argument shocks me and is in my opinion completely wrong. The fact that this has been a problem for a long time and the fact that this measure aims at young people is not a reason against increasing taxes, but rather a reason for doing so! You most probably can't change the 50 year old alcoholics anymore - but you can try to make sure that the younger generation (that is Australia's future) doesn't make the same error.

The fact that Australia has very few smokers compared to Europe (where in some countries more than half of the people still smoke) is in my opinion at least partially an effect of the very low tobacco prices that we had in Europe for the past decades. Taxes really can make a difference.

If you did something better instead of just filling up your head with alcohol, you would most probably have other (even better) stories to tell. Think about that.

Yours, Dominik Bischoff

Jesus filled four full volumes

Dear Woroni,

I'm impressed at the quality and breadth of news in your April 10 edition. I particularly enjoyed reading

about Earth Hour and ANU student politics. I hope your experiences of the green, blue, and red people are more positive as the semester continues.

Compared with other free newspapers, *Woroni* is more entertaining than the *Chronicle*, more relevant than the *Word*, and has lifted itself out of the gutter compared to previous years. Keep up the good work!

Just one minor peeve - Anthony Hall's comparison of Clive James to Jesus (I can hear the groans at this point...). Jesus' admirers wrote four stories about his life that have become extremely popular. So popular that they're bound together in the same book - leading to Anthony's confusion. Unfortunately, Clive had to write all four of his volumes by himself. And I imagine they're sold separately to maximise his sales...

Yours, Tim Wilson-Brown

Protesters lazy and smug

Dear Woroni,

My first thought about your lead article on the protests at the torch relay was that this was old news. As a student, my second thought was to question my first thought. Why was the situation in Tibet old news? The poor treatment of Tibetans has been going on for some time now and still is. Why has the treatment of Tibetans fallen out of the news cycle? Have people stopped caring? If so, why? When I came across my final answer, I thought I would have been more shocked.

Tibet's just not cool anymore.

The torch relay has come and gone and now that there won't be media coverage, protesting, I'm told, is not as important because no one will hear.

Many of my friends went to the torch relay to protest about Chinese treatment of Tibetans. I asked them why they didn't protest the day before or after. The answer was invariably that 'no one will listen'.

Sorry? Did I hear that right? Isn't the point of protest to bring about change by bringing light to issues that lie beneath the surface of general conversation?

To middle class white Australians (of which I am one), protesting is a joke. The things that are wrong with our lives are that petrol is too expensive and that interest rates are going up. We don't even protest about that. Instead we talk about the plight of the Iraqis, the Tibetans or the third world.

When it comes right down to it, middle class white Australia protests so they can feel like they care. So they can feel good about not giving other people money to feed themselves. So that they forget about the horrible treatment refugees have received

Continued next page



EDITORIAL

A fine 'Bugget', but little for working students

Mispronouncing 'budget' wasn't the only mistake the Treasurer made on Budget night 2008. Despite poor oratory, he handed down a fine budget and the Appropriations Bills this year began addressing areas neglected over the past thirteen years. However, it was a budget that delivered much for universities and little for the students who populate them.

The further \$6 billion (on top of the existing \$5 billion) for much-needed capital works in the tertiary sector is to be applauded. *Woroni* also welcomes the immediate injection of a further \$24 million directly into our own University. We hope that at least some of this money finds its way into facilities and services for undergraduate students.

The reduction in Higher Education Contribution Scheme payments for maths and science students, and the substantial rise in the tax-free threshold for low income earners are welcomed by

this paper. Next financial year, most of Australia's working students will find themselves several hundred dollars better off as a result.

But, we ask, why did this Budget not address the extreme inequity in providing Austudy payments to full-time students over 25, but not to those under 25? Why did it not address the inbuilt penalisation of students who work while receiving Youth Allowance? And why, if the government believes HECS is too high for some students, were HECS levels not reviewed for all disciplines?

Labor's first federal Budget for thirteen years was a Budget for working families but it seems that working students must wait until next time.

All aboard container housing

Woroni encourages University Council and the Vice-Chancellor to endorse the joint ANUSA/PARSA proposal to construct a new Hall on Daley Road out of retrofitted shipping containers, and applauds all of our student representatives for making a concerted effort in support of such a project.

As the Vice-Chancellor noted at the most recent University Council, the increased demand for places at our University has placed a significant strain on existing accommodation. This crisis must be addressed now. It may or may not be an attractive development, but there are many ANU buildings and residences already erected that distinctly lack aesthetic appeal.

The alternative to building a new Hall is potentially the forced eviction of existing later-year residents from University controlled residences, a far less satisfactory move and one certain to severely damage residence culture.

The construction of an affordable and temporary Hall, complete with academic and pastoral support arrangements, is the most desirable option. The University will not only assist first-years and current residents by increasing the supply of on-campus housing, but will also reduce the strain on student rental accommodation in Canberra's suburbs.

We look forward to reporting on a success for student advocacy, and a sound decision by the University Council.

From last page
(yet another issue that has dropped off the current affairs radar). If you believe in a cause, I mean really care about treatment of your fellow human being, protest yes, but do it regularly. Bring the media to your cause, not the other way around.

Yours, Sam Hall

One world in disunity

Dear *Woroni*,

I find it ironic that the motto of Beijing 2008 is “*One World, One Dream*.” The reality is that at the moment, controversial issues surrounding the Olympics such as Tibet and human rights

abuses have been so much more divisive than unifying. The ideals the Olympics purport such as increased understanding and harmony are not going to be achieved until people, on both sides of the debate, start engaging in proper, appropriate discussions; thinking more and, most importantly, listening more to each other.

Yours, Sue-Lin Wong

Torch relay some ‘success’

Dear *Woroni*

Acclaimed by ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope as “a raging success,” the Olympic torch and its rocky passage through

our nation’s capital a month ago continues to ignite fervid debate about issues of freedom and self-rule in Central Asia.

In fact, what was the actual success? While the torch relay went ahead with much flourish and fanfare, and the protests, largely, remained peaceful, there still lingers a somewhat unclear question over what the events of April 24 represented.

Traditionally, the Olympics represented a time of social harmony and unity, a time when differences were set aside in the mutual passion for the glory of the Games. People of all backgrounds came together to cel-

brate an international exhibition of the world’s finest athletes. The Games witnessed a mélange of different cultures, a symbolic gathering of the young and old, as everyone united in the shared dream of victory and success, but also of community and peace.

Unfortunately, last month’s torch relay brought this vision to its knees. Publicity turned towards political protests from both Tibetan and Chinese camps, as the sea of red flags and banners, dotted by the occasional yellow, gave the event new meaning. Shared joy for the Games crumbled away amidst palpable screaming and irate

chanting, somewhat redolent of pro-Nazi demonstrations during the 1936 relay.

Surrounded by a phalanx of police at every turn, and with the jingoistic yelling in the background, spectators could well be forgiven for mistaking the relay for some kind of Mephistophelean ritual. The “Journey of Harmony” stumbled off its path. Indeed, “rage” there was; but success is questionable.

Yours, Josh Marks

Send your (short) letters to woroni@anu.edu.au. We may edit for size or spelling.

First they came for the latté drinkers...

ANU’s most popular academic blogger imagines the Government’s response to a milk drought.

Andrew Leigh

ANU Economics Professor

Once upon a time, there was a government that thought that milk was very important to human dignity. So they decided that milk should be very cheap, and ordered that it be sold for no more than 10 cents per litre. Some people commented that other countries sold it for several times as much, but the state and territory milk boards set their price anyway.

Then one day, the milking machines started to break down. No-one expected it. The Treasurer said it was very unlikely - the kind of thing that only happened every thousand years. No-one knew when the milking machines would be fixed, and there

was a lot less milk available than before.

But because milk was still very cheap, people wanted lots of it. So the government decided it would have to set some rules on proper use of milk. To solve the problem, they instituted Stage 1 milk restrictions, under which milk users were banned from using milk to feed to cats. To enforce the rules, they set up a hotline, where people could call to report their neighbours using milk the wrong way.

To the government’s surprise, this didn’t solve the problem. At 10 cents a litre, people still used a lot of milk. Stopping families feeding it to cats didn’t solve the fact that it was still very cheap. And lots of the milking machines were still broken.

So the government instituted Stage 2 milk restrictions, under

which people were not allowed to put milk in their coffee. Because some voters loved milky coffee, they created an exception for Sunday afternoon coffee. But if you saw your neighbour drinking a latte on a weekday, you could call a special hotline, and they would be fined.

The government was sure that this would ensure that there was enough milk for anyone, but it turned out that it didn’t help. Some silly people called for the milk price to be increased, but the sensible politicians pointed out that this wouldn’t be right, because milk was a necessity of life, and poor people wouldn’t be able to afford it if it was more expensive. And besides, raising the milk price was politically impossible. The NSW Government knew that if they tried it, the Sydney Horror and the popular

broadcaster Alan Laws would hound them from office.

So they introduced Stage 3 milk restrictions, under which households with even street numbers could have milk on their weeties on even days, and households with odd street numbers could have it on odd days. If it was not your day, then the only reasonable use of milk was to feed babies and old people who had lost their teeth. Announcing the plan, the ministers said they were sorry, but everyone had been surprised when the milking machines broke, and fixing them was proving very hard. In the meantime, the people would all have to make sacrifices together.

