

CRACCUM

magazine 10



fifty, thrifty and thriving?

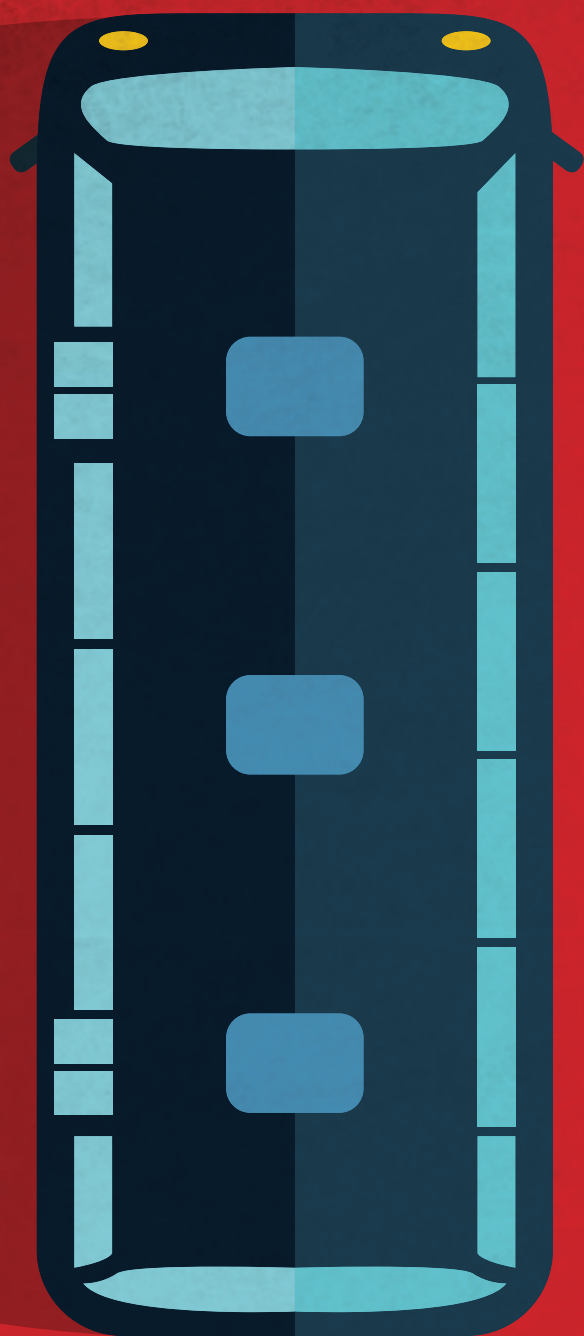
JUST HOW EASY IS IT TO SAVE FOR A HOUSE?
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WHY WOULD YOU LOOK FOR A SCOOTER IN A BUS LANE?



BECAUSE THEY'RE THERE

Driving in the city centre?

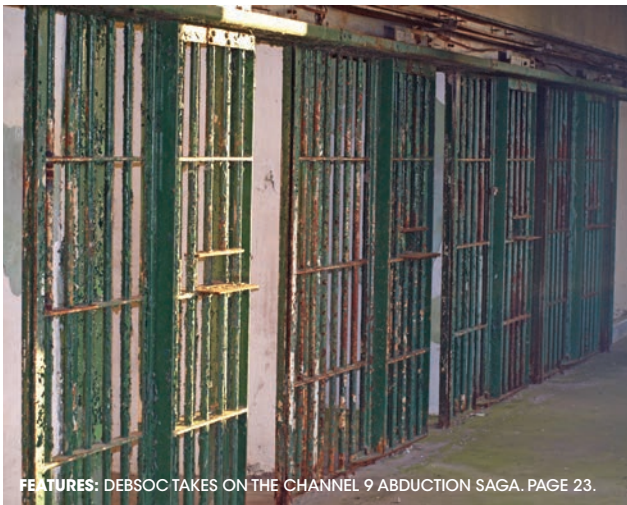
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DRIVE FOR THE UNEXPECTED





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a rose by any other name would still stink real bad

Caitlin's Note: Usually we write our editorials together, but the only time Mark has watched The Bachelor was when he came over to my house to watch Game of Thrones and arrived a little early. Instead of paying attention he spent the whole time relentlessly flirting with my mum trying to get her to affirm that he looked like Jon Snow. Mark may be kinda gross, but he is smart. Mark did not waste ten weeks of his life on this bullshit, so I'm flying solo on this one.

I was planning on writing the editorial this week on Why Smart People Watch *The Bachelor*. I recently posted a rare Facebook status about Jordan “you don’t snooze, you lose” Mauger sending Erin home because she refused to accept his offer of an over-night stay (no one blames her, imagine his Gollum impression in the dark. Not to mention that he sounds like John Key when he talks, so *definitely* sounds like him when he cums). This status got approximately 4000% more likes than my usual posts about my dog (JUSTICE FOR REX, #FREEREX) and most of the people who liked it were genuinely smart people – informed, educated people who I thought would have avoided the show like the plague. With this in mind, I was going to wank on about the show having some kind of social capital. I was going to say it has immense satirical value, and produces such comedic gold as Alex Casey’s Power Rankings in *The Spinoff*. I would have mentioned that New Zealand is such a small country that it is possible to engage a whole nation with a totally frivolous show. It gives strangers something to talk about when small talk runs out at a party; it gives us a reason to get drunk with our mums and laugh at what a twat Jordan is. I guess it gives us the opportunity to release repressed judgmental bitch urges when twenty women are paraded across our screens twice a week, and they can’t hear the nasty things we say about them so no one *really* gets hurt, right?

Insert predictable “WRONG.” here

I was all for watching *The Bachelor* ironically. But then I watched the festering turd pile that was *The Bachelor: Women Tell All*, and I went

to bed feeling nauseous. Yes, we all knew from the start that the set-up is sexist and bullshit. We all knew that pitting twenty-three women against each other was a yuck idea for a show. We all knew that the producers are heavily involved in engineering antagonism between the girls. But between all the trips to Hawaii, the wees in the ocean, the sparkly dresses, the 100+ boat rides, and the close-ups of lizards fighting, we could be sufficiently distracted from the truly troublesome premise of the show. But the *Tell All* episode had none of the silly dates or cheeky video diaries. It laid the bones of the Bachelor bare, and they were nasty.

Final two Fleur and Naz were kept separate from the rest of the girls, kept back stage (presumably in cages) till they were hauled out. A visibly sweating Mike Puru was forced to whip the twenty-one other girls into a frenzy before calling Naz out onto the stage, after which he insistently asked specific girls questions like “What did you make of Naz’s approach to Jordan?” “Is there anything you want to say to Naz while she’s here?” “Nicole, you look like you have something to say to Naz?” The girls, directly addressed, had no choice but to answer. And Naz, being attacked by both the bachelorettes and, at one point, an audience member, had no choice but to ramp up the unapologetic bitch act – because what the fuck else could you do in that situation? Almost every single bachelorette looked like they would rather be anywhere than on that stage, and their answers to Mike’s nervous questions revealed that a lot of them had really just had a shit time. The most alarming point came when Ceri was asked what advice she would give to people considering going on the show, and she responded, dead in the eyes, “be prepared for captivity.”

The girls were locked up in a mansion with no outside contact, and now they’re locked into contracts that demand media appearances, seemingly aimed at reducing them to performing monkeys. Kate had to remind Mike

at one point, after a particularly condescending question, “I’m an observant, intelligent young woman.” Now Fleur is being shoved in front of cameras mere hours after Jordan broke up with her. Naz is enduring the predation of George FM’s Resident Sick Fuck Thane Kirby, who asked her during an interview whether Jordan was “well hung” and whether she orgasmed during their overnight date, while a cameraman ZOOMED IN ON HER BREASTS. All this for ratings, for website clicks. The show itself is gross but the media circus afterwards is downright appalling. Boycott next year. ■

Mark's Note: Everything about The Bachelor is gross except Alex Casey's Power Rankings, which are the greatest pieces of journalism ever produced in this country and should be read by everyone.

An Apology

The editors wish to unreservedly apologise for publishing the column “Life Is Too Long” on 2nd May. We understand from the columnist that the intention of the column was to satirise reprehensible “lads banter” culture and proponents of it – the kind of people who, for example, defend Stephen Fry when he makes jokes at the expense of abuse survivors, or use ableist slurs as common insults. However, we realise that this ought to have been carried out in a far less inflammatory manner. There is a fine line between constructively provocative and needlessly offensive, and in this case we fucked up, plain and simple. We have never had the intention of promoting bigotry of any kind, and we offer our sincere apologies for our lapse in judgement. ■

letters to the editor

Hi Caitlin and Mark,

After reading your editorial (abort mission) in the latest Craccum, I thought I would take you up on your invitation to hear my thoughts.

I am a bit of a coward and tend to avoid giving my opinion because I hate confrontation, so I have a lot of respect for people like yourselves who are happy publish their opinion on controversial issues such as abortion. So for the first time ever, I am going to be brave and tell complete strangers what I think.

I absolutely agree that although freedom of speech is a basic human right it often means that some group or another gets hurt. This is a real issue and I am glad you brought it up. I for one am a fan of more discussion and not less. Nothing gets solved if we all shut up for fear of someone getting hurt (says the girl who never gives her opinion). This is why I think that the Pro Life group should be allowed to stay, as should a Pro Choice group, if there is one. I think it would be a shame for them to be canned.

What would be more useful, is if people who are (or know someone who is) hurt or offended by the messages the Pro Life group are chalking/shouting/spreading is to talk to them about it. Tell them that they are hurting people, explain to them how and why their messages are offensive, tactless etc. I don't know the history of this debate, perhaps people have already talked to them about it. If this is the case and they continue to knowingly spread hurtful messages then they are kind of dicks and should think about what it means to be pro life.

This brings me to a more personal issue, the issue of being pro life. Being pro life myself, I know that my wish to keep the group is biased, so I just want to explain my reasons for backing them.

Being a pro lifer and a feminist, it kinda sucks when I hear that pro lifers are understood to be anti feminist bigots. I know why they are often portrayed this way, its because lots of them fully fit this description, this sucks even more and I hate being lumped in with these people.

People often think that it is impossible to be pro life and feminist. It isn't. I stand up for the rights of females whether or not they are born.

To me, being pro life does not equal anti abortion. My pro life views mean that I promote life from conception to natural death. It does not mean that I hate, condemn or even blame those who choose to end their own life or the life someone else. I understand that people's motivations to end life are complex and diverse. Usually people end life to avoid great

personal suffering. I can identify with this motivation, I do lots of things to avoid pain. In saying that I draw the line at ending other peoples life, I don't see that as a choice I have the right to make. Anyway I am beginning to enter an argument which I know will never be resolved between pro life and pro choice groups and this email is not about that argument.

I guess I just wanted to point out that not all pro lifers are loud and tactless and don't think about women's rights. Lots of us do. Abortion is not an easy topic for anyone and I think we should talk about it more often.

I believe that people sticking up for life at all stages is progressive, just as I see that people who stick up for women's rights are progressive. I don't see why there shouldn't be room for both groups at UoA.

Anyway, thanks for reading.
DANIELLE

p.s I really enjoy reading your editorials, you guys are hilarious.

dear craccum,

this magazine is very good, with beautiful covers and thoughtful pieces on the inside.

thank you,
A FAN

Dear Craccum,

I am surprised to read in this week's issue that Pro Life Auckland is apparently "run by mongoloids" and "drooling spastics escaped from the mental home".

As the only ACTUAL spastic in Pro Life Auckland (complete with spastic hemiplegia and cerebral palsy), give me leave to observe that I'd rather be a spastic or a mongoloid than a lazy anti-disabled bigot taking refuge in cowardly abuse.

The next time Craccum supports the abridgement of our rights of free speech, remember that, despite thinking you're a bunch of hateful weirdos, I support your right to be an idiot. My adopted nephew, who has special needs, joins me in being thankful that there are good people prepared to be much more inclusive--and much less (you should excuse the word) cretinous.

Sincerely
JOHN FOX

Craccum's view on free speech or, at least, on responding to disagreeable points of view has

been varied, to say the least. This isn't really that surprising because one expects that the editors don't rigidly control what gets published: thus it is fine for even the arts editor to take a stance contrary to that offered in the editorial. I just note this because it seems to have been a running theme for a few issues now.

It started with the editor's taking a "Don't Engage" with Facebook trolls stance in the wake of the "Be prepared to run" Overheard scandal (hooaha?). This was, of course, a wrong opinion. Consider a case study. There is a site that I frequent which used to have a roughly even mix of feminists and "people who disagree with feminism" (some of whom were anti-feminists others more afeminist). The feminists left (for reasons irrelevant to the point). What happened? Well, as one would expect. Feminist threads tend to the anti-feminist, new posters are more frequently anti-feminist (whether because feminists feel excluded or because the young age of the site means that new posters read these threads and form normative views or both I don't know) and the old disagreeers have, by and large, shifted further to the anti-feminist viewpoint. As a wider study of this site, there are few conservatives (at least, by American standards) and this is a self-perpetuating system. **Point: if you take the debate away from where it happens, the viewpoint that remains "wins"**. Congrats editors, your suggestion has the opposite outcome. Slacktivism is, in fact, important in the ideological warfare of the internet.

This viewpoint could be contrasted with the stance of the art's editor. In some ways this was more reasonable. "Call people out on their shit" isn't how I would personally phrase it (mostly because I do not like the "call people out" construction) but at least Gianotti 'gets' the internet. Except, there's this thing called Poe's Law. Which, here, will be described as you can't be certain that a view is trollish or honestly held. This could be used to substantiate the point the editors were making above (and, indeed, I think this was at least similar to their logic) insofar as, if something is trolling, responding is exactly what was desired. On the other hand, if you do not "call someone out" but rather present a measured and, perhaps, overly serious "counter"-argument (generally, you have the argument, they have words) then this rather takes the fun out of it for the troll. And, of course, you *confront* the viewpoint. Anyway, I just wanted to say that Gianotti was perhaps overly confident that writer actually believed what was being said. Maybe 3000 words is excessively dedicated trolling, but I've known usernames to present an ultra-left wing, (hardcore) feminist persona yet simultaneously

ridicule the notion of a US \$50,000 p.a. salary and then subsequently be revealed as a cheat-er... tens of thousands of words later over years. But maybe there are some context aspects to the site as well. Anyway, I thought the piece would've been stronger for acknowledging the possibility of trolling (and in many respects this is irrelevant to Gianotti's point).

In the issue in which the above occurred we also had "abort mission" as the editorial. In some ways the editors didn't actually say anything. Which is great, because absolute viewpoints (in internet lingo, I believe a Star Trek reference... space is boring... "Only the Sith deal in absolutes"), while the fuel of the media cycle (esp. the clickbait and soundbite aspects) are the enemy of Democracy™. The point is that thinking about the most recent issue's view of literary canon provided me, I feel, with the response.