There were one or two people who pointed out that perhaps if the country charged more for milk, like other countries did, then there would be more of an

incentive to fix the milking machines. But lots of people shouted that this was a very silly idea, because charging more than 10 cents a litre for milk was unAustralian.

One man came up with a very clever plan that gave everyone their own milk quota, which they could then sell to other people. It would only need a couple of hundred government officials to run it, and he promised it would achieve a result that was very like raising the milk price - without actually raising the milk price. But it was rather too complex for most people to understand.

So they kept on selling milk at 10 cents a litre, and instituted Stage 4 milk restrictions...

You can read the Professor’s blog at www.andrewleigh.com

Kirby your Enthusiasm

Other High Court Justices may question Kirby’s dissents, but not law students.

Ellen Chapple

There seem to be three main sources of humour in law lectures. The first is serious but ironic injuries in cases. The second is people making protestations of innocence with poor grammar. The third, refreshingly not of the point and laugh variety, is virtually any mention of Justice Kirby. In many lectures, the phrase ‘and Kirby dissented’ followed by a wry grimace is enough to raise gleeful tittering.

An element of this might be the appeal of its exclusivity (now we are law students and we get this kind of subtle commentary, *LOL*), but Justice Kirby has a cult following which transcends the

one-off laugh. It is arguably as much a cult of personality as it is of recognition of intelligence. Most students can name a favourite dissent, usually *Al-Kateb v*

“Stories circulate, my favourite (and I have no knowledge of its truth) being that once when his partner, a postman, was ill, and couldn’t find a replacement, Kirby personally completed the local delivery round”

Godwin, Thomas v Mowbray or *Green v The Queen*. But mixed in with this worship of legal reasoning is a persistent preoccupation with the personal. He is available in a way that the other

Justices aren’t - the majority of students even vaguely interested in him will have seen him speak at least once, at a debating tournament, mooting competition or

law function. His public appearances are marked by a manner that is engagingly charismatic. He speaks with a studied and self-conscious kind of arrogance that is justified as it is often al-

most painfully obvious that everyone in the room wants to be him. The result, Facebook’s ‘The Justice Michael Kirby Appreciation Society’ is a mixture of intelligent, passionate response to his judgements and a worryingly passionate response to his presence, including a fan of his ‘soft hands’. Almost three thousand law students agree that ‘the High Court of Australia should really just be composed of Michael Kirby’. It seems almost inescapable. On a bus trip, I have had his house enthusiastically pointed out to me in the distance. Stories circulate, my favourite (and I have no knowledge of its truth) being that once when his partner, a postman, was ill, and couldn’t find a replacement, Kirby personally completed the local delivery round. Students seem to

know where and when he goes on vacation. I was told yesterday that he gets fresh flowers delivered to his office every week. Yet few students can give the first names of the rest of the High Court Justices.

But the prevalence of law student stalkers might not be all bad news for Kirby. An interesting accompaniment to this perhaps creepy attention is the enthusiasm students have for his judgements. The result is that, for many students, the decisions of the rest of the High Court bench are merely peripheral to his notable dissents. Effectively, while in some cases his reasoning has yet to find currency with the rest of the bench, there is a generation of emerging legal practitioners with an awful lot of respect for it.

BODYPUMP: A Sociocultural Critique



Leah Ginnivan
Opinion Editor

I have been hopeless at sport my entire life. As a child - a veritable lone wolf among my peers- I would angrily refuse to play team sport, mainly in case I lost and it

“Long hard strokes, now, take me hard to the finish! Yes, yes, oh yes!” she roared as she gyrated under her massive barbell.

was someone else’s fault. This abnormally brittle primary school psychology had the parallel effect of making me almost entirely uncoordinated and sadly pathetic in life skills such as throwing, catching and kicking. However, given the mounting evidence that it’s apparently important in staying alive and so forth, it has become necessary for me to find other ways to exercise.

In this spirit, a friend and I

rocked up to the gym’s Bodys-tep class one autumn afternoon. The instructor looked like a retired sea captain at a barbecue, who had just slipped into a pair of time-worn terry-towelling shorts to mind his grandkids in the baby pool. How curious, I thought - I came here for a sweaty, cool dance-moves-busting workout. Regrettably, this sea captain had learned trash talk and had the heart/lung capacity of Phar Lap circa 1931. Within seconds of entering the class room, some ungodly remix of “Filthy/Gorgeous” began pumping. Within minutes, we were

informed, to the beat of a step move, that “you’re dirty, girls, you’re dirty and you’re filthy and you’re nasty! Now lift a leg.” Advocating an arse-slapping addendum to the routine, he exhorted us to “Break the skin! Come on, slap it!” explaining: “You don’t need him girls! Go on! Give him a slap!” My friend and I furtively exchanged smirks as we struggled to the beat. We had stumbled across a comedic goldmine.

I left that day feeling uncoordinated and yet oddly fascinated. And so, I vowed to return; to learn, to understand. This time, it was Bodypump (“A rapid fat-burning class that uses barbells to give you the fastest way to tone and condition muscles!”), and our instructor was a hard-bodied young woman with a breathy accent wearing little more than her undies, a singlet, and fake nails.

“Long hard strokes, now, take me hard to the finish! Yes, yes, oh yes!” she roared as she gyrated under her massive barbell. As we neared the end - the climax, if you will - of each set, she cried out “Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!” followed by a heavy sigh and a “stay... stay... I need you to stay... don’t go” before she instructed us to lower our bars.

There seemed to be huge divide between this, and what I could conceivably imagine most of the classes’ attendees lives were like. Was it not mildly absurd to think of people finishing this class, showering, and then toddling off to their real lives-perhaps into a ‘Gender, Sexuality and Culture’ tute, their job at Nando’s, then to bed? In a room full of mainly young university students, I was puzzled by the acceptance of this outlandish, hypersexualised affair. They



Indulge an instructor’s power trip and this body could be yours.

stare, stony-faced, unflinching, dutifully lifting their weights as a muscled stranger basically gets their freak on.

In another class, apparently, the middle-aged instructor occasionally bares her six-pack and tells her class, quite seriously, if they want a body like hers, they have to work for it. In nearly any other situation, this would be hilarious. Consider the lengths we generally go to in our ‘real’ lives to avoiding such crassness. Discussion of our own or other people’s bodies, weight gain or loss, is often vacuous at best and ma-

licious at worst. Is group fitness, then, meant to at least partially be a cathartic opportunity for these festering insecurities to be “worked out,” with the instructor as the model of what we could be? Or is it more likely that the majority of class attendees are actually just trying to exercise in spite of, not because of, the strangeness of the setting and the instruction? Perhaps one day, I will try and unlock the mysteries of the sea-captain and the exhibitionist. Until then, group fitness remains an exhausting and supremely comical affair.

Truth is less popular than fiction

It’s easy to construct a compelling fantasy when nobody is checking your facts.

Jamie Freestone
Columnist

In 2004, a friend of mine showed me a DVD documentary. It outlined the dubious case that the 9/11 attacks were perpetrated not by al-Qaeda as I had naively suspected, but rather by hawkish figures within the CIA in order to provide the political impetus to invade Iraq. I will not mention here that Afghanistan was invaded before Iraq and that Iraq’s invasion was ultimately justified by Weapons of Mass Destruction. I was not all that surprised by the claim as I was a bit of conspiracy theory enthusiast; I enthused in debunking conspiracy theories, not propagating them. I immediately researched the claim and found that an esteemed engineering journal, *Popular Mechanics*, had published a comprehensive point-by-point refutation of the main claims of the conspiracy theory. Case closed.

I was subpoenaed back to the matter recently at a mate’s barbecue I was attending. I abruptly found that I had become the only

person out of eight present who felt the conspiracy was bunkum. Two were undecided and the remainder were utterly convinced of its veracity. They had been exposed to a considerable weight of evidence and they were incredulous as to how I had remained duped by outlandish stories of terrorist cells and extremism.

These people were not disaffected, paranoid schizophrenics. They were multi-generational and comprised a fairly mainstream sample of Australian society; occupational sectors represented included law enforcement, real estate and engineering. I refrained from becoming indignantly angry with these folks, though there was a time when I would have considered them deluded, or at the very least intellectually lazy. But I have since accepted that virtually all people believe some irrational things.

What makes belief in a theory like the 9/11 conspiracy fascinating and challenging, is that the weight of evidence is in one sense in favour of the conspiracy. Once a major event occurs — the

death of Diana, Hurricane Katrina, the moon landing — there is an official account about what happened, which is accepted by the mainstream media and wider society. After a while, the inevitable gaps which appear in any account of any complex event are exploited by conspiracy theorists, with an asymmetrical burden of proof resting upon the official account. An alternative is then put forward and copious amounts of research are dedicated to building this case. Through weight of effort and the considerable, lucrative market available to purveyors of such nonsense, the case becomes convincing to the layperson. By this stage there is no monetary or profes-

sional incentive to debunk these claims. The experts who matter have no time for the conspiracy, and those laypeople that dismiss it do so without further thought. It is left to benevolent, amateur experts to go out of their way to conduct unsung research just to reinforce what was once self-evident. And alas there are not too many benevolent, self-motivated, amateur experts out there.

So in a bizarre reversal of the usual evaluative method of ratio-

nal humans, one must actually go against what is ostensibly the more convincing case. Of course, it is only more convincing if you consider the conspiracy theorists’ literature alone. If the same standard were applied to picking

holes in their account, than there would be no alternative theory left.