'We don't,' said the Controller. 'We prefer to do things comfortably.'

'But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin.'

'In fact,' said Mustapha Mond, 'you're claiming the right to be unhappy.'

And if you're wondering, no, I didn't read that because I had to. And by that, I mean *Brave New World*. As far as dystopic novels go, it and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (which I also read of my own volition) are possibly the two most well known... and despite the latter's greater fame, I would suggest *Brave New World* presents the more concerning vision. And, maybe, this is where current society is actually going: rejecting the right to unhappiness.

At home I have a book called "Dinosaur in a Haystack". It's by a dude called Stephen Gould (deceased), and just randomly reading one of the essays collected in it presented probably the most surprising thing I've read since I've been at uni. Sure, I was pretty shocked by the Katz vs Churchill debate on Holocaust uniqueness (don't believe Katz) but, in hindsight, that was pretty unsurprising: people disagree, this is people. Also Holocaust related, the likelihood that Goering's infamous directive to Heydrich was initiated from within Heydrich's own office actually makes sense. But dinosaurs used to be unpopular? Woah. But, then, Jurassic Park, the film, is older than me. In this sense, I completely agree with the anonymous author of *gag order*. University, by and large, is fairly dull... but I have done all the BCom cores so, yeah, to be expected.

Which brings us to the point. Overpopulation is a myth. Japan's population is already in

decline. Growth in Russia (iirc is stagnant) and Europe is teetering on the edge of not just (recalling the Europe correspondent's column) right-wing ideologies but also an inverted age pyramid. Population behaviour is very different in different parts of the world, and humanity's ability to feed humanity is, currently, constantly expanding. Sure, Borlaug's Green Revolution had serious environmental consequences but GMOs (which, personally, I'd rather not because I'm an irrational twit) present an important opportunity. With better management of food and resource flows internationally (I would suggest liberalising labour flows would help here: but I oppose open borders), both "crises" would probably be resolved. This is particularly true as fertility rates do decline and, in the developed world, actually decline to below replacement rate. Developing world population growth is predicted to continue (hence, iirc, 9 billion world estimates soon-ish) but management of this doesn't require, to return to the above, a modest solution. (And that is also knocking the view on canon as well.)

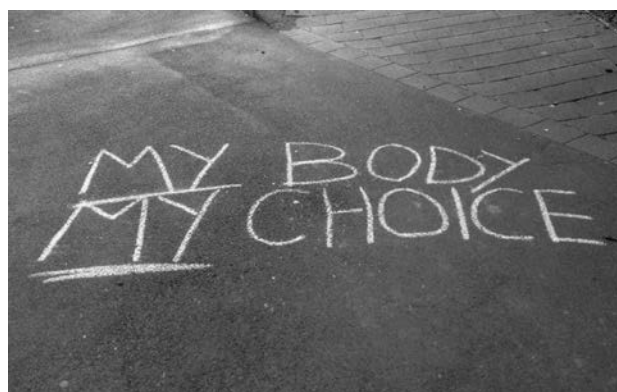
HARRY EAST

P.S. Yes, the Star Trek/Wars confusion was non-deliberate. Since I remembered, though, it just demonstrates the point about space all the better. Anyway, *obviously* the quote is meant to refer to the Ood.



Man takes offence at praise chakings on behalf of women

SUBMITTED BY L.R.



SUBMITTED BY KIRA HAMILTON AND LEA EHLERS



PRO LIFE AUCKLAND GETS A LESSON IN IRONY

(THIS MAY COME OFF AS BIASED SO LET'S CALL IT AN OPINION)

Over the last two weeks, Pro Life Auckland has once again proved why nobody likes their club by managing to piss off, and generally make life more difficult for, a bunch of people on campus. Since they began chalking offensive and triggering messages all over campus a few weeks ago, a battle has been brewing between Pro Life and the Campus Feminist Collective, reminiscent of the failed 2012 campaign to disaffiliate the Pro Life Auckland Club from AUSA. However, in a ridiculous attempt to try and be clever, Pro Life embarked on possibly the silliest path imaginable in order to address this new disaffiliation attempt.

1: Pro Life tried to disaffiliate themselves because...

A club can only be disaffiliated at an AUSA General Meeting. A General Meeting can be called if 20 AUSA members present a petition to the Executive calling for one. On Wednesday, a petition was presented to the AUSA Executive with the motion 'That the AUSA affiliation of Pro Life Auckland be removed'. This petition was signed by members and associates of the

Pro Life club, including the President. Yes, that is correct. Pro Life tried to disaffiliate themselves.

2: Pro Life wanted to take AUSA to court

For some reason, Pro Life thought that if they were disaffiliated from AUSA, then they could take AUSA to court for disaffiliating them. Again, you heard right – Pro Life wanted to disaffiliate themselves and then take AUSA to court for disaffiliating them. Their supposed legal grounds for this were to do with the right to freedom of speech and organisation under the NZ Bill of Rights Act. This is stupid for the following reasons:

- a. In this case NZBORA doesn't apply to AUSA. AUSA is not a public organisation and does not receive public funding.
- b. AUSA does not disaffiliate clubs. AUSA's members disaffiliate clubs. Therefore, it's impossible to take AUSA as an organisation to court for something that it didn't actually do.
- c. Following on from this, AUSA cannot be ordered to re-affiliate a club, because AUSA does not affiliate clubs. AUSA members do.
- d. The AUSA Constitution, which allows for the disaffiliation of clubs, has to be reviewed by a number of bodies, including the Charities Office and AUSA's Solicitors (Chen Palmer). If disaffiliation was in any way illegal, then it would not be allowed in the Constitution.
- e. Any lawyer who deserves to be a lawyer

would take one look at this case and see that Pro Life had called for themselves to be disaffiliated purely to take AUSA to court, see that this was a cynical manipulation of AUSA rules for nasty political purposes and laugh in Pro Life Auckland's misguided little face.

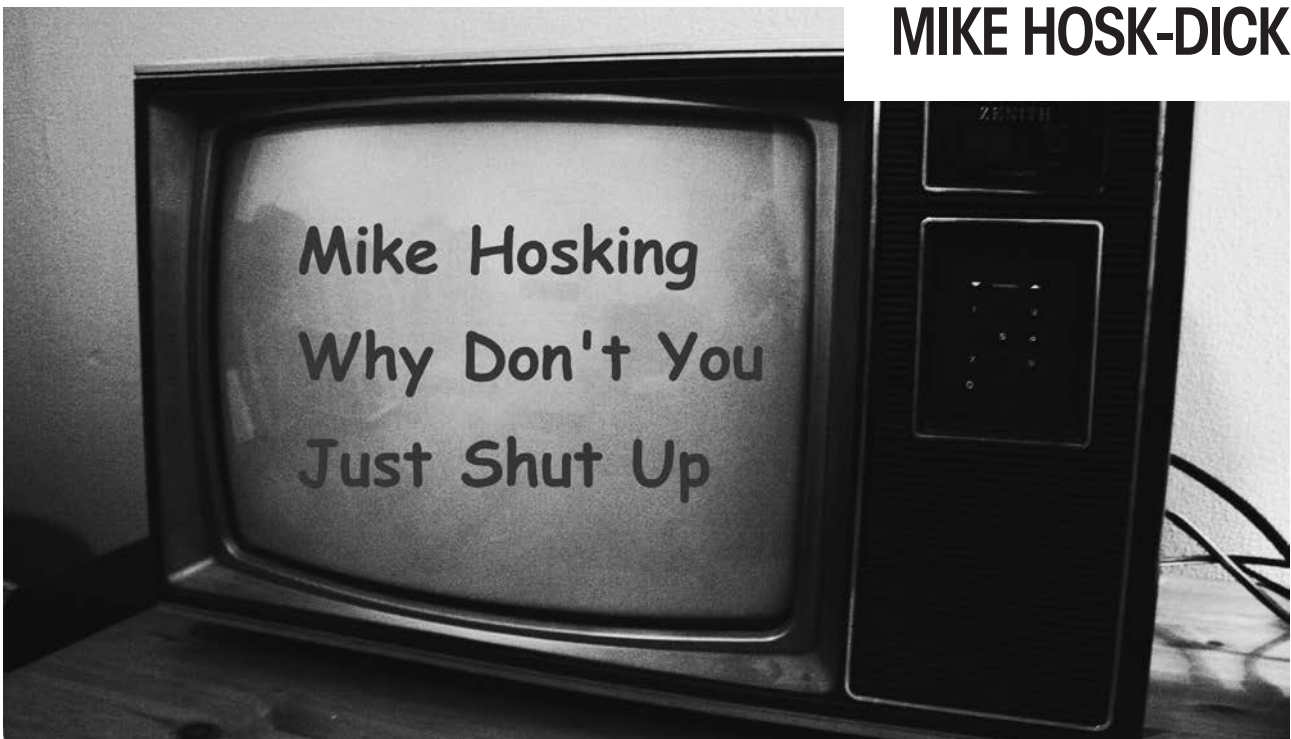
So basically, Pro Life was speeding up its own removal from AUSA. Kind of hilarious if it hadn't wasted a whole lot of AUSA time and stress working out that the club's entire premise was flawed.

3: Pro Life has now withdrawn the petition

Turns out that they needed one more signature to get the necessary 20 members (Pro Life Auckland only has 19 members? Query). One of the signatories put his girlfriend's name on the petition, without actually asking her if she gave her permission to do so. The girlfriend found out and asked AUSA to remove it, therefore depriving the petition of the necessary 20 members. Pro Life has declined to find another signatory.

SO. Basically the Pro Life Club has decided to abort a petition that may have negatively impacted their future despite many people telling them to go through with it otherwise. In other words – they made a choice to stop a process that other people claim would have been better for them. Isn't it nice that AUSA allows the CHOICE for them to terminate the petition, otherwise they would have no choice but to see it through to full term. ■

MIKE HOSK-DICK



Comments made by Seven Sharp host [Half-Human Half-Eagle Hybrid] Mike Hosking haven't just landed the sometimes controversial host in hot water, but have also provoked some very thoughtful and introspective discussion about the state of Māori-Pākehā relations in this country.

The story was a profile on Andrew Judd, the current Mayor of New Plymouth, who announced last week that he would *not* be seeking re-election to that position after vitriolic public abuse over his stance on Māori representation on local councils.

Judd, who describes himself as a "recovering racist", said that the stance was one he took after developing moral convictions about the importance of engaging with and discussing New Zealand's colonial past. Judd said that before being elected into the position, he knew nothing about New Zealand's history, and held ideas about race relations he now describes as "ignorant". He says his epiphany was brought about by cultivating knowledge of the region's history and interacting with members of local iwi - something he felt he had to do as Mayor of his town.

His new outlook backfired on him badly. Councillors narrowly voted to establish a new Māori ward in the region, but a binding-referendum, initiated by members of Grey Power,

immediately canned the project, with 83% of respondents opposing the move.

Since the referendum, Judd claims to have been spat on, shouted at, sworn at, and been subject to other forms of abuse - all by members of his own constituency. Judd won his first election by a landslide of more than 9000 votes, and now he considers re-election such a divisive and hopeless project that he doesn't believe it is even worth trying.

Hosking complained that while he would "never personally attack him" Judd was "massively out of touch with Middle New Zealand", and that Māori who wanted to be represented on local council should simply run for election. The comments immediately followed a visibly shaken Judd discussing the extreme difficulty he faced in engaging people who didn't have a good grasp on New Zealand history or Māori-Pākehā relations. Hosking's comments have struck many as being insensitive, and deliberately undermining the tone of the piece that went before it.

More than thirty complaints have been laid with the Broadcasting Standards Authority about Hosking's interjection. However, the piece, and the reaction to it, have prompted a number of people across the county to weigh in on the matter. Miriama Kamo commented on the story on TVNZ's *Marae*. Kamo said that she was offended by Hosking's commentary, saying that the comments "upset many Māori and Pākehā".

"Here's what it is to be Māori: I once lost a job

when I was a teenager because I corrected the boss when he mispronounced my name. When I arrived for work the next day he marched me to the back door, opened it, held out my pay packet outside and told me to get out." said Kamo.

"I was devastated, fired over my Māori name."

More locally, University of Auckland medical student, Kera May wrote a Facebook post on Seven Sharp's wall in reaction to Hosking's comments. Accruing almost 7000 likes, the post condemned the talkback radio host for his ignorance about issues facing Māori across the country. May told Hosking that he has "a responsibility to ensure that what comes out of your mouth when the camera is rolling is accurate and informed."

"You are clearly either delusional or completely ignorant of the vast inequities that exist in our society. Healthcare. Education. Incarceration. If you would like to enlighten yourself I'm perfectly happy to provide you with some peer-reviewed academic articles by internationally acclaimed scholars."

Race Relations Minister Susan Devoy called Judd an "everyday hero", but that the aggressive reaction to his convictions were "not surprising".

"Andrew grew up knowing little about the half of the history of the region he grew up in and he recently discovered its history of injustice: more Kiwis like us need to not be scared but to find out about the true history of their community." ■



YOUR COUCH PULLS OUT AND SO DOES AUSA AUSA WITHDRAWS FROM NZUSA

Following the lead of AUSM at AUT and USCA down in Canterbury, AUSA is withdrawing from NZUSA. NZUSA requires members to give a full year's notice before membership withdrawals are accepted, meaning that AUSA will officially leave the group on May 8th 2017.

AUSA President Will 'Nando's Presents' Matthews says that the AUSA Executive was "keen to work with NZUSA to resolve its concerns" during that period.

"We've been very clear that AUSA is supportive of the concept of a national student voice, and wants NZUSA to provide that voice. We want to be a part of NZUSA, but at the moment we don't feel the service is worth the substantial levy that we pay."

NZUSA levees typically cost in the five figures - figures for other student associations have varied from between \$25,000 and \$45,000 per year. Increasing dissatisfaction with how that money was spent, with NZUSA resources increasingly going to help resolve issues in smaller polytechnics and other tertiary institutions, have motivated the trend towards regional independence.

Craccum understands the NZUSA levee cost as much as one third of AUSA's annual operating budget. With increasingly tight operating costs already affecting operations at AUSA, that money represented vital budgeting lee-way. In return for their membership fee, NZUSA helped negotiate national campaigns on student issues, and used economies of scale to help bring better resources to individual campus problems. This year the organisation has run campaigns on issues of student debt, housing, and public transport. ■



HEALTHY HOMES BILL PASSED EASILY THE MOST BORING STORY IN THIS WEEK'S EDITION

Labour's "Healthy Homes" Bill has passed its first reading in Parliament this week.

Labour claims that the bill, sponsored by Labour Party leader Andrew Little, will help protect the the health and wellbeing of hundreds of New Zealand families up and down the country, while their opponents on the right have claimed that the bill would take too long to enact, unnecessarily raise costs for poor families, and ultimately be ineffective. If successfully passed, the bill essentially forces landlords to meet minimum standards of heating, ventilation, and drainage in rental properties.

National's competing Rental Tenancies Amendment Bill has a similar purpose, but comes with a much lighter set of restrictions. In particular, the bill has lower standards surrounding insulation and heating, with certain provisions within the bill allowing some houses that have been constructed to older standards to remain as

they are.

Labour's bill has garnered some support from Students' Associations across the country. NZUSA have recently renewed their calls for the introduction of a "Rental WOF" - a shorthand for yet another higher standard for homes across the country, supported by the Green Party.

National's bill passed the select committee stage during the middle of last month, and is currently going into it's second reading. Labour's bill passed its first reading 61 votes to 60, with Labour, the Greens, NZ First, the Maori Party and United Future all voting in favour, and National and ACT voting against.

An almost identical bill, submitted by Labour's Housing Spokesperson Phil Twyford, failed to make it past first reading after a 60-60 deadlock vote in parliament in March last year. The extra vote this time came from New Zealand First gaining an extra seat in the Northland by-election. ■

MOUSTACHE ON CAMPUS

There is a light at the end of the tunnel for the university culinary set - Moustache, the boutique biscuit store, formerly located on Wellesley Street, will open a new location at the centre of the University Quad.

After the turbulent ejection of NZ Natural from campus [news ed: rest in peace boysenberry delight, best in category nz ice-cream manufacturers association awards 2007 and my personal respite from the many difficulties of a long day of university study], many were wondering exactly what would open in the ice cream parlour's place.

The milk and cookie bar announced the new location this week, using an ornate, mul-

ti-part scavenger hunt to break the news.

The store has been a favourite among Auckland students since it opened in 2012. Its founder, 22-year-old Ms. Deanna Yang, was profiled by a number of local media outlets for her culinary skills and entrepreneurial success. Unfortunately, the business was forced to close their Wellesley street location in late 2014, for reasons described as "outside the business' control". However, Ms Yang managed to keep the store alive by successfully crowdfunding a "Cookie-Bus", which has been touring the country since that date.

Securing a contract with the store is the latest in a long line of successes for the University, who have managed to attract Mexicali, Shaky Isles, and Waffle Supreme over the last six months. ■

☑ Please fucking vote

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

THIS SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

John Palino: Guess who's back, back again, Johnny's back, who knows why. After coming so close to being competitive last time around John is back just wishing that his small post-election scandal is enough to elicit some name recognition, without it being enough for anyone to actually remember who he is.

Penny Bright: You know that crazy lady who owed the council \$34,000 in unpaid rates? Well, she's a politician now. The only possible upside of her winning is that she could become both the plaintiff and defendant at the same time in the same case.

Victoria Crone: The managing director of Xero is interesting in that no one really knows what her political views are. From what the website tells me, she seems like your run of the mill 'cut spending and pay down debt' fiscal conservative. Also will cap rates rises, but that's what Len Brown said.

Phil Goff: Actually going to be the next mayor. Name recognition, centrist and seemingly genuine. If he had just waited one cycle he would actually have had a chance of being Prime Minister, but then again the Labour Party may have just moved that little bit too far away from him. I honestly wouldn't be surprised if both National and Labour endorse

him, if only so both can claim they won.

THE OTHERS:

David Hay

Adam Holland

Tyrone Raumat

Mark Thomas

Not important or notable enough to get their own paragraph, but include a former Green Party member, the grandson of a Prime Minister, the Deputy Chair of a local board, and someone described as a community leader, whatever that is. Pretty sure that just means that they have no other defining feature.

ALREADY LOST:

Stephen Berry: Dropped out of the race in March and endorsed Palino. It's a shame really because I had actually met him, and therefore would not have felt nearly as bad about being a dick. At the Politics Week Backbenchers last year he represented the ACT party, and I kinda hope he comes back as he is the sort of person who is a walking drinking game – he said something offensive, drink. ■

TOP FIVE

1: Phil Goff might not be Auckland's next mayor. While previously we assumed that he had a 100% chance of winning it, turns out it is now only 98ish. There are plausible scenarios in which he doesn't win. Admittedly one of these involve a communist takeover of the government, but still.

2: The opposition has started governing again. After several years of languishing and in-fighting, the New Zealand Labour party has finally got its act together. Its minimum standards for rented homes got through its first reading. National does not seem unhappy however, and it appears that they will also support it once it is out of Select Committee.

3: *Shaun Micallef Mad as Hell* is back. The Australian answer to *The Colbert Report*, this half hour of political satire is great for those feeling the politics week buzz. Though not shown in NZ, hit up YouTube for full episodes.

4: John Key is still our preferred Prime Minister by a substantial margin. Take this as proof that university students just live in our own bubble.

5: It's Politics Week if you can't tell, and that means that there are many great events on – the highlights being Backbenchers on Monday, Politics Quiz on Wednesday and the great Politics Debate on Friday. *Craccum* understands that there will be bunting. ■



STUDENT ALLOWANCES SLIDE

Student Allowance numbers, and the number of students contesting Student Allowance eligibility, have dropped dramatically since the start of the decade – potentially a sign of increased lack of faith in Studylink as a reliable supplier of student aid.

99,271 students applied for Student Allowances in 2011. That number has decreased by almost 25%, falling to 75,050 in 2015. New restrictions placed on student allowance eligibility by the central government have also meant that the number of students contesting allowance applications has dramatically decreased. Review applications have halved in number from 2011 to 2015 from 788 to 300.

Studylink's Student Allowance application process is well known for being both complicated and poorly designed. Studylink requires signed parental proof that students are independent from their parents – meaning that those who are either out of contact, have no means to contact, or do not wish to contact one or both of their parents are effectively excluded from the system.

Allowances are decided on the basis of parental income – which fails to account for the fact only 15% of students receive financial support from their parents. The level of the allowance is also hotly contested, particularly in Auckland, where \$172 a week isn't enough to cover weekly rent.

Students who require financial assistance but aren't able to negotiate Studylink's system are often forced to apply for loan living costs, increasing their debt. ■

lifestyle

WHAT'S ON 16 – 22 MAY

Lakes and the Magic Band are bringin' the noise this Saturday at Neck of the Woods, from 10pm. With support from **Molly + The Chromatics**, **LCKY U**, **Round Buddha** and a DJ set by **Soup**, there are guaranteed good times for all. Head to Eventfinda for \$10 pre-sale tix.

If you're looking for a good time on a Wednesday night, head to The Wine Cellar for a dose of sweet music, with **Being.**, **Balu Brigada**, **Paprika Jones** and **Rachel Hamilton**. Doors open at 8pm, with door sales only \$5.

Opening this Wednesday is an exhibition of **Japanese Pottery** at Pah Homestead. With 35 artists from 7 major traditional kiln sites in Japan featured in the exhibition, this is a great chance to see masterful work from a country with an incredibly rich ceramic history. Free entry, with the show running until 19 June.

Ever been to an opera? How about a subversive one? Head along to the Basement Theatre to see UnStuck Opera's re-imagined **Dido and Aeneas**. \$18 for students, the show runs Tuesday to Saturday from 8pm. ■

AGONY AUNTS



Dear Aunties,

The other night my girlfriend and I returned to my house after a night out for some much needed rest. Unfortunately my flatmate was enjoying his newly found single life and having a rather debauched evening with his new friend in the bedroom next to mine. Thin walls and being discreet usually go hand in hand in the flat and life goes along swimmingly. However, this time we were kept up till the early hours of the morning. The morning after my flatmate showed little remorse with a 'sorry not sorry' tude. Any aunty wisdom would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Traumatised and Frustrated

Dear *Traumatised and Frustrated*,

Being privy to intimate details of other people's sex lives is one of the many joys of flatting. If the guy is really showing no remorse, perhaps you could consider giving him a taste of his own medicine. Pick a night when you know he needs his beauty sleep (maybe he has work in the morning...?) to bring your girlfriend around and indulge in your own night of luuuuurve. Forget discretion, and show your flatmate how frustrating it is to be kept awake all night. If that doesn't work – we would suggest you invest in some earplugs.

Your loving aunties,

Aunt Phryne and Aunt Wilhelmina xxx ■

PLEASE SEND YOUR PROBLEM IN 50 WORDS OR LESS TO LIFESTYLE@CRACCUM.CO.NZ, ANONYMITY GUARANTEED.



THE UOA FAIR TRADE CLUB PRESENTS SAMPLING SQUAD @ KOKAKO

Every now and then, the Fair Trade Club rounds up a team of dedicated Fair Trade enthusiasts to visit ethical businesses (mostly cafes, let's be real). We recently visited Kokako Café and Roastery in Grey Lynn for their 15th anniversary.

Kokako is a coffee brand that has built itself a reputation for quality. In 2009, it was certified as organic and Fairtrade – yay! Kokako staff explained to us how each process of coffee was carried out from Papua New Guinea to NZ or, as they describe it, "understanding the journey of your coffee from crop to cup". (If you're interested in learning more, watch the film *Black Gold*.)

Despite considering ourselves coffee connoisseurs, we knew nothing about the early processing stages of coffee. The coffee

beans used by Kokako are handpicked in the Eastern highlands of PNG. Their main supplier is actually a co-operative, Highlands Organic Agriculture. This co-operative system, along with Kokako's exporters, ensure not only that A-grade coffee beans are supplied to Kokako but also that the farmers are paid a fair price.

The different types of coffee the squad tasted at Kokako were truly enjoyable. The Ethiopian Sidamo was sweet and quite acidic. It smelled floral and had a black-tea aftertaste that gave off some full fruity notes. The Cold Brew Coffee is a healthy substitute for energy drinks. For a coffee it is not very acidic and has earthy, chocolatey notes to it.

Thanks for doing you, Kokako! ■

SOOOSH FIX

We all love a Tuesday Salmon Supreme with double avocado, but sushi is plentiful in this town, and there are plenty of great alternatives to St Pierre's.

Masako, 101 K Road: Serious soosh variety here. It's like walking into a goddamn sushi banquet. They also do donburi, salads and lunch boxes – takeaway and eat in.

Sushi Bar Salmon, Mercury Plaza: Offers lunch and dinner and is super affordable. The food comes pretty quickly but if you are waiting a while, it's fun to have a squiz in Mein Garn Sarn Supermarket next door for snacks and tasty treats.

Yuzu, Symonds Street: This place has a caa-ute covered deck space out back so it's great if you want an affordable dinner with nice ambience. They also do green tea ice cream, with sprinkles.

Bian, Symonds street: Another popular lunch spot with more to offer than just teriyaki chicken on rice. They have a 'build-your-own-box' soosh take away system and the service is really efficient.

Banzai, Symonds Street: Another sen-soosh-in-al establishment. They do a build-your-own-box sushi service, salads and hot meals as well. ■ EMILY FREW



SOCKS AND SANDALS. SACRILEGE?

For years I've considered socks and sandals to be the ultimate faux pas of everyday dressing. But maybe it's time to think outside the box when it comes to the limits of appropriate sock and footwear combinations?

You're in a hurry to get to uni, you put your sandals on, rush out the door only to realise you're facing near-arctic conditions, so you grab a pair of socks to make sure your ankles don't get cold and you keep on going. Simple enough? It's ultimate mid-season problem solving.

At first I was horrified by the idea. The beauty of socks is that they're inherently personal! They're the sort of thing you wear for yourself, because they're the only part of your own outfit you can properly see besides your shoes. It

would be wrong to wear them with sandals!! Wouldn't it...?

Perhaps 'socks and sandals' is a dangerous gateway, leading to further desecration of fashion norms. Maybe people will stop wearing shoes altogether! It's like riding a bike without a helmet or choosing to walk on the right side of the footpath when you know you're meant to be on the left. It's a reckless abandonment of safety which says, 'it might rain today, but I don't care if I get soggy socks, because I'm going to do what I want'. Its truth to material in sock form and proof to the world that like it or not, you'll take risks when it comes to footwear.

Risky and dangerous but not altogether unsuccessful. I might just try it. ■



UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

Human Nature by Kirsty McNeil, Amy Donnell, Lara Thomas, Casey Carsel and Natasha Priddle opens this week at **George Fraser Gallery**. Opening event 5pm Tuesday, with the show running until Saturday.

George Watson has a solo show at **Window**, with *Decorative Orchids* onsite, and *Mostly I harvest each green fruit with regret* online at windowgallery.co.nz.

Group show *The face is familiar* opens this week at **West Space** and NICAI Student Centre, with work by Tommo Jiang, Mano Rankin and Casey Carsel. Show runs until 17 June.

Last chance to see *ALTER: Between Human and Non-human* at **Gus Fisher**. Curated by Deborah Lawler-Dormer, *ALTER* is a group exhibition that investigates virtual/real and human/non-human relationships in the context of ever-increasing digitization of existence. ■

FASHION ON CAMPUS

Michelle: "You want to project a certain vibe, everyone does that."



The truth hurtz, but it's bettr to hav a few lolz than to cri abt it xox **newsinceritymemesx0x**



I miss all of you guys



what you think staying in touch with your highschool friends will look like



✓ Seen 2:15pm

✓ Seen Tue 2:42pm

✓ Seen Mar 19

what it actually looks like



Lighten Your Load

AUSA, your students' association,
has **lockers available now**
for hire.

Top Locker \$50.00

Bottom Locker \$45.00

EFTPOS ONLY.

Please supply your own padlock. Lockers are
located under the Quad.

Pop into
AUSA Reception
and get yours
today.

This week we're interviewing AUSA Welfare Vice-President Penelope Jones. Here are some things that Penelope loves: being the life of the party, helping needy students, and her quest to take the ultimate bikini photo. Here are some things that she hates: being called Penny in formal situations, the current socio-economic and policy environments leading to enormous levels of student hardship, and cupcakes.

FIRST THINGS FIRST - HOW IS YOUR QUEST FOR THE ULTIMATE BIKINI PHOTO GOING?

It's not really going... You've heard of the Fresh-er 5, welcome to the AUSA 8.

YOU'RE AN EX AUSA WOMEN'S RIGHTS OFFICER. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE LEAST FEMINIST THING YOU'VE DONE?

Well I did suggest we release an AUSA Executive bikini calendar. On the other hand that could be quite empowering...

ARE YOU NOW, OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN A MEMBER OF THE LABOUR PARTY?

I used to be, but I fell out with some of the members and became quite alienated.

LET'S BE HONEST, YOU'RE ONLY ONE OF THE ROUGHLY 75% OF THE ELECTORATE THAT THE LABOUR PARTY HAS ALIENATED.

Yeah, and the rest of the electorate didn't even have to meet the members to feel that way...

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE POKEMON THAT YOU GOT ASSIGNED?

Well I'm disappointed that it's from Generation IV, which everyone knows is the worst of the generations, but Will really nailed it with the fringe similarity.