Some may say I should have stood up for that romantic ideal, The Truth. Some may claim I gave in, a la Galileo to the Vatican. In response I leave you with the knowledge that the implications of the conspiracy being true have in no way manifested themselves in these people’s political lives. Were they to internalise the notion that the most powerful government in the world were corrupt and indeed murderous to their own population and possessing of enough god-like power to contrive the most elaborate artifice of all time, they would be panicking in the streets. Instead, the thought that there is some unseen force at work, comparable to similar notions of god, fate or karma, is comforting. It serves to keep back the dread that the universe is devoid of magic, purpose and meaning. Rather than bring the mood down at the barbie with this last point, though, you will either be reassured or disappointed that I instead opted for another beer.

“Were they to internalise the notion that the most powerful government in the world were corrupt and indeed murderous to its own population and possessing of enough god-like power to contrive the most elaborate artifice of all time, they would be panicking in the streets.”

At least we got tax breaks



Alessandro Antonello
Columnist

In the annual course of human events, the Australian Commonwealth budget invariably offers itself as a mediocre affair. Treasurer Wayne Swan has helpfully confirmed my expectation that the first Labor budget in some time would be another exercise in alternately torpor-inducing speechifying and rage-inducing glibness.

From my jaded perspective, the most disappointing aspect of the budget speech was Swan's decision to utter only twice that choice phrase 'downward pressure on inflation'. As I rely on that phrase and its overuse for my comedic shtick, I felt like the tax cut I received was Wayne's little victory over me; maybe

I'll win next time. Thankfully, however, the treasurer did mutter that other disgusting phrase 'working families' twelve times, and introduced the possibility that 'nation building' will be an over-used phrase in the future. It's like the bloody Western Front with me and Wayne.

Numbers and economic indicators were blatantly thrown around in an attempt to impress tax payers who know little about the economic forces that have made their mortgages more difficult to service that the government knows what it is doing.

It seems that this budget and the political discourse surrounding it are a mild triumph of the Howard Legacy.

What Labor has done is run, as fast and as far as it can, with the notion that economics and finance are now central and guiding facets of Australia's identity—they have followed the Liberals into the abyss. It is the triumph of the conservative-bourgeois spirit: you will succeed and be a good citizen if you make money, live in your own house (with an enormous mortgage),

work productively and not bother other people or the government. Rudd and Swan are now using economics and the price of crap, just as Howard did, to fashion national identity - though, with less race than Howard.

What Howard and Rudd have done and are doing is creating a culture and community of

"this culture of economics has created a class of teenagers more concerned with home ownership... than actively seeking out STIs and binge drinking with drop-kick friends"

economics. The economists among *Woroni's* readership may suggest that this is inevitable and indeed desirable - that a nation state operating with a proper respect for economics and 'the market' is a good thing. The problem, however, is that the centrality of economics in modern political discourse belies the fact that the overwhelming majority of Australians are wholly ignorant economic actors. The government's policy of talking up

its own part in tackling inflation has absolved mortgage holders and those with incomprehensible personal credit issues of their responsibility in acting with economic awareness.

Moreover, it seems this culture of economics has created a class of teenagers who are more concerned with home ownership

and their eventual life-destroying mortgages, rather than actively seeking out STIs and heavy binge drinking with drop-kick friends on dilapidated public transport.

This predicament reminds me of the Italian Risorgimento. That infamous phrase about Italian nationalism - 'we have created Italy, now we must create Italians' - may well be rephrased for Australia: John Howard made an economically-discouraged Australia, now Kevin Rudd must

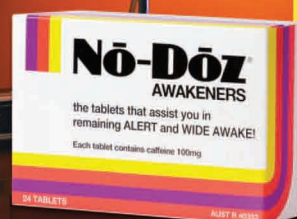
make economically-literate and wise Australians.

I hope we look back at this period of history as propagating one big lie about inflation and economics. The Reserve Bank of Australia has continually warned that personal and corporate credit and debt are possibly the main offenders causing inflation. Though it has suggested that government expenditure has had some inflationary effect, to this day it continues to see non-government actors as the trouble makers. Even if the government was a more significant inflationary pressure, many initial reactions seem to be that the budget contained little in the way of inflation-fighting measures. This budget, nor any stated government policy, has taken as its task encouraging citizens and corporations to take some responsibility and some caution. And I haven't even mentioned China's insatiable appetite for raw materials, another major cause of inflation.

Thanks for the tax cut, Wayne. I'll be spending my extra money to put downward pressure on inflation.

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Morgellons: mystery or madness?

A new disease is wreaking havoc on the skin and nerves of healthy people.



Joy Thompson
Research

A strange new disease has previously healthy people describing the sensation of having parasites crawling under their skin. They are afflicted by lesions that often heal abnormally and extrude blue, red or black fibres. Chronic pain, fatigue and psychological symptoms are also common, including paranoia and depression in severe cases.

One of the first cases occurred in 2001. It involved a two year-old child from Pennsylvania with what appeared to be scabies. His mother treated him with creams, which had no effect. She then found bundles of fibres protruding from his skin. After receiving little help from the doctors she contacted, she set up a not-for-profit organisation to attract research into

the newly named Morgellons disease. The response was staggering: 12,106 families have registered with the Morgellons Research Foundation (MRF). Cases are not restricted to the USA, although most reports are made in Texas, California and Florida: they come from 15 countries, including Australia.

Many doctors and dermatologists are sceptical of Morgellons. Patients with Morgellons symptoms are commonly rediagnosed with a well-documented, though rare, psychological disorder called delusional parasitosis (DP). Like Morgellons disease, DP is characterised by sensations of itching or crawling under the skin and lesions, but the lesions are generally self-inflicted. DP patients also suffer from an unshakeable belief that their symptoms are caused by infections or parasites, regardless of evidence to the contrary.

Some medical professionals even believe that the increasing publicity given to Morgellons disease is harmful to public health. In a hard-hitting review, Caroline S Koblenzer, MD, suggested that the growing body of information could be confusing

for DP patients and make them less likely to accept medication or psychiatric referral. "Clearly" she writes, "as more and more of our patients discover this site, there will be an ever greater waste of valuable time and resources on fruitless research into fibers, fluffs, irrelevant bacteria, and innocuous worms and insects."

Information on Morgellons could cause a DP patient distress but most Morgellons sufferers do not fit the DP pattern. DP often occurs in people with underlying psychiatric conditions, and similar symptoms are caused by cocaine and amphetamine abuse. The majority of Morgellons patients are psychologically normal before the onset of the disease. This is in spite of the psychological symptoms that arise as the disease progresses, which may have contributed to the confusion. Then there is the question of the two year-old described above, and other child patients: their symptoms are not drug-related and they are arguably too young for a diagnosis of DP.

Meanwhile, as the number of Morgellons cases continue to increase, US Centres for Disease Control have started to act. Last

year, they launched a web page devoted to Morgellons disease, which they termed 'Unexplained Dermopathy', and launched an epidemiological study in January. Other independent researchers have also been investigating the condition their results only triggering more questions.

Most research efforts have focussed on the peculiar fibres extruded from the skin. Randy Wy-more, who started the Centre for the Investigation of Morgellons Disease at Oklahoma State University, and his colleague Rhonda Casey were baffled by their appearance. Not only did fibres submitted by different patients look very similar, they did not resemble any common environmental fibres. According to a review appearing in *New Scientist*, a follow-up investigation with a police forensics team confirmed their findings. When the fibres were heated to 370°C in order to determine the chemical makeup, they darkened but remained intact. This is staggering: most organic matter is vapourised and inorganic matter reduced to ashes at such temperatures.

Even without the fibres, the disease would remain puzzling.

According to the Morgellons Research Foundation website, many Morgellons patients are in an immunocompromised state and are susceptible to unusual bacterial, viral or parasitic infections. Vitaly Citovsky, a biochemist at Stony Brook University, even found the microorganism *Agrobacterium* in Morgellons lesions, but not in control samples. This bacterium can insert genetic material into plants, and is often used to produce genetically modified crops. Whether or not *Agrobacterium* causes the symptoms is unknown, but Citovsky's group has previously demonstrated that it can insert DNA into human cells in the laboratory.

The scientific and medical communities are not much closer to understanding the cause of Morgellons disease, or if it even exists, than they were when it first appeared. For some sufferers, at least, the disease may not simply be a figment of their imagination. If this is the case, it only makes the situation more worrying: for an unheard-of disease to wreak havoc on the skin, nervous system and immune system of healthy people, means that something is badly wrong.

About Schmidt

Observing supernovae, the universe's accelerating expansion, and its beginnings through black holes – all in a days work for ANU's new man in Washington.



Katja Grace
Health (usually)

Last month Dr Brian Schmidt, of the ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics, was appointed to America's National Academy of Science which was set up by Abraham Lincoln to advise the US government on what areas of science it should be investing money and effort. Dr Schmidt told *Woroni* the organization produces a report a day, with his role being to help edit and produce some of the reports in his area of expertise.

Dr Schmidt said he would be informing US government policy on some of "the big questions",

such as, should the US build a large new radio telescope? Should they be searching for extraterrestrials? And should they be putting money into a linear collider?"

Three astronomers were amongst the seventy two new members added to the organizations two thousand strong collection of scientists this year. Dr Schmidt said being chosen as a member is "certainly an honour and a privilege."