YOUR FRINGE IS AMAZING. WHAT BLACK MAGIC DO YOU DO TO KEEP IT SO PERFECT?

Okay - this is my routine.

Every three weeks, I have to get it trimmed by a senior stylist. Sometimes they cut it too short



ALREADY PRACTISING FOR THAT BIKINI PHOTO

and it goes above my eyebrows, and then I look like a freak.

I have to wash it every morning with only Schwartzkopf shampoo.

It needs to be blow dried every morning, using a special dryer attachment. When I'm doing this, I have to put a heat protector on the fringe.

If it's windy then I have to use a bit of hairspray to keep it in place. Even then the wind messes it up so I have to carry a comb with me wherever I go.

JESUS CHRIST.

OKAY, CONTINUING WITH THE SERIOUS QUESTIONS: SHOOT. SHAG. MARRY: AN UGLY RICH MAN WITH NO PERSONALITY, A GREAT LOOKING POOR GUY WITH LOADS OF PERSONALITY, AN ALL AROUND OKAY LOOKING NICE-ISH AVERAGE JOE

Marry the ugly rich guy. I don't care, I have enough personality for the both of us. Shag the good looking poor guy - Titanic/the Notebook styles. Shoot the average guy. That was easy.

BEING WELFARE VICE PRESIDENT PUTS YOU IN CHARGE OF ONE OF

AUSA'S MOST IMPORTANT PROGRAMMES. AS WOMEN'S RIGHTS OFFICER YOU WERE ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME BIG AND VERY SENSITIVE ISSUES. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY YOU'VE LEARNED FROM AUSA?

1: No matter what your intentions are, if you've offended someone you need to listen to them.

2: The number of students who are out there struggling is staggering. It's one thing to read a statistic, it's another thing to actually meet these people and listen to their stories.

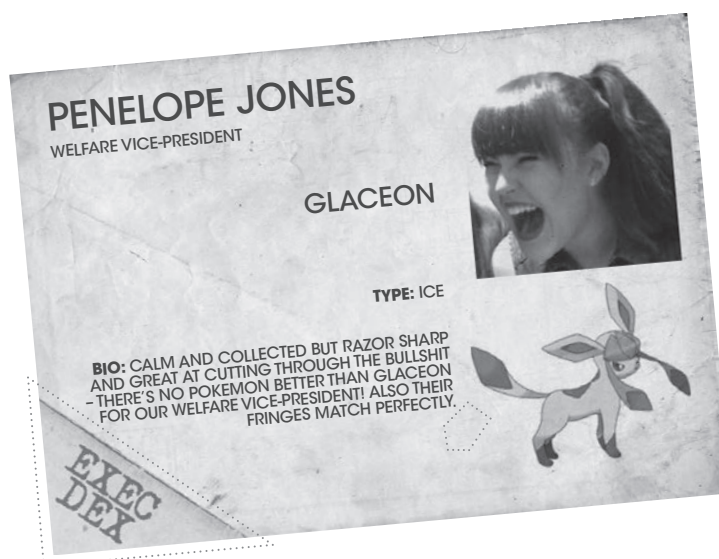
3: AUSA is great experience. I've learned how to take part in governing a business, organising large scale events, running campaigns and sticking it to the man.

LAST, BUT NOT LEAST: IF YOU COULD ICE ANYTHING ON A CUPCAKE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Hairy armpits.

IS THAT TRANSMISOGYNIST?

HELL NO ■



AUSA GIVES NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM NEW ZEALAND UNION OF STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

Auckland University Students' Association (AUSA) has given notice of withdrawal from the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA).

AUSA informed NZUSA President Linsey Higgins and Executive Director Alistair Shaw of the decision on Monday 9th May. It is the result of a review of NZUSA, which the AUSA Executive started in January 2016.

However, AUSA President Will Matthews said the AUSA Executive was keen to work with NZUSA to resolve its concerns about the service the national body provides and could reverse the decision to withdraw.

AUSA does not immediately cease to be a member. NZUSA's constitutional requirements means that the withdrawal of a member association takes a year from the date notice is

given. AUSA's resignation is due to take effect on the 8th of May 2017.

"Because of the long resignation period, we would like to use our withdrawal as an opportunity to work with NZUSA to address issues we've identified", said Matthews.

"We've been very clear that AUSA is supportive of the concept of a national student voice, and wants NZUSA to provide that voice. We want to be a part of NZUSA, but at the moment we don't feel the service is worth the substantial levy that we pay."

Matthews said AUSA's experience had been that NZUSA has a good understanding of the unique problems that each student union association faces in terms of issues like funding and relationships with their relationship with their institution, but does not currently provide sufficient support.

"We would like to see better levels of organisation and communication, increased profession-

alism in NZUSA and more consultation with members," he said.

"Our experience is that there is a lack of engagement with member associations in planning and implementing campaigns, feedback is not taken on board, and there is a perceived failure of NZUSA to understand and support member associations with local problems.

"Members often aren't fully aware of what's going on with campaigns and central government lobbying. There are also internal issues in terms of organising national meetings and constitutional changes.

"We are committed to reviewing our decision at the end of this year, and if the Executive sees some clear progress in the issues then we will reverse our withdrawal.

"This isn't the end of the AUSA-NZUSA relationship, rather the beginning of a conversation about the future of it." ■

ON THE PRO LIFE CLUB

Your Women's Rights Officers give you the low down on the recent Pro-Choice/Pro-Life debate that's been brewing on campus.

Last week the pro-life club came and gave us flowers. The gesture was kind although taking them felt like a betrayal of sorts. As beautiful as they were, the flowers didn't fit in our office vase. We knew that if we kept them they wouldn't bloom the way we wanted, and so decided to sacrifice them. This may have seemed inconsiderate or ruthless to some, making them wonder when our hearts stopped beating, as the chalking would suggest, but the point is that it was our choice as human beings. What we want to keep on us, around us and, most importantly, inside us, is our choice and no one else's.

The pro-life/pro-choice debate is not a new one. It has been around for generations of Women's Rights Officers and the issue resurfaces each year. On one side, there is a group of people who believe that pregnancies should never be terminated because even a conceived egg is a 'life'. On the other, there is a group of people who believe that women have every right to choose what to do with their bodies

because, well, of course they do. There is something sacred in one's ability to exercise their freedom of choice and such a freedom should never be qualified when it comes to something as intimate as one's own body.

We want to make one thing explicitly clear. If someone is 'pro-choice' that does not mean they are pro-abortion. Pro-choice empowers people to know that they themselves are ultimately in charge of their own bodies and can therefore decide what best to do with them. If you are pregnant and don't want to have it, that is your choice and you are entitled to that. At the same time, if you do, you are also entitled to that.

Pro-life, however, limits the choices that women are presented with. They place an absolute barrier to women from exercising their fundamental right to choose at the most vital stage in pregnancy. It is not enough to simply say "abortion or adoption" because this dichotomy does not take into account the psychological harms done to women who are forced to carry unwanted children. It also ignores the harms done to children after they are born that result from not having a stable family upbringing. Pro-choice, on the other hand, gives you more control over your life as well as the life of your child for if you actively decide to have one in the future.

If you've had the good fortune of missing out on all of pro-life's recent stunts and have no idea what's going on, then count yourself lucky for managing to avoid the inconsiderate harassment that has occurred towards women on campus via chalking and on facebook. This is the problem: How do we balance the welfare of our students with the freedom of speech that ties into the messages pro-life is chalking? The messages they have written outside the general library, the Quad and even outside of AUSA house have been critical and judgemental of women exercising their bodily autonomy. We have received complaints from people who have seen these feeling threatened, guilty (this does NOT mean regret), and generally uncomfortable on campus. This is not okay and AUSA opposes this harassment.

Our main concern as Women's Rights Officers now is to care for and support the welfare of students who may be impacted by this. So, we're hosting a panel on Abortion Law Reform as part of AUSA's Politics Week at 6.30pm in Womenspace on the 17th of May. If this sounds like something you might be interested in please stay tuned for more details. In the meantime write to us at wro@ausa.org.nz or come and see us in office hours (Wednesday 1pm-3pm) for more rants. ■

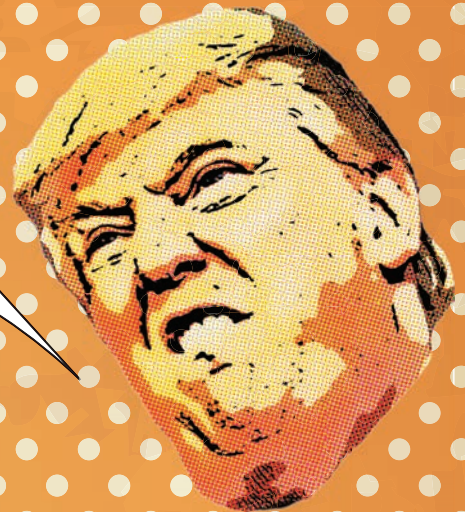
AUSA PRESENTS...

POLITICS WEEK

16TH-20TH MAY



MONDAY 16TH
YOUTH BACKBENCHERS
5PM-7PM, SHADOWS
BACKBENCHERS
8PM ONWARDS, SHADOWS



TUESDAY 17TH
WELFARE BREAKFAST
8AM-10AM, FRONT OF AUSA HOUSE
"ARE STUDENTS SCREWED?"
2PM, SJS ABOVE THE QUAD
ABORTION LAW REFORM PANEL
6PM, WOMENSPACE



WEDNESDAY 18TH
PEACE RALLY
12PM, QUAD
POLITICS QUIZ
6PM, SHADOWS

FRIDAY 20TH
"HOW TO GET YOUR VOICE HEARD"
2PM, SJS ABOVE THE QUAD
THE GREAT ANNUAL POLITICS DEBATE
5PM-7PM, OGGB3
ACOUSTIC MUSIC NIGHT
8PM, SHADOWS

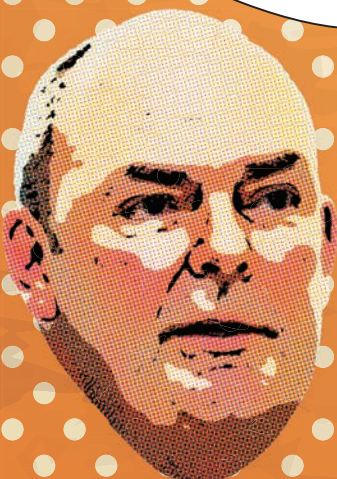
THURSDAY 19TH
CARTOONIST IN THE QUAD
1PM, QUAD
CAREERS PUBLIC SECTOR EXPO
5PM-7PM, LIBRARY BASEMENT



SATURDAY 21ST
UN YOUTH PRESENTS POLITICS FORUM
10AM-5PM



AUSA
SERVING STUDENTS



fifty, thrifty and thriving?

isabelle russell weighs in on whether students should be saving now for that dream home or making the most of their youth.



A million dollars will barely cut it for retirement savings. Several hundred thousand and you're still short of a suburban Auckland house. Meanwhile, a \$20 dinner, \$4.50 large flat white, \$54 D-Reserve Pop-Up Globe ticket, or perhaps even a South American backpacking adventure in the July break are comparatively accessible financial choices.

Facing a future of possible (probable) financial insecurity, has our generation actually become more liberal with money? A plan to save until we can truly afford discretionary spending may never be fulfilled, nor is there any future guarantee of good health and leisure time to enjoy it. No obvious right or wrong leaves us teetering between saving dollars for an end goal and spending them on life experiences along the way, at the expense of overdraft.

Hotly-debated, over-inflated Auckland house prices make the classic Kiwi dream of home-ownership a thing of the past – distant and inaccessible. Barfoot and Thompson reported the median house price in Auckland for March 2016 as just shy of \$800,000. Yet the dream lives on according to their survey of 500 18-34 year-olds. 91% aspire to be homeowners for the benefits of financial stability, investment potential, raising a family and living out the values instilled in them by their parents and grandparents.

Recently, the *NZ Herald* spotlighted a 24-year-old Aucklander seeking out her third property after climbing onto the ladder at just 21. She persevered through 40-hour work weeks on top of study, saving every cent. The sacrifices – repetitive meals of cereal, milk and tuna and turning down nights out – have seriously paid off. Three properties before 25! Three mortgages, yes, but she could be set up for life. It's admirable, enviable, but it may not be for everyone. Discipline and a long-term view make for an

effective saving strategy, but what's the harm in brunching, festival-going or actually having a bit of fun on the weekends?

By prioritising short-term spending over long-term saving, students may be saving up setbacks instead – but is it reasonable to expect 20-year-olds to financially plan for life in their later years? The UK Financial Times says “instability is at the core of millennial psyche. Own stuff? They can't afford to.” Savings have become an expensive luxury. This instability may dissuade us from long-term money goals and instead push us towards adopting a mindset of short-term satisfaction. Why deprive ourselves now when there isn't even a guarantee of comfort later? Or wait until we're older only to realise that opportunities have long passed us by? Despite this apparently volatile future and the accompanying sense of pessimism as to home-owning and retirement nest-egg prospects, ironically it's easy to feel misguided optimism by assuming that in delaying consistent savings habits now, we can catch up later. The buzz-killing reality is that thriftiness and a dose of FOMO are required to realise these goals. An extreme connection, maybe, but there could be a positive correlation between skipping a concert and being able to support your family in years to come. The fact is, a normal level of spending could still make for aggressive catch-up somewhere down the track when our best efforts aren't enough to recoup those missing funds. Time is the closest ally of retirement saving. \$20 for a weekly dinner date with pals might be insignificant now but it adds up to a sizeable \$1040 a year. Yet a weekly \$20 Kiwisaver or savings account top-up for the next forty years is only \$41,600 – \$958,400 shy of a \$1 million retirement goal that we're told is still woefully inadequate.

Instant gratification may not be a bad thing when it contributes to a life worth living and, ultimately, a life well lived. The money channelled into experiences enjoyed in the present seems doubly well spent: we revel in the fleeting fun and collect life experiences, mental souvenirs to keep. Priorities play a

major role in our pursuit of happiness: how we allocate our limited time and money. We are the sum total of our experiences, connecting us to a meaningful sense of community when shared with others. Long after material status symbols have lost their shine, investments in experiences can continue to give back unquantifiable personal returns. Should we feel guilty? Travel agencies are welcoming a new wave of millennial travellers as one of 2016's top trends. A fast-growing, influential group of young jet-setters, with youthful glows and little to anchor them, taking off when classes end. A rebellious response to the pressure to save for home-ownership, only to be a permanent renter? Or optimism that we can have it all? University is a limbo before committing to real adulthood, full-time work schedules, fewer holidays and increased debts to shoulder. Certainly not every student has the luxury of hopping on a plane after their last exam, but the sentiment applies to discretionary spending in general.

Without intending to dredge up a tired #YOLO justification for a general attitude of negligence, living a life with no regrets means making the most of now or risk losing opportunities that won't give you a second chance when you decide you're finally ready for them. This is not to convince you to throw your dollars at everything for the sake of collecting good times. It's also not to say that millennials are collectively neglecting saving, since many of us try to stow away sums where we can. From when we properly start adulting until we're silver-haired in a rest home, the memories from decades past stick. Short-term fun may not be a good financial decision (then again, you never know who you'll serendipitously meet or what you'll learn), but maybe it's a long-term investment in our life satisfaction. Treating yourself and living while you're young instead of prioritising long-term fiscal goals that are too distant and obscure to conceptualise right now may seem frivolous, irresponsible and potentially wasteful to older generations. It's not about being irresponsible and abandoning savings, but it is about trying to find a balance between now and later. ■



the artful dodgers

catriona britton is pissed off with
how the government continues to
neglect funding for the arts

As much as creatives are hypersensitive individuals, the Government continues to be a merry band of hyperdicks. It was announced in April that Creative New Zealand (“CNZ”) is set to lose \$11 million in funding due to drops in lottery sales. All that Arts, Culture and Heritage Minister Maggie Barry had to say was a few large jackpots will inevitably attract the gamblers back and “the balls might just roll our way”.

She may as well be saying the arts organisations that are now having diva tantrums and side-of-stage freak-outs about funding cuts have nothing to worry about and need to chill out – put their batons down and their tightly rolled-up scripts back in their pockets. Sure thing, Mags. Nothing screams “certainty” for the arts sector than having to rely on gambling for funding.

It’s almost embarrassing that CNZ has had

to warn people that in order to keep the arts alive, they need to attend arts events, make donations and buy Lotto tickets. The latter shouldn’t even need to be a thing to begin with. Actively encouraging people to gamble is as problematic as John Key pulling ponytails. It speaks volumes about our Government that CNZ receives 60 to 70 per cent of its revenue from the Lottery Grants Board. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage only provides it with \$15.69 million annually. With the sheer amount of arts organisations that are funded by CNZ, how is this a sustainable model of funding?

The Government is no stranger to criticism about its obvious lack of arts funding. Remember the debacle in early 2015 with Eleanor Catton? She called the Key government out and was publicly shamed by New Zealand mainstream media as a result. Catton expressed her anger over the Government’s treatment of the arts and felt “uncomfortable” being an ambassador for New Zealand when the Government wasn’t giving fair treatment for “the intellectual world”. John Key, ignoring this statement altogether, instead focused on the political comments she made and told everyone “she has no particular great insights into politics”.

Instances like this and Barry’s recent comment, where prominent individuals in the arts scene publicly express concern on funding, show just how apathetic the Government can be over a sector that’s just as important as any other.

We hear time and time again that funding for things like schools, hospitals and roads need to be prioritised above all else. Yes, these things are important. But then you also had the Government spending \$26 million trying to convince the public that we needed a new flag when this hadn’t even entered the public’s mind.

Jacinda Ardern highlighted a further aspect to the problem. The Government has maintained the same level of funding for organisations like CNZ since its inception. This doesn’t take into account the constantly changing dynamic of the arts sector. The arts aren’t static and cannot be compartmentalised into set groups of organisations. Every year more and more arts and cultural businesses are being established, putting increasing pressure on the already limited funding available. Of course, this shouldn’t be seen as a bad thing. If anything it shows just how thriving the arts continue to be.

But high-profile arts organisations such as New Zealand Opera, the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra and Auckland Theatre Company will undoubtedly suffer from the 10 per cent funding cut. This may jeopardise the amount of creative content they put on and, perhaps consequently, the quality of this content. It also could lead to significant job losses, which is the last thing the Government should want to deal with.

Instances like this show just how apathetic the Government can be over a sector that's just as important as any other.

There's a fair argument that these high-profile arts organisations receive significant funding from large businesses and wealthy patrons. However, cuts in funding will not only be a big blow to these organisations, but will also see a trickle-down effect to local community arts organisations that don't necessarily rely on or attract wealthy patronage. This, if anything, is a serious worry. Ticket prices to well-known arts events, productions or concerts often do not come cheap. Having accessible and affordable community arts organisations allow for a wider demographic to witness and appreciate an aspect of culture that is so fundamental to the human being.

Gaining corporate sponsorship is no easy feat, especially when there are many all vying for some form of it. Not every organisation is as lucky in its success as the Pop-Up Globe, which gained sponsorship from leading law firm Anthony Harper and ATEED (Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development), among others. When you have the small guys putting on shows out of their own pocket and

relying on CNZ funding (if they're lucky), you realise just how detrimental any cuts will be on the future of the arts around the country. It's not going to stop creatives from pursuing their artistic goals necessarily. But it could very well stifle New Zealand's creative growth on a national and international scale, as public recognition of amateur events won't leave people's community halls, backyards or local pubs.

The Government needs to stop acting like those tall pricks standing in front of you at a concert who step on your feet and spill beer over you when they thrust their hands into the air. All they are doing is ignoring the pleas from these arts organisations that need the room to grow and continue showcasing what great creative talent New Zealand has to offer. The arts *aren't* something you can gamble with.

Long-term, sustainable investment arrangements need to be seriously looked at and considered in order for there to be any certainty for the arts and the multitude of different sized organisations. There's a bigger picture to look at – one that's painted with many colours. Maintaining unreliable mechanisms for the limited funding already available would be to be paint over this picture with a few block colours, stand back and forget about the intricacies underneath. It would be hard to replicate the power of the art again. ■

This doesn't take into account the constantly changing dynamic of the arts sector. The arts aren't static and cannot be compartmentalised into set groups of organisations.

this house supports the actions of channel 9 in “reclaiming” the children of sally faulkner from lebanon

the debating society has been around since 1887 and meets every thursday to discuss issues both topical and whimsical. www.debating.co.nz

AFFIRMATIVE

Let's not shy away from the reality of this situation. Ali el-Amien, the father of the two children in question, is a man who fled Australia after a custody battle didn't favour him and deprived Sally Faulkner of the right to see her children. After a court found he was not the best parent to raise his children, he subjugated a fair arbitration process and now hides in a country that refuses to cooperate on cross-border parental disputes. Seeing as the Australian government couldn't do anything, it would seem fair to condone the actions of private individuals in reclaiming the children of Sally Faulkner.

Which parent has a stronger claim to the children? Under different legal jurisdictions, el-Amien and Faulkner have stronger legal claims. Faulkner won custody in Australia and is the legitimate custody holder there. In contrast, Lebanon prioritises the father's rights in custody disputes and sees el-Amien as the legitimate parent in terms of custody. In the absence of legal clarity, who has the moral claim? On the face of it, it should be Faulkner. Faulkner won custody in Australia, a country they both agreed to raise their children in. In contrast, el-Amien decided to flout Australian law and chose a jurisdiction that favoured him as a place to find shelter. At first glance, it would seem we should prioritise the parent that followed the process they both voluntarily submitted themselves to. Some might say that Western legal systems are stacked against men in paternity cases and that it was legitimate to avoid a legal regime that would arbitrarily discriminate against el-Amien. What's the comparative though? Justifying el-Amien's claim on an unfounded Men's Rights Activist argument, or supporting the country that draws its custody law from Sharia law that discriminates against Faulkner because of her gender? On that basis it would seem reasonable to side with the country that doesn't overtly discriminate on gender. Also the outcome of an adverse custody case in a Western liberal democracy is usually unbalanced visitation rights as opposed to entirely ceasing contact. In this case el-Amien, being unsatisfied with less contact, deprived Faulkner of all contact in retaliation. This would seem disproportionate and an unfair outcome compared to the previous balance of parental rights.

The second issue is whether the abduction of these children was justified in that it violated Lebanon's sovereignty. Clearly Faulkner and Channel 9 violated Lebanese law by abducting her children from el-Amien, but should they follow the law of other jurisdictions? There are clearly practical reasons to do this: the bars and concrete walls the Channel 9 journalists and Faulkner briefly encountered while imprisoned

Faulkner won custody in Australia, a country they both agreed to raise their children in. In contrast, el-Amien decided to flout Australian law and chose a jurisdiction that favoured him as a place to find shelter.

are a testament to that fact. But is sovereignty a legitimate moral claim? Generally sovereignty seems to operate on a sliding spectrum with certain illiberal practices not being worthy of intervention by other forces, ranging from laws prohibiting homosexuality, to outright genocide in Rwanda for example. On the face of it, intervention by the Australian Government could not be condoned, but Australia was not acting in this situation. Given Channel 9 and Faulkner are private individuals, how do we assess their obligations? Normally people follow authority structures based on reciprocity: I follow New Zealand law because it enforces my rights and provides me with significant public goods. In this case Lebanon does not provide

NEGATIVE

Many will know all too well that the love of a parent for their child can drive them to do the unspeakable, which may not always be in the child's best interests. While the facts of this situation may be presented in a favourable manner for Sally Faulkner, to support the actions of Channel 9 is essentially a principled affirmation for *individual* parents to take vigilante action by abducting their children whenever they feel aggrieved by the actions of the *other* parent. The inherent problem in this is that this is always going to be subjective in adversarial situations (such as divorce). Each parent will always believe themselves to be right, and even in the absence of fair international arbitration, the parent that will be able to "reclaim" their child may not always be the most ideal parent – indeed, it may be the parent who has the most funds, most emotionally unstable or have access to the most illegal means. In the end, the child is treated merely as some sort of deprived property in a battle between possessive parents and will be the one who will suffer. At best, these circumstances are simply

any public goods to Channel 9 or Faulkner, so it's hard to see any obligation to abide with their laws. The next level of obligation could be to international law. Aside from the dubious benefits provided by institutions like the United Nations, it would seem absurd to draw legal obligations when nations like Lebanon don't recognise relevant conventions surrounding cross-border custody disputes. Even if you could infer some obligation to respect international law, that obligation doesn't take any form at the point Australia and Lebanon don't both adhere to international law.

Are there any issues surrounding the well-being of the children? Regardless of any moral claims around parental rights and sovereignty, it would seem horrendous to condone Faulkner's actions if it endangered the children. In this case Channel 9 hired a child abduction agency that specialises in cross-border rescue operations and their escape path was using a boat to travel to Cyprus. Aside from the risks of the operation failing generally, it's hard to see any material risks to the children beyond the regular perils of sea travel. It would seem unlikely that the Lebanese Government would have acted violently in reclaiming children, given the international backlash that would cause.

At the end of this argument, Faulkner would seem to have the better moral claim amidst a web of domestic and international legality. ■

regrettable, but to support these actions is to signal approval for an act that is illegal and possibly even immoral.

Do parents possess any type of unequivocal right that can be objectively assessed and allow them to seize a child and deprive the other parent of such a claim? The cross-border and vigilante nature of these actions should make one uncomfortable. In a domestic dispute, varying types of information, such as the desire and welfare of the child and the parents'

Regardless of any moral claims around parental rights and sovereignty, it would seem horrendous to condone Faulkner's actions if it endangered the children.

character, can be factored into the determination and decided by an objective third party. While the affirmative may correctly point out that it is difficult to resolve these disputes internationally, the problem with the Faulkner case is that it is essentially one parent determining their exclusive right to the child by their own metric. Cultural claims are ultimately subjective as well; appeals to the superiority of "Western living standards" are similarly countered by parents who might wish their children to have a closer connection to their family's culture. Even in cases where one parent is said to have deprived the other of the children first depends on your point of reference, as the location of the children may simply be a product of chance and circumstance. There is no genuine distinction between acts and omissions that suddenly means a parent forfeits their (half of) parental rights. This highlights the difficulty in establishing a clear right to the child in the first instance. To support the motion would essentially be supporting a series of perpetual and retaliatory abductions.

Given clear parental rights to undertake vigilante action is difficult to establish objectively, we should consider the harms to the abducted children. Even if these "reclamations" were successful, we say the confusion, guilt and betrayal they can feel from the uncertainty and traumatic experience is likely to fuck them up for the rest of their lives. It might be true that the abducting parent is hypothetically better than the other (remember the converse can also be true), but this comparison only exists in the hypothetical. Given the children experience trauma from the abduction but does not experience this hypothetical – in other words, they will form their desires and preferences within their cultural and familial context – we should prioritise certainty and coherence of living with one parent rather than the distress of being conflicted between two. The process of abduction itself is dangerous regardless of its success, as parents are likely to shelter their children from the other parent and from the protection and services of the state.

These actions create diplomatic tension between countries, which in itself is a harm. Moreover, while the international dispute resolution process for custody disputes is not perfect, these polarising cases force countries to commit to a more radical and adversarial position by defending their own citizens. This makes it even less likely for them to join some of these much needed international agreements or cooperate altogether. Neither is it true that media coverage will improve the situation – while it may be true that it will generate discussion and "political capital" – these parents can be seen as violating the law, and one's activism is another's crime, so that political capital may simply exacerbate the problem. ■



Civil Phwoodaaaar

ARTS EDITORIAL BY SAMANTHA GIANOTTI

Captain America: Civil War has debuted to critical acclaim, a shit tonne of money, and a big, fat “fuck you” to *Batman v Superman* hardliners everywhere. The two films may have been made almost simultaneously, but every single frame of *Civil War*, with its balanced tone, nuanced character motivations and intelligible plot, feels as though the Russo Brothers are mooning Zack Snyder while blowing a cheeky raspberry.

Hoooo boy. *Civil War* is an absolute banger of a film. Moral quandaries of epic proportions. A synthetic humanoid wearing a sweater. A sneaky alt-J number on the soundtrack. Marvel’s latest installment casts further aspersions upon the future of the DC Cinematic Universe, with many now convinced that DC is an acronym for “dat’s crap”.

Civil War establishes the third phase of Marvel’s Cinematic Universe with a (literal) gut-punch, shaking up the bond between the Avengers, further exploring the motivations and hesitations of the Star-Spandexed hero we have come to love, and throwing a cat amongst the pigeons in the form of Wakandan hero Black Panther (whose vibranium suit makes a very slick “whoosh” noise when he jumps off buildings and cool shit like that). The bonds of superherodom are tested as each of these (distractingly beautiful) characters are forced to pick a side when it comes to the question

of handing over control of the Avengers to the United Nations. The wedge driven between the team by these “Sokovia Accords” is not convoluted (or painfully asinine). As Tony Stark and Steve Rogers - the two figureheads of the titular war - stand their moral ground, you find yourself backing their individual rationale, cheering for both sides. (Inwardly cheering. Don’t whoop in a movie theatre. That’s rude.)

Even among the raft of *Civil War*’s heroes, where the inclusion of so many has led to this third *Cap* film being dubbed “The Avengers 2.5” in jest, there is one pair of characters that streak out leagues ahead of the rest. A consistent crowd-pleaser, even after five films (and a cameo in *Thor: The Dark World*), their presence remains a squeeze-inducing delight to all who pay \$24.50 to witness their full glory in IMAX 3D. Their strength and endurance, even when the strain of the call to action pushes them towards breaking point, is a goddamn inspiration. They are stretched to their very limit in this film, the ramifications of the Avengers’ internal conflict threatening to tear in two the very thing that holds them together. This pair are the class of character comicbook fans were desperately hoping for - well-rounded and fleshed out, with a three-dimensional presence translated from script to screen.