Primarily Dr Schmidt studies supernovae, or exploding stars, which he calls "the largest bangs in the universe since the big one." To some, supernovae may seem like just more irrelevant specks of light in the night sky. However, if you like your computer, your car, or being alive, consider that none of this could be without supernovae. You'd have an iron deficiency to take your breath away, not to mention your planet. "The big bang made hydrogen and helium. These big stars, before they explode, can make things up to those like oxygen," Dr Schmidt explains, "the Earth is basically

made out of remnants of supernovae."

It was supernovae that allowed Dr Schmidt's group to discover the universe's accelerating expansion. A few years ago he led a program that found the universe wasn't sticking to its supposed principles. While we are slaves to gravity, the universe seems impervious to its pull. It just expands faster and faster. This is pretty surprising as gravity should be pulling everything back together.

Measuring distance is tricky in astronomy, but the supernova is an interstellar tape measure. His team could see "basically how many watts [the supernova] put out, like a light bulb, and the fainter they are the further away they are." Using this data Dr Schmidt's team could see it was expanding at over the expected speed.

Dr Schmidt and his colleagues think "there's some energy or something tied to space itself in some weird way." "We call it dark energy, but [it's] more of a concept right now than something

you can put your hands on." He concedes we probably won't ever be able to put our hands on it, but understanding this energy is an attractive alternative.

Also on Dr Schmidt's to do list is to figure out what happened after the initial unprovoked explosion of everything. He is also asking how the first stars and galaxies formed in the universe 13 billion years ago. "The first stars formed when the universe cooled off and collapsed enough for exciting things to start happening. Trying to understand how that happened is a real fundamental question for, I think, this decade," Dr Schmidt said.

To help find an answer, Dr Schmidt is leading a program at Mount Stromlo to build a new telescope called SkyMapper. The telescope, Schmidt said, will take an image of every part of the southern sky and record the fundamental properties for more than a billion stars in this galaxy. Among those billion stars are a few of the very first stars that formed. "By looking and finding these needles in the hay-

stack we can actually go through and hopefully reconstruct what happened to make these stars look the way they do. It's sort of like finding the first cells in your body. In our body those cells are dead, but in the universe, it turns out those stars are alive still. We can find them," Dr Schmidt said.

Another plan for SkyMapper is to find the first black holes that formed right when the universe was first forming its stars. The research team hope they can use these black holes "to probe the universe back then directly," said Dr Schmidt. In the process the team will look at every single object in the southern sky and amass Australia's largest database. The project will gather about a petabyte (a thousand terabytes) of data.

Dr Schmidt holds that his selection to America's National Academy of Sciences came as a surprise to him, with the reasons for the honour "slightly obscure." However, with credentials and research projects such as these to his name, there can be no doubt no one else was at all shocked.

State of the Association: Homeless

Jamila Rizvi
ANUSA President

If there is one issue that we deal with in ANUSA, no fail, every single academic day – its accommodation. Students living on campus, students living in the suburbs, students living at home, students living in share-houses, students receiving rent assistance, students who are ineligible; it doesn't matter what situation, when it comes to housing, most ANU students are doing it tough.

With a vacancy rate of less than 2% if you're lucky enough to find somewhere you like, it's usually going to be a stretch to af-

ford. If you decide you can make that stretch, then the chances of a landlord choosing to rent to students over young professionals are still slim.

In the past, students who live on campus usually get sick of the whole communal bathroom concept by the end of second year. But when the chances of finding secure, affordable accommodation, off campus are so dim - can we blame later year hall/college students for not wanting to move out? Probably not. But all the same, combine this new phenomenon with the increased numbers of international and interstate students and what do you get? An on-campus accommodation crisis - to add to the one that already exists every-

where else in the inner-suburbs of Canberra.

A few months ago articles appeared in some national newspapers, describing the Dutch solution to their student-housing crisis. Later our own excellent student newspaper ran a similar story, considering whether such a solution could work at ANU. That solution? Shipping containers. Now before you shirk away in disgust or start relating stories about formaldehyde – give me a few lines to explain why this could actually work.

I spent most of my mid-semester break and first week back, traveling with the ANU to investigate alternative student housing. A party of four of us, visited several different sites, where modu-

lar building had been used. Some of these sites were office blocks, hotels, construction worker accommodation but several were student-housing complexes. Notably, the student housing complexes were built out of shipping containers. Quite simply - I'd move in today if I could.

The container is about double and a bit, the size of a conventional hall or college room. It is a strange shape (for a house), in that it's long and thin but all the same completely livable. The ideal structure seems to be to stack the crates 5 high and 10 to 12 along. Then 4 of these blocks can be constructed, all facing inwards to a common courtyard. Small, private balconies (yes, for every room) face outwards and

communal, outdoor, entrance balconies run along the middle. The whole effect is somewhat reminiscent of a 1970's American seaside resort.

The inside is probably the most impressive. There are large (floor-to-ceiling) windows at either end of the room; the lighting is great. Heating and cooling doesn't seem to be an issue – I felt completely comfortable despite the scarily low temperatures in Amsterdam. Basically it looks like a normal room, except thinner. The bathroom is in the middle, with space beside it, to form a narrow corridor. The bathroom effectively separates the living and sleeping areas from the eating and studying areas on either end. And yes, you can fit a double bed.

All the student facilities we viewed were self-catered - with a small kitchen, similar to those in the Packard Wing at Bruce Hall (perhaps a little smaller). The bathrooms were small and simple but have got to be better than sharing with the rest of your floor! The whole shipping-container look wasn't too bad. In fact, I liked the sites, which made the container a feature of the architecture rather than tried to cover up what it really was.

But perhaps the most desirable qualities of the housing are the time it takes to build and the associated cost. To answer everyone's burning questions – yes it is possible to build another 300+ room hall, to be up and running by January 2009. And second to that, it can be done for a much smaller price than conventional accommodation. So the price passed onto students would be significantly less, than the most similar form of accommodation that currently exists at ANU; Packard Wing at Bruce Hall.

My conclusion? Unfortunately the ANU can't solve Canberra's housing crisis. Us townies/villagers will have to keep battling it out for a little longer in the rental market or deal with living at home. But achieving more accommodation on campus, and having that accommodation be of the type that is most in demand (i.e. hall-style, supported accommodation) is possible. On 30 May 2008, the post-graduate student president and I will be making a presentation to the ANU Council about our trip. We will be recommending that the ANU investigate building 100 additional family/couples rooms, to be aimed at post-graduate students out of shipping containers. We will also be recommending the ANU create a new hall-style facility, of around 300 rooms, of the same design. I will keep you updated on our progress.

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It's risky writing your own personality



Cathy Haines
Culture

I doubt you would be surprised to find, upon being introduced to someone on campus, that you already 'know' one another. The quantity of sources from which to assume someone has gained some knowledge of your existence is immeasurable in a small-town university culture. But only recently, have strangers begun to approach on the prerogative that they "know you from Facebook", and this does cause some recoil.

This person doesn't know you. They don't know the tone of your

voice, what you find ridiculous, whom you dislike. They don't know how you would react to a dying man, or a child, a betrayal, a feeling of inferiority, to being loved. You have never reacted to their personality before. Who are you to them?

Then you relax. You are forced to take responsibility. You consciously and deliberately sent a version of yourself into the infinite abyss. You control the precise content of their knowledge of you. But you are left with a lingering worry about why you did it. One day they could be someone to whom you want to represent yourself rather differently.

You could just as easily ask why we do anything. The kind of impulse driving us to create virtual selves is not new, or in any way more definitive of our current culture than any other. It's not a complicated fact to intuit; our continued existence depends upon reproduction. And with

Facebook, we have an opportunity to reproduce our selves in a way we can control.

We all want something to pour ourselves into; something to hold the little creaks and crevices of our personalities, the complexities, and the subtleties, our moods and ranges, our ecstasies, the depths of our de-

"We all want something to pour ourselves into; something to hold the little creaks and crevices of our personalities,"

spairs, our idiosyncrasies, our originalities; something to witness our life; something greater than us in which we can invest ourselves. This is the only way to overcome the central defining feature of our human existence; mortality.

Sociological discourse about the nature of the 'I' generation revealed in such declarations, and philosophical claims about

the real or non-real nature of the self, aside, Facebook satisfies this same desire in a reductive way.

The kind of separation virtual reality demands between the self we inhabit and the self we present turns cultural notions of representation on their head. If we begin to think of selves like this - selves self-created, selves

of creative possibilities in, for example, the Arts, where in the guise of a character, a chord or a brush stroke the human personality can be revealed as complex and dynamic, without having to be answerable or conclusive.

Maybe Facebook is really going to save our souls, or ensure our immortal fame. Or maybe you are all much less ambitious about yourselves than I'm giving you credit for and Facebook is just a convenient way to deliver invitations, share photos and indulge people-watching tendencies. I've certainly no intention to stop using it. But my consistent impulse to play fair with you - oh invisible, indispensable silent reader - requires me to say; We would probably have a lot more freedom to create if we did so in an environment that didn't require us to take so much personal responsibility. In that sense, a little moral corruption could do a lot of good.

New Album for Canberra's Hottest Band



Bradley Kunda
Music

Event: Andi and George Band Double Album Launch and East Coast Tour

The Front Café, Lyneham Shops
7 pm, 29 May, 2008

Canberra's own *Andi and George Band* will unveil the fruits of an ambitious recording project at a double album launch on the eve of an extensive East Coast tour at the end of May.