“Sam Wilson and Bucky Barnes?” you ask.

No.

“Black Widow and Hawkeye?” you press further.

Eh, nah.

There is no pair in *Civil War* more three-dimensional than Chris Evans’ biceps.

Crikey dick. It should not be humanly possible to have arms this huge. Shakespeare famously wrote, “What’s in a bicep? The armpit of any other man would smell as sweet.” But we cannot accept this as truth. No bicep, nor tricep, nor armpit, could ever better that of Christopher Robert Evans. These are the kind of arms that you write epic poems about; these muscles are the kind that inspired the songs of Ancient Greece, lyrics about the legend of this man’s beefy brawn accompanied by the gentle strings of a lyre.

The end of *Civil War* leaves the future of the Avengers team uncertain, and as Marvel gears up to the two installments of *Avengers: Infinity War*, where our faves will go head to head with cosmic warlord Thanos to undo his attempts to wield the Infinity Gauntlet, it’s safe to say that there is still shit left to hit the fan. But we know Evans’ biceps will be there - to punch our favourites out of danger, to distract us from the heartbreak on screen, or at the very least, to hold his compatriots comfortingly against his solid breast should all hope be lost.



May Chris Evans never, ever wear a shirt that fits. God bless America. ■



jessica jones aka survivor

this article contains spoilers about marvel's
jessica jones. you have been warned.

It's fair to say I was not expecting much from Marvel's *Jessica Jones*. However, the show quickly makes it clear: Jessica Jones is well used to people underestimating her and she is more than happy to prove them wrong. Jessica may not wear a costume, but she's the hero we need.

Complex and character-driven, the show avoids the over-arching big-question themes that are staple in other Marvel franchises, instead focusing on Jessica's life and her issues. We watch Jessica struggle to get back on her feet after being in a (supernaturally) abusive relationship that almost destroyed her. We see Jessica's struggle as she loses all control to the telepathic and psychopathic Kilgrave - a struggle that mirrors the lives of many, giving representation to survivors of domestic abuse everywhere.

Do not mistake this for a story about the powerlessness of abuse. This is a story of survival. Simply look at where Jessica's tale begins; the abuse storyline is in the past and instead we meet a very independent protagonist working as a private eye. The series follows Jessica as she is sucked back into Kilgrave's twisted world, using her past experiences with Kilgrave

to help his current victim, even though doing so makes her vulnerable to him once again. Kilgrave's abuse is the ultimate isolation; with his power of mind control, he can make anyone do anything he wishes without any evidence. The kind of abuse Jessica has suffered is the kind that changes how you experience the world, without your consent - what we see of Jessica's almost obsessive paranoia over Kilgrave and her absolute reluctance to let anyone in isn't so much an allusion to, but a direct reflection of, the struggles in the lives of real-life survivors. However, Jessica shows survivors that they have power too - the power to speak out, despite fear.

Watching the beginning of Jessica and Kilgrave's relationship makes one apprehensive - for all its focus on abuse survival, the show loses authenticity when it explores how it all began. In a flashback, we see from the moment they met, Kilgrave's instantaneous compulsion was a direct replacement for any positive feelings Jessica may have had towards him. It feels like there is a disconnect in that moment from the experience of real life abuse - rather than Jessica giving trust and love to Kilgrave, thus bestowing him with the power to abuse her, his power of mind control means she never had an opportunity to give him this love and trust. For those trapped in the cycle of abuse, this trust and love is a central reason why they do not end the relationship sooner. That feeling of trust filters into doubts and fears - the fear

of being alone, of never again being loved as intensely or at all, the fear that they will not be able to trust or love again, or fear of admitting they are wrong in choosing the person that they loved. It is a very intense personal battle, and one that Marvel's *Jessica Jones* seems to avoid completely.

For what it may be lacking, Jessica Jones more than makes up for in portraying life for survivors post-abuse. Jessica displays many small but important coping mechanisms that we are introduced to throughout the series; when we see her become overwhelmed she recites "Birch Street, Higgins Drive, Cobalt Lane", a coping mechanism to calm her down when the horror of what has happened becomes too much. Throughout the series she also repeats the phrase "you have done what he told you, you're free" to others who have become the puppets of Kilgrave's tyranny. She uses the knowledge that she has gained through her own misfortune to help others in danger, giving herself control over the situation once more.

Jessica's message to all those who might be experiencing the same thing is clear: you can regain control, even if it does not feel like it. You have the power to overcome and change what feels like an inescapable situation.

■ KIMBERLEY LOEFFEN

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spanish film festival 2016

academy cinemas, routinely offering students their necessary dose of culture and black doris plum ice creams, is hosting the spanish film festival for 2016. below are six of the top picks from the festival - get yourselves some tickets at academycinemas.co.nz (and treat yourselves to a cone of black doris goodness).



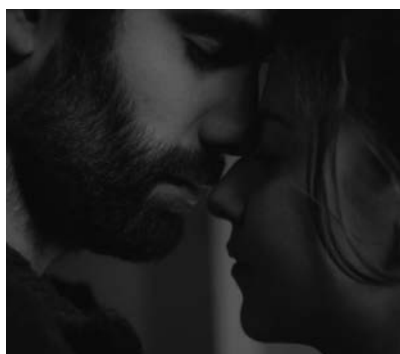
The Thin Yellow Line

(2015, dir. Celso R. Garcia)

"The enigmatic Damián Alcázar is Antonio, a onetime construction foreman who fell off the grid decades ago and is now a night watchman living in a junkyard. Well, not any more: business is bad, and the scrapyards owner just replaced him with a guard dog. Jobs are scarce in this corner of rural Mexico, and Antonio has to settle for pumping gas for pittance; but when an old co-worker stops by for a fill-up, Antonio once again gets the chance to lead a team.

Setting out with four novices and a rolling spray-paint machine, the men start the job of laying down a dashed yellow line on a 217-kilometer stretch between two small towns. While on the road, a spectrum of hardships and triumphs will force the unlikely team of misfits to unexpectedly bond.

A road movie in the most literal sense, Celso R. García's dialogue fosters an easy, earthy camaraderie between the men, delivering both sadness and pure joy, and making this an irresistible journey in which audiences will delight." ■



Autumn Without Berlin

(2015, dir. Lara Izaguirre)

"A captivating Irene Escolar delivers an award-winning performance as she plays young June – a woman who left her home in Madrid to escape a terrible occurrence. She has now returned, but not as the same person she once was. Wiser and more confident, she yearns to reconnect with her father, brother, best friend and ex-lover Diego. However, her past abrupt departure makes this much more difficult than she anticipated and she must gradually work to regain their love and trust.

Her greatest challenge is Diego, who has also changed during her time away. He has become a recluse and retreated into a self-imposed solitary confinement in his apartment where he avoids human contact and natural light. June is determined to save him from disappearing completely. Slowly her presence draws him back into the world as she fights for them to reconcile their differences and realise their old dream of moving to Berlin together. This is an emotionally delicate and moving story that boldly confronts the limitations of love." ■



No Kids

(2015, dir. Ariel Winograd)

"After the success of *My First Wedding* and *To Fool a Thief*, Argentinian comedy maestro Ariel Winograd returns with another box-office hit that's sure to delight audiences at the festival. Hapless charmer Diego Peretti (known as Argentina's Hugh Grant) and the fiery Maribel Verdú (SFF13 Festival Guest) sizzle on screen as a mismatched couple with very, very different views on parenthood.

Gabriel (Peretti) is a divorced dad whose daughter Sofia is the centre of his universe. So much so that he hasn't had a relationship in four years. His world is rocked by the sudden reappearance of Vicky, a childhood crush who has grown into a beautiful, independent, self-assured woman. Sparks fly, they fall for each other...there's just one catch. Vicky hates kids. Gabriel hatches a farcical plot to keep Sofia's existence a secret from Vicky, but it soon transpires that Sofia has plans of her own for Vicky. Featuring a stand-out debut performance from child actor Guadalupe Manent, this is the ultimate crowd-pleasing comedy." ■



Volcano

(2015, dir. Jayro Bastamante)

"Maria, a 17 year old Mayan woman, lives on the slopes of an active volcano in Guatemala. An arranged marriage awaits her. Although Maria dreams of seeing 'the city', her status as an indigenous woman does not allow her to go out into that 'modern world'. Later, during a pregnancy complication, this modern world will save her life, but at what price?" ■



Food & Shelter

(2015, dir. Juan Miguel del Castillo)

"Rocío (Natalia de Molina in her award-winning performance) is a young single mother who has been without work for three and a half years in the Andalusian town of Jerez de la Frontera. She is on the edge of a precipice, living day-to-day off the small allowance of odd jobs and the generosity of her neighbours. As she fights to keep her apartment (with several months of rental debt accrued) she struggles to provide for her eight-year-old son Adrián. When Rocío's gas canister runs out or when her water is turned off, she is faced with an impossible decision: if she replaces them, there is no money to feed her son.

There is an understated naturalism to the performances in this perfect storm of misfortune, reflected by documentary-style photography. In the central role, the striking de Molina's haunting performance is painfully expressive and combined with Castillo's absorbing script, gives a somber, unsentimental but completely compelling X-ray of a southern Europe in crisis." ■



Embrace of the Serpent

(2015, dir. Ciro Guerra)

"Closing this year's festival is one of the major discoveries of the 2015 Cannes International Film Festival. Ciro Guerra's multi award-winning film is a breathtaking cinematic odyssey through the Amazon, following the quests of two European explorers in search of a rare flower alleged to have healing properties.

Inspired by the real-life journals kept by Theodor Koch-Grünberg (portrayed by Jan Bijvoet) and Richard Evans Schultes (Brionne Davis), the film charts each man's treacherous and life-changing journey. Though decades apart, both are guided through the labyrinthine rivers and jungles by the same native shaman, Karamakate (Nilbio Torres, and later Antonio Bolívar Salvado Yangiama), the last surviving member of his tribe, who takes them deeper and deeper into a heart of darkness. The spectacular widescreen black and white cinematography and evocative sound design combine to depict the landscapes and characters with an hypnotic, mythical sense of wonder. This is an extraordinary film." ■

All information and synopses were taken from the Spanish Film Festival 2016 Programme - check out the programme for more information on the festival, running from 19 May-5 June.



Dark Souls 3

GAME REVIEW BY EUGENIA WOO

Even if your idea of gaming is playing Candy Crush, you've probably heard of *Dark Souls*. It's infamous for having a learning curve that makes Mt Everest look like a speed bump, and it's the sort of game that people clock simply as a kind of "fuck you" to the geniuses who created it. It's highly polarising, and that's one of the reasons why the franchise has a cult following.

The first installment of the franchise was the kind of game that made me doubt that I had the motor skills required to control a mouse and keyboard at the same time, let alone the finesse required to lop a head off a charging hydra. *Dark Souls 3* marks a return to that same mix of confusion and terror that I experienced when first subjecting myself to Hidetaka Miyazaki's games.

I'll give you a quick run-down of the game: it's an action RPG where you fight valiantly (aka dodge-rolling and screaming like a small child) for your survival in a hellscape populated by monsters triple your size. Also, if you aren't careful, you might walk the wrong way down some stairs and trip to your death. If that doesn't sound like a good time, then I don't know what does!

Dark Souls 3 is beautiful and gritty. The worlds you explore are aptly themed and executed, and the combat is smooth and challenging, with the addition of various incentives to develop different playstyles for different portions of the game. You might die ten times on the same boss, but you'll be rewarded on the eleventh try by fantastically disemboweling it with Herculean strength. While the PVP element is lackluster and glitches still rear their heads here and there, it's an admirable end to the *Souls* franchise and a fitting tribute to the suffering of gamers everywhere. ■



Spotlight

Special Features

DVD REVIEW BY SAMANTHA GIANOTTI

Spotlight. What a team. What a film. What a time to be alive. This year's Academy Award Best Picture winner is now out on DVD, and along with the best goddamn journalism film this side of *All The President's Men*, you'll find yourself buried in some bonus special features.

Spotlight is made up of an incredible cast, playing incredible characters, who broke an unbelievably important story. It's vital to remember the team behind the beautiful faces of Rachel McAdams and Mark Ruffalo - the members of the real Spotlight team who faced down opposition and (divine) retribution at every turn of their investigation. The DVD boasts three short bonus clips: "Spotlight: A Look Inside", "The State Of Journalism" and "Uncovering The Truth: A Spotlight Team Roundtable". The latter brings back members of the original group to reminisce on their investigation, reminding us of the painful truth behind this story, and the victims of abuse the team sought to indemnify.

All in all, the special features you get with this (super fucking great) film aren't all that impressive, adding up to just over ten minutes of bonus content. It is now that the man behind the curtain is revealed - this review is nothing more than a thinly veiled guise to have you all purchase and watch *Spotlight*, which I'm told I am not allowed to outright review because it came out a solid six and a half months ago. Well, what are you going to do, Mark? ARREST ME?

Spotlight spotlights (ayy) all the elements a great film should have - engaging pacing, a refusal to delve into melodrama, and an empowering narrative (which allows the contributors of a student magazine to fantasise, just for a moment, that maybe one day they will do something that doesn't involve charting the downfall of Adam Sandler on a communal whiteboard). Plus Liev Schreiber, perpetually sporting wire-framed glasses, has never been more attractive.

Break the story. Break the silence. Buy the DVD. ■



The Colour in Anything

James Blake

ALBUM REVIEW BY CATRIONA BRITTON

For me, James Blake presents a bit of a contradiction. This is especially true with his latest album, aptly called *The Colour in Anything*. If I were a synesthete, I would be perplexed by this album. His lyrics, mood and tone convey deep blues and murky greys, but the production suggests otherwise. The music is painted and mixed with many colours; layers upon layers of texture demonstrate a complexity that defies a deceptively minimalist sound.

There's no denying that Blake is an artist in all senses of the word. He continues to stand apart from the rising mainstream popularity of electronic music. He plays and manipulates sounds in an old-school fashion, not being afraid to use autotune as seen in "Put That Away And Talk To Me" where snappy clean beats accompany warbly falsetto and hip-hop style trills. His unique way of presenting tracks that cross multiple genres is ever-present as we see a mixture of gospel, R&B, blues and hip-hop making appearances in almost every track on the album.

His lyrics are deeply melancholy and haunting as always - perhaps to the point where you are emotionally drained after listening to each track. Blake writes so introspectively, you feel as if you can literally hear the cogs in his mind turning, his heart breaking. Simple lyrics such as "you wanna know me like waves know shores" resonate alongside minor organ chords, seeming to pull you into his emotional sphere where you can bond over a mutual despair for the things that make life a little bit sad sometimes.

Some will rejoice that this album features song-writing cameos from Frank Ocean in "My Willing Heart" and "Always", and Bon Iver in "I Need A Forest Fire", the latter easily being one of the best tracks on the album. It's a vocal pairing from the gods, falsetto ringing out in a heavenly cloud of sound. Blake is an artistic force that continues to create compelling and intimate music, maximising the minimal and showcasing vulnerability in the most open sense possible. ■



The Five Essential Studio Ghibli Films

If you read that title and went “Who on earth are Studio Ghibli?” then we can still be friends but I’ll put you under “Work In Progress”. It also means you missed the debut of the English dub of *Only Yesterday* at Academy Cinemas.

We all are familiar with America’s Disney Pixar, the champion of computer animation from 1995’s *Toy Story* through to 2015’s big hit, *Inside Out*. Studio Ghibli are in some ways Japan’s equivalent to Pixar, in that the consistent quality of their films keeps bringing audiences back. Thanks to recent English dubbing the studio found success and acclaim in America, particularly among critics.

One key difference between the two is the animation style of their films. Studio Ghibli has two principal director-screenwriters, the well-known and regarded Hayao Miyazaki, and Isao Takahata, both of whom largely reject computer animation. The former famously insisted that “hand drawing on paper is the fundamental of animation”, despite the studio’s decade-long stint with partially CGI films from 1997 to 2008. Ghibli films are perhaps aimed at a different audience to Pixar too. Many believe animated movies are strictly for kids (like say, the *Smurfs* or the *Alvin and the Chipmunks* shitpiles), with nothing but fart/poop jokes and physical humour. Pixar and Studio Ghibli aim for more family-friendly audiences, but sections of serious and deep dialogue and quiet scene transitions in Ghibli films are a level of artistic expression that some younger kids may miss. Anyway, onto the list.

My first choice is the aforementioned *Only Yesterday* (1991), a quiet, reserved work of art by Takahata which won me over at the Academy screening. *Only Yesterday* focuses on Taiko,

a 27 year old woman who takes a vacation from her office job to work in the countryside, where she reminisces about the good and bad memories of her fifth grade life - puberty, boys and maths - and subsequently discovers her true self. It’s one of the most human films I’ve ever seen, and understands the mixed emotions that nostalgia for one’s youth can bring. It’s also a gargantuan fuck you to the Japanese and American gender roles of the time, focusing on a female lead with her own dreams and ambitions. It’s a little deep for kids, but the Academy screenings were packed for good reason.

The second essential is another Takahata classic, *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988), which focuses on the strife of teenager Seita and his 4 year old sister Setsuko as they struggle through the final months of World War II in Japan. A commercial failure upon release, the film was found to be strong viewing for young children, which it still should be seeing as it’s an incredibly intense emotional experience. It was claimed by Takahata to be not an anti-war film, but instead a call for society to stop isolating its youth. Still, it’s the tragedy and destruction unfolding around the two as a result of firebombs and warfare that leaves a lasting impact.

The third choice is *Fireflies’* double-feature accompaniment and polar opposite, Miyazaki’s *My Neighbour Totoro* (1988). University professor Satsuko and his two daughters, Satsuki and Mei, move house to be nearer their hospitalised mother. The delight of this film is following the two girls’ experiences interacting with the spirits of the surrounding bush, including the famous giant cat-like Totoro. As I saw it, these forest protectors could have been interpreted by any viewer as real or imaginary. Either way it serves as a brilliant opposite to *Fireflies*, a more innocent, youthful journey - what it lacks in plot is compensated by the joy and imagination of childhood.

It wouldn’t be a Studio Ghibli list without *Princess Mononoke* (1997), another massive hit from Miyazaki that also saw critical success in America. *Mononoke* chiefly follows Ashitaka, a warrior amidst a struggle between forest gods and the people using the forest as a resource.

Like other Ghibli films, *Princess Mononoke* is heavily interested in the environment and our relationship with it. It acknowledges the benefits of enlightenment thinking on our technology and development while pointing out the risks it brings to the balance of nature. Other than that, despite some computer animation, the bulk of the film is a moving canvas and it’s magnificent to watch.

And we conclude with my personal favourite, Miyazaki’s biggest success, *Spirited Away* (2002). *Spirited Away* was an international critical and commercial success and thoroughly deserved the Best Animated Feature Oscar. 10 year old Chihiro is taken to a spiritual world and has to work at a bathhouse belonging to a witch named Yubaba to bring back her parents, who were turned into pigs. *Spirited Away* is strange at first, with lots of unusual artwork and creatures that become curiously charming as you watch, particularly the ghostly “No-Face”. Chihiro is given such unusual tasks and instructions that you can’t help but feel for her confusion, as well as admiring her determination to do anything to save her parents. All of this compiles in a last act that will make you feel like you didn’t know you had.

Studio Ghibli have made terrific films over the years, and though I haven’t included them on this list, they have made a nice string of gems over the last half decade, and are continuing through Miyazaki’s retirement. Watch one of these today and recognise that Hollywood isn’t the only home of incredible animated art.

■ JACK CALDWELL



Louis Theroux and the Art of Discomfort

Documentaries have been dominated by the BBC for decades. No broadcasting company has made more informative, entertaining, or harrowing documentaries than they have. Two of the biggest names within the BBC are names that ought to be of the household variety. Personalities that grace our screens with enthusiasm and dedication — these are, of course, David Attenborough and Louis Theroux.

Attenborough may be heralded as the British Morgan Freeman, but Theroux has presented the art of documentary in the most confronting manner. Theroux's work places you into the very aspects of society that we wish to ignore, but delve into them in a manner of curiosity.

The last documentary in which I indulged was a particularly harrowing film on the topic of alcoholism. Perhaps it was the 600-word-mark inertia, or perhaps it was the drag of my third

glass of chocolate milk. But this documentary put me in a place beyond discomfort, a state of morbid fascination. This is part of the intrigue that Theroux embodies. He entices you, just as he does his subject. He will slowly draw you closer with a sense of naivety, until eventually you immerse yourself in the middle ground of morality.

Theroux's manner matches his documentaries with a delicate precision. The topic of alcoholism is best swept aside in the jokes of *Shadows* as a place to drown your sorrows. But Theroux reaches farther than we have ever wanted to go about the topic. An episode looking into the sheer complexity of autism struck me in a similar fashion. We are placed into the light of morality. The comfort we seek daily is stripped bare.

Unlike typical documentaries, or the farcical fantasies of the History Channel, Theroux aims to bring about the moral quandary that we often try to avoid. His examination of neo-Nazi culture and white supremacy in the USA offered an alternative look into the affairs of racism. Of course, racial discrimination is abhorrent, but this documentary questioned us

on why. Each documentary offering a similar basis to the confrontation — these are human beings. Theroux's personality assists this with a gradual intrusion of reason. He begins in a straight sense of naivety, unaware of the moral implications of his surroundings. As the show goes on, the inquisitive nature becomes slowly more critical. These questions follow the natural thought paths we have ourselves: why are you a racist? Why do you drink? Is it reasonable to preach that "god hates fags"? The questions seem to grasp the aggressor from the heart. They've been intruded!

But Theroux isn't all about the racists, homophobes, or junkies. There are some more entertaining segments. His experience with the swingers clubs asks many of the same questions without the moral grovelling, whilst his look into bodybuilding doesn't bother to shrive the sins of the topic.

Theroux is bloody fantastic. A delicate mix of naivety, humour, and compassion provides a confrontation that makes the uncomfortable certainly intriguing. Best watched at 3am or as an academic equivalent to a post-coital cigarette.

■ JACK ADAMS

HOBBIT ON TOUR

Exchange Ratings: The Guide

WITH ELOISE SIMS

It's 6pm on a Tuesday evening, and I'm at the pub. I even have the audacity to call it "the local" now, when I go there to watch Champions League football. Repulsive, I know.

But, here we are – I've well and truly settled into Britain. I feel utterly triumphant. It's a small victory every time I wander up to the bar, ask for a "pina'Strongbow", and see my English friends nod in approval.

(FYI, Strongbow cider tastes like wine extracted from a diabetic rat. Everyone drinks liters of it in Exeter. I don't understand.)

It's hit the half-time break on the game, and we're sitting around talking about how many exams we should be studying for right now. It's a nervous topic at best. My friend sees fit to change it. "Eloise." He says. "Eloise."

"Yes?" I'm pretending not to choke on an entirely too large gulp of Strongbow.

"I've been wondering," he says casually. "What made you choose Exeter?"

This is an interesting topic. Everyone turns to me, intrigued. I blink. "Well. Er. There were a lot of reasons."

They nod. I rack my brains. "Ah. Well. Firstly, it had a really good record for both of the subjects I wanted to do."

This is true. Exeter's been consistently ranked third and fourth in the UK for quality of politics and history courses offered. They concede. "Any other reasons?"

"Well... Er, I heard Muse is from here. And JK Rowling."

Two more notably true facts. They lean in, eager to know more.

I shrug. "I don't know, I thought it'd, you know... have a good music scene, interesting political environment, relaxed students, lots of nightlife, interesting courses?"

I pause.

"...Exeter has none of those," my friend summarizes neatly. Everyone nods in assent.

"That's the problem," I muse. "In New Zealand, it's very hard to come across local information as to what the universities are actually like – I mean, I just sort of went with the most prestigious one and ran."

"People should know that, though." Someone pipes up. "Like, they need to know what a university is REALLY like before they make a decision like that."

"Maybe I should write a column on it," I mutter,

ironically, to a chorus of laughter.

Here I am. Two days later.

Writing a column on it.

If you're interested in going on exchange in England – firstly, you SHOULD. England is a bigger, wetter New Zealand, but with far more clubs, societies, and mad trips you can take to the weirdest places in Europe for about 20 NZD.

But you should also be careful about which university you choose. Here, after hours of pains-taking work, I have compiled a list as to what each university is like, based on people I've met from there. Go nuts.

Exeter – Ah, my local. My home. Here are some things I really, really wish I knew before I turned up there.

- If you're a white, upper-middle-class Young Nat, with a penchant for lacrosse, hockey or rugby, everyone will want to be your friend.
- If you're not any of those things, you're going to join the Poetry Society and talk about "disenfranchisement" a lot.
- Everyone loves avocados and bobble hats. This is completely inexplicable.
- Everyone knows everyone. One-night stands can get very awkward, very fast.
- The most popular club is essentially a bigger, more expensive Bar 101. Don't leave your drink outside your stall when you go to the toilet. People wee in it.
- The Southerners already hate you.

King's College London

- Parties. Non-stop parties.
- Everyone DJs casually.
- Everyone looks good with his or her shirt off.
- Everyone studies philosophy and is at least 1/4 French.

Kingston University

- Trying really hard to be Kings. It isn't Kings.
- Most people hear the name and think it is Kings, and get excited.
- It isn't Kings.

Queen Mary University

- Officially the worst university in the "Russell Group" list. This apparently means something.
- Everyone is an international student with loads of money.
- Everyone pretends they're not an international student with loads of money.
- They all shop in Lush for hair products.

UCL

- Everyone at UCL lives in cramped little apartments, and hotboxes them with frightening gusto.
- It's the University that created Coldplay. I'll say no more.
- Everyone is show-off smart and quotes Nietzsche non-ironically.

University of Birmingham

- BEERMEENGHAEM
- Everyone speaks like that. You cannot escape.

- Everyone is in five different sports teams. But they all smoke. It's a paradox.
- Nothing makes them happier than a combination of Strada (Italian restaurant) and JLS (a weird mid-2000s boy-band). There is genuinely no explanation for this.

University of East Anglia

- ?????????
- I think it's in the Midlands somewhere.
- It probably has a lot of pigeons.
- I don't know anyone who ended up there on purpose.

University of Leeds

- Everyone has a story about doing a terrifying amount of drugs and vomiting up green residue in a bathroom.
- Everyone went on a gap year that "really changed them".
- You're weird if you don't have a nose piercing.
- The kind of people who did that "Free Puppy Petting Session" in the Gen Library that ONE TIME.

University of Manchester

- Someone from there told me they had nine muggings on their street in one week.
- There's a non-stop party scene to make up for the muggings.
- Everyone is a student club promoter.
- It never stops raining.
- The kind of place where people listen to a lot of Radiohead.
- The Northerners already hate you.

University of Nottingham

- A bigger Exeter that tries its best to be edgy. I see you, Nottingham students. I know your game.
- All of their buildings look like sandstone Soviet constructions.
- Everyone rides a bike into uni.
- Consequently, the number one stolen item in Nottingham is bikes.
- Very lively nightlife – the highlight being locals trying to punch you in the face.

University of Roehampton

- Very pretty campus. Has a strange obsession with birdlife as a result.
- Essentially East Anglia but mysteriously located in West London.
- I hope they're okay.

University of Sheffield

- Everyone can only drink craft beer due to dietary restrictions.
- If you don't wear a sweater, no one will talk to you.
- Everyone pretends they don't love the Arctic Monkeys.
- They do love the Arctic Monkeys. ■

ELOISE IS ONE OF THOSE GIRLS WHO MADE A SHOW OUT OF HATING JUSTIN BIEBER WHEN SHE WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD. NOT MUCH HAS CHANGED. SHE LOVES JOHN OLIVER, PICTURES OF LABRADORS, AND WILL BE TRAPPED IN ENGLAND FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS. PLEASE FOLLOW HER ON TWITTER (JOHN CAMPBELL DID IT THE OTHER DAY): @SIMSELOISE



Mother's Day

WITH RAYHAN LANGDANA

The Nando's in Newmarket on a Sunday night looks exactly like you'd expect the Nando's in Newmarket to look on a Sunday night. Diners are outnumbered almost two to one by wait staff and "chefs". The unrelentingly harsh lighting (more suited to a hotel lobby than a restaurant) catches the glimmering slicks of oil striped across almost every table. The tomato sauce bottles are sticky; a hardened nub of tomato crust constipates the nozzle. Smooth jazz burbles forth from a speaker. If it provided the soundtrack to the animated chatter of diners, the restaurant would be lent a decidedly cosmopolitan feel. Given that the diners (all five of them) were silent, the jazz conjured the feel of being on hold to Vodafone.

Dining alone in Nando's in Newmarket on a Sunday night is probably not a decision that people make freely. When you dine alone in an airport Nando's, you're excused because you're killing time. Dining alone at a Nando's after work simply means you had to stay late and are in desperate need of sustenance. Why did I choose to do this? Why did I actually leave the warmth of my home and make my way towards the bright lights of Broadway for some mangy, stringy chicken, mediocre customer service and lukewarm Sprite? I did it because it was Mother's Day.