The unique album is entitled *Sun and Moon*. 'Over the last month, we just did this super effort to record twenty-four tracks' says the band's Andi Kirwin. 'We've got twelve upbeat crazy songs, and then we've got twelve...chilled-out, groove, jazz kind of songs. I just worked within the concept of twenty-four hours - twenty-four songs - in a day and night.'

The songs, written mostly by Andi Kirwin and George Bishop, capture an extasmic sound which is difficult to categorize; Andi describes it is a blend of funk, soul, jazz and folk, but perhaps more accurately explains that 'we make high-energy music, and then chilled out music...and anywhere in between that, and it

just depends how many people we're playing with in a gig...for what kind of music we'll play.'

The extensive fifteen-piece outfit comprises vocals, guitars, bass, drums and percussion, as well as a tight horn section, flute, strings and whatever else happens to walk by (a tabla player appears on their new album). There are some notable individual members, however. "There's heaps of, I guess you could call them fans, just people who really love Lina [Andonovska], our flautist," says Andi. "Mostly, people are just amazed that she can play flute and jump up and down at the same time. I know people love our horn section as well. They're pretty talented."

At the heart of the group, however, is the duo of Andi and George. Both possess a strong connection to their roots, if only for the sweet derivations of their middle names: Andi's is 'Viti', meaning 'Fiji', her mother's birthplace; George, who is half-Australian, half-Japanese, bears the middle name 'Goh', the Japanese symbol for 'Australia'. Andi describes her relationship with George as "kind of like having a brother. You have those times where you annoy each other, because we do work together as well, not that we see it as work."

Andi has recently traded in her law degree for a full-time commitment to the band. "I reckon [law] just wasn't for me. I just didn't know what I wanted to do after school, so I just did that, just because I could. I reckon there's so many kids who

do that, so my message now is if you've got a gift you should just do it, because you run out of time otherwise; you just find out that you're old - like the boat has gone."

Now the band is realizing some of its dreams. "Our first dream was to get a vehicle to travel around in...Amos [Enders-Moje, vocals] is decking [a bus] out now to make it a tour bus, putting a kitchen in it and cutting out ten seats to make room for futons inside. We're getting it painted...next week - all graffiti: sun on one side and moon on the other."

After an extensive tour of the East Coast, where the band will trek to Nowra, Berry, Sydney and wind-up in Woodford for the Dreaming Festival, the group has ambitions to travel to Melbourne, Tasmania and South Australia, before venturing further abroad to Japan in 2009.

Andi laughs at the idea of international fame. "World domination - nah! George is pretty much a farmer, he wants to just farm stuff and build stuff with his hands. And I used to want to live in the city but of late I've just been over it. I just want to go and live by the beach somewhere. But we'll probably just keep travelling as a duo, or a trio, or four people, and then the band will join us for festival gigs."

With determined and talented musicians driving the bus, and with great songs and some outstanding band members, the group could very well be thrilling international audiences in the



near future. The great attraction to their music, however, may be summed up in the group's unpretentious and sincere attitude to a life of making music. "We've spoken about moving and kind of setting up a little community somewhere where you're surrounded by artists and musicians, where there's heaps of space, just to raise a family" says Andi, who ponders "just going to a place close to the beach - just living out our lives making music and touring."

The Andi and George Band will launch their new album Sun and Moon at the Front Café, Lyneham, at 7 pm on 29 May. Tickets \$10. They are also performing free for the Woroni website



launch at God's Café, 7pm on Wed 28 May. See www.andiand-george.com for more information on the band and their upcoming performances.

Striking Indigenous art hits ANU



Emily Birks
Art

Sesserae: The Works of Dennis Nona

ANU School of Art Gallery
Tuesday – Friday, 10.30am – 5pm, Saturday 12 – 5pm.
Until 7th June.

If you attended the recent Indigenous Triennial 'Culture Warriors' at the National Gallery of Australia, you will have seen several of Dennis Nona's works already. 'Ubirikubiri', a near to life-size bronze crocodile, and (my favourite) 'Apu Kaz', a bronze dugong and its calf beneath a traditional hunting platform, were intricately carved with tribal patterns and located at the entrance to the exhibition. It was a fitting introduction to the diversity of contemporary Indigenous art.

Nona was born in 1973 on Badu Island in the Torres Strait. Originally taught the traditional craft of wood carving as a boy,



'Apu Kaz - Mother and Baby Dugong' Dennis Nona (2005)

he used this expertise to explore linocut printmaking, etching and sculpture. He also draws upon his cultural heritage in his work. In 'Sesserae', more than 60 prints made between 1991 and 2005 reveal stories of cultural and social significance, such as knowledge about weather, food sources and the constellations. Many feature depictions of tribal identities and stories.

The prints are striking, partly due to their size. They are beautifully executed technically. It is quite a feat to have printed such large lino blocks without mishaps with colour or smudging. Nona has cut away the lino block to create prints with fine, intricately patterned backgrounds that seem to vibrate. The black and white prints have had hand

Painted, coloured highlights occasionally added afterwards. The figures of humans and animals tend to consume the negative space. Animals such as the dugong, crocodile, turtle and various bird species are prominent, both as background decoration, and as characters of the stories being conveyed.

These animals are revered as Totem animals, and seen as a source of food. In the lino print 'Nath (Dugong Hunting Platform)' a man spears a dugong from his perch above the sand flats. According to the text panel, only one man in the whole village would have the role of hunting the dugongs from a hand-built platform. What is particularly poignant about this print is that Nona has given the viewer infor-



'Sesserae' Dennis Nona (2004)

mation the hunter does not know - the dugong he has speared is pregnant.

Works in the exhibition are grouped in themes such as 'Hunting', 'Rain' and 'Life and Death', and many of the works have extended text panels telling the origin of the legend depicted, which helps those unfamiliar with the Badu culture to appreciate and immerse themselves in the storytelling of the prints.

And it seems some customs are universal. In 'Ina Kasa Piki (Dream)', a large linocut tells of a couple, their relationship, their children and their land. The couple appears numerous times in the same print, leading the eye around the composition. At the bottom of the work, a woman is counselled by mask-like faces.

Some are approving, some are in denial, some are confused. They are representative of the confusion the woman feels about the future of her relationship.

The titular work of the exhibition centres around the ancestral story of the young man Sesserae. He transforms himself into a Willy Wagtail bird in order to escape tribal elders, who wish to punish him for his greed when hunting.

Nona uses his printmaking to communicate spiritual and legendary stories to a wider audience. This is work about a living culture, told in a contemporary way, and even those unfamiliar with the culture feel included and enlightened.

Images courtesy: <http://www.aboriginalartprints.com.au>

Energetic Iron Man makes great entertainment

Jonathan Fisher
Film Critic



The world needs another superhero movie like Hillary Clinton needs another superdelegate to defect – but *Iron Man* hooked me, from the first frame. I could feel the energy and joy with which it was made. There have been good superhero movies (like *Superman Returns* and *Hulk*), a couple of clunkers (*Fantastic Four* and *Spider-Man 3*) and even one or two great ones (*Batman Begins* and *Spider-Man 2*) in recent times. Iron Man doesn't take its character quite as seriously as *Batman Begins* takes its cowl-bearing vigilante, but it provides something that has been missing in a lot of superhero movies recently – humour. In remembering that superhero stories are first and foremost modes of entertainment, Iron Man succeeds where something like *Fantastic Four* fails. It's funny without being goofy, witty without being a spoof.

Iron Man opens in Afghani-

stan, as a U.S. troop convoy carrying billionaire arms maker Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.) is attacked. He is seriously wounded and taken captive by mercenaries (the most recyclable of film villains) who want him to make them a deadly weapon. After a string of flashbacks introducing us to his business associates, endearing Girl Friday Pepper Potts (Gwyneth Paltrow) and military friend Rhodes (Terrence Howard), the action returns to Afghanistan, where Stark builds himself a giant suit, blows the hell out of his captors, and returns to L.A. Once he returns, he renounces his role as an arms maker, shuts down the company's weapon-making division (which is a problem for the share-holders of an arms company) and gets to work perfecting his iron suit.

There are a lot of familiar elements at work in *Iron Man*, but it's the way that director Jon Favreau (*Elf* and *Zathura*) presents the material that differentiates it from other superhero films. *Iron Man* beams with energy. Just about every aspect of the film fits its style – the music suits the playful but semi-serious tone of

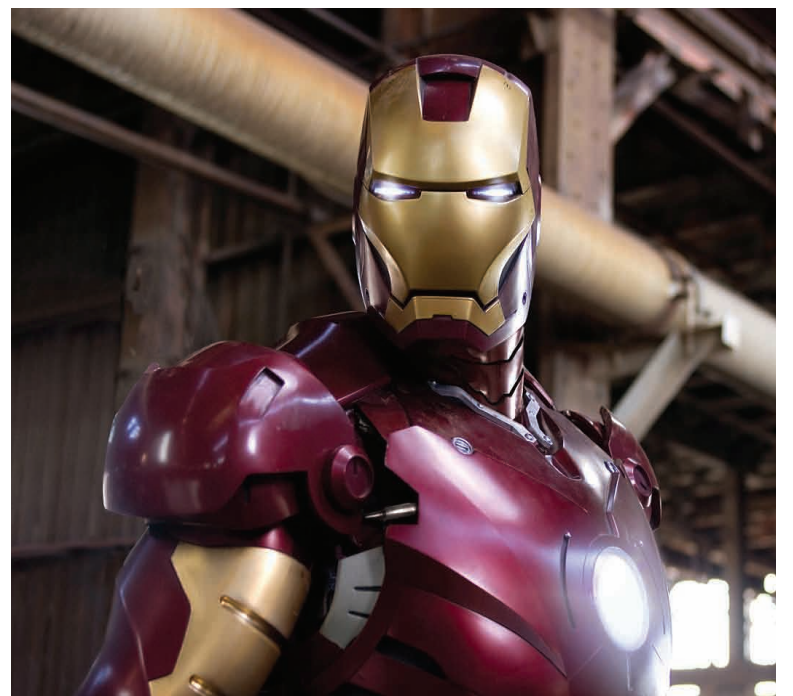
the film, and something about Downey's face inside the Iron Man mask just feels right. As for the film's villain – well, I don't want to give anything away, but there is a character with a bald head and a goatee named "Obadiah Stane". Whoever came up with that name must be given a percentage of the film's profits. Jeff Bridges plays Stane with a lot of conviction, taking care to iron out (if you'll forgive the expression) his character. Everything, from the way he speaks to the way he holds his scotch glass, distinguishes him from the garden variety villain.

Special-effects wise, the movie is impressive without being flashy. We've gotten to the stage now where just about anything is possible with CGI, and the challenge for film-makers is to use CGI in service of a story, rather than as an outlet for the FX crew to show off. *Iron Man's* final action sequences do something that is rare in blockbusters these days – it leaves you wanting more. The film is a tad over two hours long, but feels just the right length.

The movie has its problems. None of the characters are as de-

veloped as Downey's Tony Stark, even though Bridges has a lot of fun with Obadiah Stane (I just love that name). Terrence Howard's Rhodes, in particular, is underused and extraneous, but I guess he'll come into his own in the inevitable sequel. This is (yet another) origin story, and people like me who watch too many of these movies may get a little tired of finding out about the hero's tortured past. These sto-

ries generally only vary in what kind of upbringing the hero had, who in their immediate family was lost, who screwed them over, what animal (or in this case metal) they take on the attributes of, why they change their ways and fight for good etc etc. Many superhero films these days feel formulaic and tired. *Iron Man*, while it may adhere to a kind of formula, could never be accused of being tired.



The Painted Veil

Lyndsay Dean
Film Critic

★★★

Some films are able to transcend existence and draw you into a perfectly plausible alternate reality, one in which you emerge from the cinema's warm cocoon completely unfazed about its fabricated nature. I'm thinking of films such as *Atonement* which stun you with their cinematography, and yet manage to make you forget that you're watching actors on screen playing out characters that don't exist. John Curran's *The Painted Veil* isn't one of those films, and yet its strange distancing seems to work. You never forget that you're watching something meticulously framed and shot; the menacing mountains are always there, the slow pace feels contrived, the piano soundtrack is always demanding to be noticed. And yet it all seems to work in an ethereal, metaphysical sense.

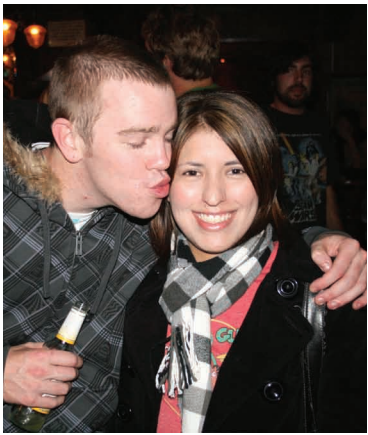
The *Painted Veil*, based on W. Somerset Maugham's novel, focuses on the betrayals and their consequences between husband and wife. Kitty Garstin (Naomi Watts), under pressure from her

parents, marries socially-awkward bacteriologist Walter Fane (Edward Norton), knowing full well that he is infatuated with her; a love she doesn't return. Upon returning to his base in Singapore, Kitty instigates an affair with serial womaniser Charles Townsend (Liev Schreiber). Walter, sick of Kitty's lying, gives her an ultimatum: get Townsend to leave his wife and marry her instead, or accompany him to the Chinese Interior to assist with a cholera epidemic relief effort. Townsend denies Kitty, condemning her to follow Walter and bear his understandable anger and cold shoulder.

It'd be easy to despise Walter for his childish neglect if Kitty wasn't so obviously a manipulative, spoilt brat. Walter doesn't hate Kitty for what she did, but rather how it reflects his own shortcomings; he hates that he knowingly married a woman who didn't love him. It's this knowledge that makes his final "forgive me" so poignant. It seems to be saying "all I wanted was for you to love me, only me, as I do you. Is that so wrong?"

I first had misgivings about Norton in a romance but, to his credit, he pulls it off. Slight opening wavers in the accent are

forgotten and tightened, whilst Naomi Watts is solid once again. The scenery is breathtaking, and Curran does some interesting things with muted dialogue and heightened music. However, points are lost for the re-use of Erik Satie's oft-heard 'Gnossienne' piano score. And why have we had to wait two years until its Australian release? Overall, *The Painted Veil* goes beyond a chick-flick – it's a 'mother' movie. Take your mum and a box of tissues, but take someone with a Y-chromosome? I'm not so sure...



Writing Serial Killer

Joy Thompson

Once upon a time, in what would be a universe far, far away, it is generally agreed that there was a Big Bang. We aren't concerned with what happened beforehand, since it doesn't really matter – that is to say, it ante-mattered.

Then, suddenly, nothing very interesting happened for a long time thereafter.

About thirteen billion years later, when the nothing had done its job, an insignificant small planet appeared. On the planet was an equally insignificant small continent, and along a street in one of its cities drove a student and her parents.

Grace watched the falling leaves spiralling past the car windows and sighed. What had happened to her? All her ambitions had dwindled to failure. There was no longer any spark in her thoughts. Even the writing that described her life had degenerated into torturous prose.

She thought of the pens in her pocket and remembered a bizarre murder committed hundreds of years ago. A gang of students had stabbed a mediaeval scholar over and over again with their quills, and he had died

as his blood trickled out of the tiny wounds. Students' wits had dulled through the ages, though, and her pens were no longer sharp enough for murder or suicide. They could scarcely kill a reputation now.

I am a fraud, she thought. She felt like a character in a novel, bumped from one anti-climax to another. All the chapters in her life had been plotting against her from the beginning, and the eagle had flown away a long time ago.

The car pulled up, the house was unlocked, and Grace went to her room, where there was a kinder silence. She leaned against the bookshelf, running her fingers along the spines, until she came to a copy of the *Metamorphoses*.

This book had haunted her for years with its tales of shape-shifting and merging forms. She remembered her childhood dreams of wings sprouting from her shoulder and lifting her into the sky. If only she could change herself again.

Grace took a deep breath, opened the book to the first page, and dived in.

The gild-edged maw of the classics closed behind her, and Grace was no more.

Help! I'm all surface, no substance.

Dear Agapanthus,

In the erudite habitat of the university, I feel pressured to be a fountain of insight and intellectual revelations. As a result, I have a token and controversial fact about every conceivable topic, but in truth know nothing about anything. I'm afraid that I am a total dilettante, and shall soon be shunned by my peers as a result. I feel adrift in an overwhelming sea of knowledge and am entirely without a paddle. What can I do?

Arts Jock, *Narrabundah*.

How interesting AJ,

Did you know I was discussing this just the other day, practically getting into a fist-fight over whether Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* has been mistranslated which, OMG, it totally has. If you can't read it in the original, you don't deserve to read it, I've always said.

Anyway, I think you're fundamentally missing the point

of university, and indeed, life. Everyone knows that 'a little learning is a dangerous thing.' Or do they? As I see it, the only solution to your predicament is to take up the rest of Pope's injunction - to "Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian Spring; / for shallow draughts intoxicate the brain / And drinking largely sobers us again."

That's right, AJ. Alexander Pope commands you to be a wanker. The doubts you now experience about the validity of your divisive opinions only show that you haven't committed to your education, have you now? Man up.

You needn't worry about isolating your friends, either. There's nothing better in this world than a superficially educated, needlessly provocative and loud-mouthed companion, especially when you try to impress their new friends as well. Although it's often better for everyone if you stick to

time-tested topics: for example, you could perhaps question George Bush's competency? Just a thought, AJ. Incidentally, did you know that the AJ from the Backstreet Boys checked into rehab for cocaine use? And this prompted his mother, one Denise McLean, to pen a book called *Backstreet Mom*?

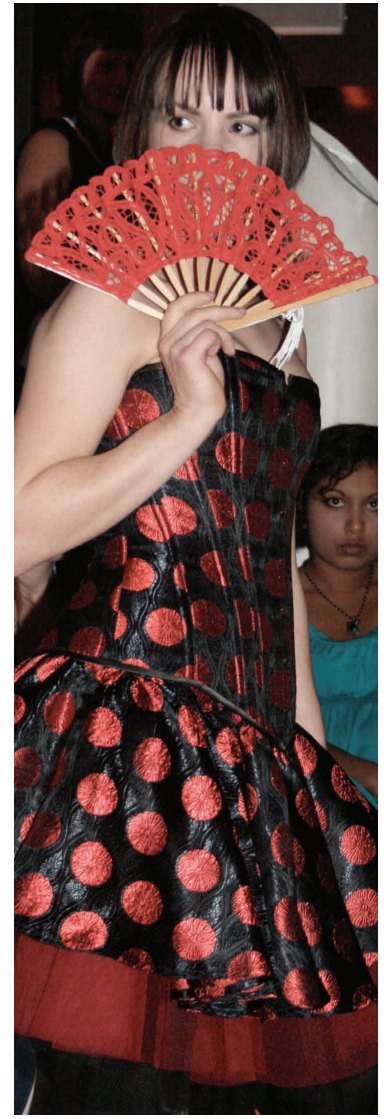
I digress. AJ, from time to time we are all called upon to conform. For example, writing for a student audience ineluctably forces you to mention procrastination, Mooseheads, and Facebook (you forgot the Mi Goreng - Ed). You are in such a time, and it would be foolish to ignore it. This isn't something to be scared of - great fortune lies ahead of you. As Horace always said: *Carpe miscellany* (seize the miscellany).

You must 'paddle' yourself.

Send your crisis to Aunt Agapanthus at woroni@anu.edu.au

London Circuit & Fair Trade Fashion Parade

Had a party? Been to a university event? Send your social snaps to us at woroni@anu.edu.au



WORONI WEBSITE

www.woroni.com.au

LAUNCH PARTY

ANDI & GEORGE BAND

WED 28 MAY

7PM - GODS CAFE

Sarah Webster

The perks of being an (*open air quotes*) journalist (*close air quotes*) continue to roll in. While the most immediate fruits of my labour have been good-humoured accusations of vanity and nepotism, I have also had the honour of being invited to attend 'Modern Morals: A Fair Trade Fashion Parade' at Knightsbridge Penthouse.

Anyone who knows Knightsbridge can see why it was the chosen venue - its usual ambiance of borderline pretentious good taste was complemented by a newspaper catwalk (very 'Derelict'), and a large group of attractive and socially conscious individuals. In short, the perfect place for a single gal with borderline pretentious good taste and an interest in fashion to spend her Sunday night. Attendees, having been lavishly supplied with fair trade cocktails and nibbles, were treated to an exhibition of ethically-produced fashions available to the Canberra clientele, with representations from Tree of Life, Ruby and Rogues, Mooble, Raven and Fully Stoked.

A noble goal, certainly. Few better, in fact, and having a social conscience to speak of myself I here fling boundless praise and admiration upon all those involved in organizing the event. Unfortunately though, from a pragmatic fashion perspective, the fare did not satisfy. The reason that fair trade fashions have not taken off in the past is that they all seem to be subject to one of three rules - either they are aggressively hippie, aggressively bland or such high fashion that they are overpriced up the wazu. There is no intrinsic problem with any of this, it's just that we always knew fair trade fashions like these were available, and as such attendees left the event precisely as informed about the potential of fair trade fashion as they were when they arrived.

These considerations obviously lose sight of the >\$2000 the event raised for Oxfam, the excellent turnout, food, and company, and possibly above all the intentions and example set by the organizers and attendees alike. I offer my congratulations to all concerned, hope you enjoy the pictures, and remember that cargo pants are O-U-T!

woroni events

Send your (short) events to u4303222@anu.edu.au by Friday May 31st.

Inclusion is subject to editorial discretion

scuna orchestra
Beethoven's 7th Symphony, Weber's Clarinet Concerto and More. Gordon Arthur Hall, St John's Church, Cnr Constitution Ave and Anzac Park West, Reid @ 14:00, Sun May 25. \$5 tickets @ door.

BLOCK launch
Issue 6 of ANU Writer's Journal. Smith's Alternative Bookshop, 76 Alinga St, Civic @ 18:00, Thurs May 29. Come for the nibbles amid a truly literary atmosphere, with readings.

biggest morning tea presented by ANU Goodwill Society. **Chifley Meadows @ 10:00, Thurs May 22.** Coffee, tea, chocolate, home-made goodies for the Cancer Council

cocktail party
ANU Law Student's Society presents **An evening of Careers and Cocktails.** John Curtin Medical Centre @ 19:00, Thurs May 22. \$20 tickets available from law school foyer 10-12: 19th, 22nd May.

unya competition
United Nations Youth Assoc. presents **Security Council Competition.** Copland 30 @ 11:45, Sat May 24. Register with: actsecretary@unya.asn.au. Members: \$5. Non-Members: \$10 CASH PRIZE

canberra winter warehouse music festival presented by Friction and Lexington Music. AIS Arena @ 13:00 Fri May 31. Tickets on sale via ticketek.

art exhibition
ANU School of Art presents **Sesserae: The works of Dennis Nona.** ANU School of Art Gallery. May 14-June 7. 61255841

concert
ANU School of Music presents **Contemporary Music Ensemble.** Rehearsal Room 3, ANU School of Music @ 18:00, Mon May 26. Gold Coin donation. 61255700

the trivs ep launch
Also featuring The Magic Hands. Transit Bar Thurs May 22.

havana nights
Catchy beats and cocktails at Monkey Bar Fri May 23. Doors open at 8:30. Free until 10pm

WORONI WEBSITE LAUNCH FREE
ANDI & GEORGE. FREE FOOD. GOD'S CAFÉ 19:00. Wed May 28. Come check out our new site!

play
Canberra Dramatics presents **Clowns in Winter.** The Street Theatre @ 20:00, May 23 - May 31. 6247 1223

poetry slam
presented by ANU Writers. The Front, Lyneham @ 7.30 Thurs May 29. Open mic, slam comp live and local music.

comedy night
The Phoenix, Tues May 27. 62471606

Long Distance Love

Melissa Jogie
International Community

'Love can survive the test of time,' but can it survive the distance? 'Distance.' The word grows all too common to an international student. We leave home, distance ourselves from our family, friends and favorite restaurants. Our experienced elders say, traveling is about developing the 'self' by denying the comforts of the known to test the qualities you have learned throughout the years. However, when emotions get involved and curiosity leads you into intriguing situations

"Everyone who is in love suffers from wishful thinking. It isn't their fault. I blame it on literature."

you find that the easiest word to describe the confusion is obviously 'love'. Maybe the world is really a small place because we all have been in some kind of long distance relationship from one time to another. In most cases the truth stings because from the

opinion of many individuals who have shared their experiences have concluded, "it unfortunately never works". Everyone who is in love suffers from wishful thinking. It isn't their fault. I blame it on literature. The romantics and the classics and the highbrow 'Romeo and Juliet' dramas help encourage delirious thoughts about undying love. Love is a practical thing. Just like the courses you study, love is an emotion you have to devote time to, nurture it and understand it bit by bit. Always remember why you feel this way, question why you feel this way and don't be afraid to imagine life without this love or this

individual. It is a universal trend that international people find themselves clinging to others for comfort. Love is a necessary comfort, it ties the physical affection particularly sex with the emotional strings of having someone to care when you get the flu.

I will be doing an injustice to those who have spent time proving that some long distant relationships work. In most of these cases it's because a strong commitment was made before departure that guaranteed the person to return. Usually long distance relationships work with mature students who have life set in terms of what they want and their careers etc. My ultimate advice is enjoy the moments you have now. Enjoy the company of another and don't think too much about what will last and what will fall through. Nothing is forever even if it does work out. There comes a point in everyone's life when you accept that only you can fix your personal problems. Until you don't believe you are good enough, no one in the world can convince you differently. So love other people, love many people, love everybody from near or from far, but always love yourself because no one can do that better than you.



High turnout, but no tea, at High Tea

Scott Walker
News

On Saturday 10 May, the International High Tea, formerly known as International Hawker Night, was held in Union Court. The event was run by the International Students' Department (ISD) in cooperation with several mainly nationality-based ANU clubs and societies. 400 students attended the sell-out event. ISD General Secretary Shiori Shakuto commented that after an initially slow uptake of the \$4 tickets, over half were sold on the final day of sales. "The event was more popular with students than expected," said Ms Shakuto. While the ISD made an announcement on the Friday before the event that no more tickets would be made available, some students were nevertheless admitted on the day. ISD International Student Coordinator, Alstrid Sahetapy, commented that "the day went

really well and the servers were quite generous with the helpings of food." This may account for some of the more popular stalls running out of food halfway through. However, Ms Sahetapy applauded the Japan Club for cooking on the spot and "taking up the slack and providing [main meals] until the very end." The dishes were prepared by eight ANU clubs and societies: the Mandarin Club, the Malaysian Students' Organisation, the Turkish Club, the Taiwanese Students' Association, the Japan Club, the Mauritian Club, the Singapore Students' Association and the recently established Goodwill Society. The ISD told *Woroni* that the costs of running the event would be covered by the ticket sales and that the participating clubs which provided dishes would be refunded a pre-agreed sum. One committee member commented that the committee was considering giving financial bonuses to the clubs which performed better than others. The event's name was changed from 'Hawker Night' to 'International High Tea' so that the event could be hosted during the day to take advantage of warmer temperatures. Alas, the committee had no good response as to why there was not a single cup of tea to be drunk at an event purporting to be a 'High Tea'. The next ISD event is the International Ball, to be held on Saturday 2 August.



Notice of ANUSA Annual General Meeting
The Annual General Meeting of the Students' Association will be held in the ANU Union Refectory at 1pm on **Thursday 29 May 2008**. At this meeting the President's Report will be presented and the Treasurer will present the budget for approval. The 2009 Student Diary Editor will also be elected. Nominations to the ANUSA Administrator by 5:00pm Wednesday 28 May.

An oarsome team

Scotty Bolton
Sports

When most of us are neatly tucked up in bed, the boys and girls of the ANU Rowing Club are up and finishing their training. Up at 5. Hit the water at 6.5 days a week. With about 30 hours of training a week, the ANU rowers spend more time on Lake Burley-Griffin than a normal University student spends at class. When it comes to dedication the rowers certainly have it. This dedication has paid off for the club, having been just awarded the ANU Club of the Year and the Most Improved Club for 2008.

The team is currently in off-season winter training, using the time to compete in local time trials on the lake and slogging their guts in the gym. However the main focus for the Rowing Club at the moment is preparing for Uni Games.

Last year ANU came 6th overall at the Games and they hope that they will improve on that this year. Gavin Cookman, Club

Vice-President, believes that a top-four finish is an achievable goal.

If the team's performance at Nationals is any indication, they could be in a strong position leading up to the Uni Games. The National Rowing Championships, held in March this year, was a very successful Regatta for ANU. Katie Duncan competed in the double lightweight sculls as part of a composite crew, finishing third behind the current World Champions. The Men's Under 23 Coxless Four also competed well, finishing 5th overall. Lou Kilby, the Club's Captain, reached the semi-finals in the Women's Under 23 Singles Scull. No mean feat. The Under 23 Men's Lightweight Double also made the semi finals in a highly competitive competition.

The team, lead by World Championship winning coach James McCartney, is poised to stick it to the local rivals in the upcoming competitions on the Lake. The main event for the ANU rowers is the Disher Cup. This event is a 4km endurance race on Lake Burley Griffin against long time rivals, ADEA

and RMC. Cookman said the team is 'very confident, even at this early stage'. ANU won last year and hopes to repeat this at the next meet. The event, planned for later in the year, is a great spectator event and is worth attending. The finish line is just in front of Black Mountain peninsula, allowing spectators to relax in style while the rowers slog it out.

As the weather gets colder and we rest of us sleep in, remember the rowers, out on the water in the frosty Canberra morning. This dedication by all the crews, Novice right through to Senior, will hopefully lead to great results as the competition heats up.



Katie Duncan (left) won bronze for ANU at last years' Uni Games.

SCOREBOARD

INDOOR SOCCER

ANU LUNCHTIME COMPETITION:
Ninth Round: CJ's Angels d Kinky Gone Wild; Sneakers d B&G; Newell's Old Boys d Texas Rangers; Arpillera d SRA.

VOLLEYBALL

ANU LUNCHTIME COMPETITION:
Ninth Round: Wallyballs d Mean Machine; Springers d Dig Deep; Velociraptors d Dreamtime Kings; SVH Bombers had the bye.

TOUCH FOOTY

ANU LUNCHTIME COMPETITION:
Eighth Round: Magpies d Hairy Fish; Halal Butchers d PeeWees; Young Libs d Darts; Fenner Cobras d ANUS Touch; SRA d Off Constantly; Johns d Burg Cats; Living the Dream and Run Straight Johnnies had the bye.
Ninth Round: SRA d Hairy Fish; Johns d Living the Dream; Darts d Run Straight Johnnies; Fenner Cobras d Off Constantly; Young Libs d ANUS Touch; Halal Butchers d Magpies; Burg Cats and PeeWees had the bye.

	Wins	Losses	+/-	Points
Young Libs	8	0	50	27
Halal Butchers	7	1	28	25
Johns	6	2	31	23
Magpies	6	2	28	23
Fenner Cobras	6	2	23	23
SRA	6	1	23	22
Burg Cats	4	3	6	21
Darts	4	4	2	19
Run Straight Johnnies	2	5	-11	17
PeeWees	2	5	-29	17
Living the Dream	2	5	-30	17
Off Constantly	1	5	-20	11
ANUS Touch	0	8	-61	11
Hairy Fish	0	7	-31	10

Calling all AFL players!

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Uni-Norths Owls play a strong defence against Gungahlin and Harden Uni-Norths Rugby Union

The Owl's Odyssey

Phil Pryor

The Uni-Norths Owls, representing both the Australian National University (ANU) and the University of Canberra (UC), hope 2008 is the year that takes the Club in a positive direction. Results this year in Pre-Season Competition and the early parts of the regular season have already shown a definite improvement from last year.

Some new talent throughout Colts and Opens has been a revelation for the club. The undefeated Colts side gained players from St Edmund's College, Canberra Grammar and various schools from Sydney, Victoria and country NSW. The Opens have recruited a number of fresh players from Australia but have also secured many imports from countries like Cameroon, South Africa, New Zealand and France. As well as the fresh faces, some key players have returned from serious injuries and surgery.

The club has also welcomed some gifted players from the

Brumbies, including the son of a former Wallaby, Patricio Noriega, playing at hooker. Other talents include fullback Peter Betham and halfback Matt Page. Betham has been recently selected into the Australian Under 20s side.

In the official pre-season competition, the Vodafone Shield, the Owls came up against Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and Wests. 1st grade and 2nd grade had no success, but third grade managed to taste victory against Gungahlin. The Colts team beat all three sides and only conceding a handful of points to top their pool. The Colts (under 20s) are considered the Owls biggest Premiership chance this year. The Women's side also had a successful pre-season, recording wins in all of their matches. Since the club's formation in 2001, the women have been the most consistent performers.

Following a week off for Easter, the main season began against the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA), which meant 1st and 2nd grade had the bye. 3rd grade lost in a close game against ADFA 1st grade, but Owls

Colts rolled ADFA by 50 points. The Women's side kicked off the season well, defeating ADFA in a one-sided match by 55 points. 5th Grade were unlucky in their opening match out at Bungendore, losing 26-8, but in a usual fashion enjoyed catching up with the opposition players after the game with a few drinks.

In the second round of the regular season the Owls took on the Gungahlin Eagles. 2nd and 3rd grade lost in tight matches, however Colts again dominated, recording a 57-10 win. 1st grade overpowered the Eagles, piling up three unanswered tries to produce a promising lead. However before halftime the Eagles put two tries on the board. In a disappointing ending, 1st grade lost 47-26.

Josh Sebens, Club Captain, identified the 1st grade tendency to drop their intensity towards the end of a match as a definite weakness. Despite this, it looks like a promising year for Uni-Norths. Especially so for the Colts, who are tipped as Premiership-contenders and the ones to watch in the upcoming rounds.

Burgmann in Blues While Johns Shine

James Greenacre
Steve O'Conner

The college Rugby League competition has begun and has proved to be yet another year of big hits, big plays and competitive hard fought footy. As we approach the third weekend of the season there has been some interesting surprises.

Despite Burgmann's ex-resident hero Red-dog, the prowess displayed in previous years is lacking, losing three on the trot.

Ursies have shown some unforeseen passion and are unlucky to find themselves without a win after two games. They went down fighting to B&G after a close half-time score (end score 20-6) then unluckily again to Bruce 24-16. Chin up Ursies.

Johns appear to be a changed team, using an impressive back-line to outclass their opponents, downing Burgmann and Fenner with score lines of 22-4 and 26-4 respectively.

B&G have begun the season playing a physical brand of football complimented by radical fashion-insensitive haircuts. The haircuts have obviously proved fruitful, producing two wins and a draw against Fenner. Many on the sideline of this game believed

it to be one of the best games of college football seen in a number of years. The passion shown by both teams on the field resulted in big hits, great breaks and a nail-biting finish. The unnies have been unlucky not to field their best team for their first and most important encounters (B&G and Johns), yet despite this they remain a chance of reaching the final.

Bruce have successfully utilised massive Packard Resident Steven Wenzel to shoulder charge themselves up-field and into equal 2nd place after beating Burgmann and Ursies. They are showing great organisation and determination, a team to watch in the latter rounds of the competition.

As the competition reaches maturity the leader board appears to be as tight as a Johns boy's budget on a Thursday night in skinny-leg jeans. B&G are out in front after 3 games (2 wins and a draw). Johns and Bruce occupy second place with a perfect score after two games, whilst the Fenner bunnies are close behind with a win and a draw. Ursies and Burgmann are bringing up the rear, as they have not yet won a game. The second-half of the season promises just as many upsets and close calls. Bring on all things big and brutish!

Balls, bats and controversy

Scotty Bolton

Inter-Hall sporting events are usually a highly contested competition, with all colleges battling to reach the finals. However this does not appear to be the case in this year's Softball Competition, which this year appears to be a slightly one-sided affair.

After a solid performance in first term it seem like Fenner could be continuing their winning streak into the new term. Currently undefeated, the girls from Northbourne seem like being clear favourites to take the title. They have had decisive wins over B&G and Bruce, while controversy ruled over the very close win against Johns.

The Johns game, which in the end came down to a Inter-Hall Sports Committee vote due to an umpire slip, came down to the wire. After much lively de-

bate the Inter-Hall Sports Committee decided that Fenner were the rightful winners of the game. This puts Fenner very well placed to take the title.

Regardless of the controversy, Johns seem very keen to have a rematch in the finals. Currently close in second place the sky blue girls are hot on Fenner's heels. Although losing to Fenner, they've recorded wins over Bruce and old time rivals and next-door neighbours, Burgmann. With games against B&G and Ursies, they are hoping for strong performances in the next two weeks.

As the season heats up it will be interesting to see whether the points table becomes closer or continues to separate. Can Fenner hold off the sporting dominance of Johns? Or will there be a underdog, maybe Ursies, claiming the title? We shall wait with bated breath as the season continues.