In 2012 I left my family home in Wellington and moved to Auckland for university. The most significant difference in my life now is that I'm unable to be with my mother on Mother's Day. I'm unable to personally hand her the card I'd written (bought from the dairy if I was organised; sketched on an A4 piece of paper if I jolted awake at 1am before

Mother's Day and realised that it was 1am before Mother's Day). On Mother's Day, I feel alone. I feel in need of comfort.

I appealed to those I live with to accompany me. I told them I felt unloved and that if they had a hug or a kiss spare, they should send it my way. They were hungover. Some of them didn't acknowledge me. One grunted. Two told me, "Fuck off." When I asked again, a third joined them. "Why Nando's?" Well, where else can you go for dinner on Mother's Day and not be judged for dining alone? Nando's is the last safe space for solo eaters. All of my old haunts – Sal's, Ngopi, the White Lady – have been colonised by pairs and groups of diners who send snooty looks my way as I take up a whole table in a packed restaurant (or in the case of the White Lady, a whole crate on a packed sidewalk). Nando's is where to go when you want to be alone – you know everyone else there is riding solo too.

Having sated my appetite for loneliness and slippery chicken skin, I ditched the glamour of Newmarket for the St Luke's mall. I was meeting my friend to catch the evening screening of *Mother's Day*, the film industry's ode to motherhood. This film has a rating of 17/100 on Metacritic.com. The Chicago Sun-Times called it an "offensively stupid... crapfest." I had to see it.

The film follows a variety of families who live in Atlanta, Georgia (shout out to OutKast). There's the divorced mother of two who's just been told that her ex-husband has remarried (Jennifer Aniston, in the role she was born to play – and she knows it too, having played this role in almost every screen

appearance she's made). There's the woman who's married an Indian doctor and has lied to him about her parents, knowing that they'd never accept a "towelhead" – for a son-in-law. Kate Hudson plays this progressive, non-racist mother, and it's great to see her out of the house again now that she's no longer married to the fedora-tipping lead singer of Muse.

There's the father whose wife, a marine, died in combat. Jason Sudekis plays this wounded stud. It is an impressive display of range from Sudekis, whose last memorable screen role saw him extol the virtues of fingering girls while making slurping noises in order to fool the girl into thinking you're performing oral sex on her. The movie was called the "fake chow"; the film was *Hall Pass*. Don't see it. Julia Roberts is in the film too, but she's got a cool-looking movie with George Clooney coming out soon so I'll pretend that she had nothing to do with this one.

The movie was terrible. I cried on three separate occasions. The theatre was united in its response – we sighed at the same time, rolled our eyes at the same things, and laughed when ****SPOILER ALERT**** Jason Sudekis fell off the balcony while breakdancing. I texted my mum the second I left the screening.

Mother's Day was a terrible movie, and Mother's Day is kind of a terrible "day." But sometimes we need roughage like this in our diets to stay healthy. Not every occasion, film, or meal has to be imbued with extreme importance. Sometimes, a good day is eating Nando's and seeing a rom-com, if it makes you text your Ma. ■



Of Broken Backs and Broken Media

WITH ADEEL MALIK

As hard as I try to be topical, this column is written a week in advance. The Tony Veitch saga will be old news and beyond that I don't like commenting on gender issues (I honestly feel that as a man I have an empathy gap because I don't and never will face those problems). What I want to talk about are the editorial standards of the *New Zealand Herald*.

Let's not let Tony Veitch be the scapegoat for the deplorable editorial standards that *NZ Herald* demonstrated last week. Firstly, they did not fact check the story. Veitch's claim, "It was only one time" is a lie. That statement is incorrect according to Ms Dunne-Powell. As Michael Field reported, "Six other charges against him were dropped for reasons never explained – but it is common for certain charges to be dropped in exchange for a guilty plea, so as to spare the victim the stresses and the state the expense of a trial. It should not be taken as evidence that the other charges were baseless."

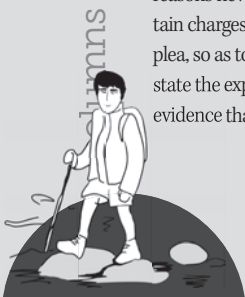
The fact that no one fact checked an article written by a perpetrator of domestic violence about domestic violence is a case of serious malpractice. It's not like people at the *Herald* did not know what Veitch had done. What added irony to the whole situation is that the *Herald* extensively covered the Veitch domestic abuse saga. They published the very details that Veitch ignored or contorted in their newspaper.

The worst part, with respect to journalism, was seeing the *Herald* monetise the whole situation. Immediately after the outrage poured out there was a story from the victim's father. The only action that the *Herald* took got them more clicks on the internet. There was no recanting of the original story, no apology for publishing the original piece or any degree of self-reflection on the organisation's part. To add insult to injury, the *Herald* attached a link to Veitch's apology on the father's response. The *Herald* manufactured a controversy about domestic violence (intentionally or unintentionally) and used it to sell banner advertisements and a few more newspapers. They showed no remorse for the journalistic malpractice it is.

Sadly, this is not the first time this year that the *Herald's* editorial standards have outraged me. Larry Williams' glee at councillor George Wood and Callum Penrose's proposal to ban begging was another article completely unhinged from basic human decency (incidentally Veitch and Larry Williams both call Newstalk ZB home, along with the likes of Hosking).

I am okay with the piss poor journalism that the *Herald* provides. I am fine with 346,587 stories on the Bachelor. I am reluctantly okay with push notifications about peeping toms and lost babies that weren't actually lost. But the indecency the *Herald* showed towards domestic violence is actually harmful. Giving a public profile to an abuser like Veitch sets a poor precedent, and this is not a one-off indiscretion. In their handling of the situation they demonstrated exactly how little they care for victims of domestic violence. The *NZ Herald's* reporting – be it on education, homelessness or domestic violence – often lacks a basic understanding of those issues. ■

(The most painful part of writing this was actually having to read Veitch's apology.)



Life is Too Long, Isn't It?

WITH SHMULY LEOPOLD

Not the cleverest title but it seemed better than the usual “Down in the Dumps”, or “Mental Health in Kiwi Communities” or some other hacky vomit-inducing shit signalling a cheesy infomercial telling you to get help. I’m sure keen readers have already figured out where this column is going...

The internet is ablaze with statistics about suicide and depression, especially since NZ’s suicide rates hit record highs in August last year. A quick Google search will tell you there are over five hundred deaths from suicide in New Zealand every year. Which means over two thousand people have killed themselves in the last four years. Not to mention the rates of mental illness – around 15% of the country suffers with anxiety or depression. More women are diagnosed with depression than men. More men actually kill themselves. Suicide is the second highest rate of preventable death among young men.

These stats get thrown at you every year during this or that mental health week (along with cheesy notes in the law school cafeteria, and vomitous “puppy days”). Other than the odd public figure who makes a career out of it, we Kiwis aren’t very comfortable when these details get personal. Sure a Mike King, or John Kirwan, or Stephen Fry, can talk emotionally about themselves. But they’re famous, we’re used to their self indulgence. At a face-to-face level we could do without the admissions. But the reality is everyone in New Zealand knows someone who either suffers from a mental illness, or has or will kill themselves. I have at least three friends who’ve cut themselves. Three with diagnosed anxiety. Three with depression. Two more with seasonal affective disorder. And yet another two with borderline personality disorder. My uncle has bipolar disorder. My partner’s birth mother has schizophrenia. One member of my family tried to kill herself. A different one succeeded.

If those last three sentences are awkward to read, they’re more awkward to type. On top of the joys of dealing with mental illness, and the joys of dealing with others’, you get a plethora of paranoias the moment you mention it. Do I seem like I’m looking for attention? Do I seem weird? Will people think I feel sorry for myself? I don’t, you know, because I’m so manly. One of the joys of pseudonymous writing is that I can at least say this without getting funny looks in

class (imaginary or otherwise). But most of my friends know about my column. Panic ensues.

Usually here is where you either tell a motivational story, list a helpline, or give some vague positive sounding advice: “your friends love you”, “no matter what you’re going through you can make it”, “reaching out is so important”. All of these things are perfectly lovely, and make for great exposure for student politicians as they polish liberal caring credentials. They are also at least partly bullshit. Most mental illnesses are for life. A great many are not even diagnosed. Some are virtually untreatable. I will probably continue to ritually crash out in a pile of ashes and old Flame bottles every few months for the rest of my life, assuming I don’t find God. According to an Auckland University study, around half of transgender students attempt some kind of self harm while at university. And as above, suicide in NZ reached record highs only last year.

Part of the problem is that we have no idea what to do. The cheesy ads with strong men walking down pebbled beaches don’t seem to work. The ridiculous mental health days (only catering of course to the people up to showing up, and socialising in a crowd) don’t seem to work. The drugs seem effective, but that’s only for the diagnosed, and even they often have to then deal with not being able to drink alcohol, or have an active sex life (amongst other symptoms).

And at a wider level questions abound. Increasing intellectual skepticism of psychology, are we pathologising difference? Is depression or anxiety just part of the natural spectrum of human personality? We’ve improved in leaps and bounds in many ways, but you only need to look at the suicide rates in the queer community to see the overwhelming effect that perceived “difference” has on a person. The reality is many trans people will spend their lives feeling outcast. Many poor people will never escape the towns they were born in.

Many office workers will never achieve the sort of “fulfillment” or “happiness” they’re always told to seek. And if they do, will they be anything more than insufferable fucks? Are we really supposed to be happy more than like 20% of the time? Feelings add texture to life. Very little art was ever made without examining unhappiness. Even terrible soap operas, designed specifically to animate the lives of boring housewives, do so through exhibiting unhappiness. A world of plastered-on smiles and self-esteem sounds more like a Young Nat conference than paradise.

And then we have the legitimisation problem. Focussed on in every progressive article on the topic. We’re told it’s terrible to even think someone is just trying to get attention. The mental-health equivalent of victim blaming.

But I think we all suspect from time to time, and even discussed in hushed tones out of potentially triggered ear-shot, the disturbing idea that some people really do seem to romanticise mental illness. To seek attention, as it were. And of course we feel suitably guilty for saying so, but that doesn’t mean we don’t think it. The mature response of course is that since we can’t know other people’s interior lives, we need to just assume that if they’re talking about it this much they certainly need *some* kind of help – and almost never the kind that tells them they’re making it up.

I have no answers of any kind. I’m not entirely sure this column will do any good, or even be read for that matter. The only thing I can think of is to introduce the conversation. And I don’t mean crap public talks. I mean the usual. What we need is to be able to sit down, with booze, and have actual conversations about suicide - whether we want to make jokes, or just consider our options, we need to normalise the discussion. Now of course we don’t want anyone to do it, but we need to be able to figure out why. And like most important decisions, we usually only arrive at the right conclusion after a talk with friends. We need to be casual and conversational about these topics, we need to be able to talk like adults. The options can’t just be either radio silence, or weepy cuddly support chats.

This does sound awkward as fuck though. Maybe that’s the problem.

Post Script. Of all the articles I’ve written this year, this has been the most heavily edited. As if to make my point, we’ve totally failed to normalise the conversation. My initial title was “Go Kill Yourself”, and above I asked whether suicide was a legitimate option. But fears about people getting offended meant we ended up self-censoring. Even in a column about normalising the discussion, we refuse to do so. We need to lighten up, end your facebook posts with #bringbackthebantzsuicideedition. ■



The Power of Myth in Politics

WITH CURWEN ARES ROLINSON

One of my favourite political ideas was coined by a French thinker known as Georges Sorel.

Sorel's core contention centred around what motivated people's political behavior – what drives people to take a position, to get involved, and to do things in service of the advancement of a creed, particularly in the large numbers required to make a democracy, or indeed any mass-movement, viably work.

It turns out that contra to the forthright opinions of many a political uber-hack, densely-worded, deeply-thought reams of finely wrought policy detail don't actually tend to draw in people. Particularly the less-aligned persons from outside the seven-circled political hell better known as the Beltway, whose moral support is vital in actually getting any serious and enduring representational political project off the ground.

Instead, what motivates us – even the hacks, before we lost our sense of wonder and became grey, shriveled husk-like hollow-men feeding on the fires in the spirits of others – is Myth.

"Myth", rather than "Minutiae" is what makes the political world go round.

Now by "Myth", I don't necessarily mean that which we'd traditionally think of as belonging within a legendarium. With some noticeable exceptions, the role of magic swords in determining the future course of governments has been markedly limited. Instead, it refers to grand, sweeping ideas and aspirational philosophic constructs. "That Vision Thing", as Winston once put it.

The example Sorel put forward when explaining his concept was that of the anarchist "General Strike". Something which quite plainly and self-evidently was highly and hugely unlikely to happen – yet which motivated many thousands of labour activists to get involved and work furiously to try to bring about the conditions wherein the people they championed were able to meaningfully undertake action (almost invariably on a much more limited scale) to secure their own economic self-determination and obtain a greater standard of living.

Other ideas which might fit neatly into this "Myth" category include the notion of a truly fair and democratic society; an idealized nationhood. Or, a personal favourite, the ongoing struggle against Neoliberalism having an ultimately successful and more ardently nationalist/socialist outcome. Libertarians believe that once the Great Beast of Government, "Leviathan", is slain (or, more rarely,

tamed) that we shall all enjoy the looting of its hoard. That 'Free Market' idea is also presumably up there.

This is what gets people involved in politics. Because they're passionate about equal treatment for women, rather than a comparatively minor legislative move which might, in a roundabout way, close the gender pay gap by a few cents. Because they love the idea of our state enjoying true economic self-determination instead of merely being bitterly opposed to the fractional reduction of a single tariff on imports betwixt us and China.

In short, because we fall in love with some generalized elements of 'the bigger picture' – and then start zooming in our gaze more and more on the microcosm as we find ourselves getting further, and more deeply passionately, involved.

This, of course, can inevitably lead to burnout. But while they last, these dreams can be intoxicating. And even more wondrous is the unique sort of politician's or political activist's brain which can simultaneously entertain both the starkly sweeping Vision, and the subtly stabbing detail-thrusts required to make it happen in any real degree.

But as sublime as all this is there is a dark side too.

Our brains – particularly our political brains – are wired up to prioritize emotional resonances over eminent reasonability when it comes to our inclinations and decision-making. That's why I've kept using terms like "beautiful" and "fall in love with" when describing how we relate to "Myth" in the political sense above. Because those are the parts of the brain being stimulated. It's a rare creature, indeed, who initially develops a logisticians' pure mathematical acceptance for a concept without first becoming emotively entranced by it.

The trouble with "Myth", then, is how it subverts our reasoning on occasion to lead to some very curious avenues and outcomes indeed.

A great example of this in our own domestic politics is the New Zealand National Party.

Many of them are adherents of that aforementioned Myth-cult of free marketry. This causes them to assume that they are innately superior – indeed, unassailable – economic managers. And thus, this forms a cornerstone of the "Myth" of the National Party, as carefully parceled up for mass-democratic consumption.

The trouble is, it isn't true. The idea that National are seriously competent economic managers might have what Stephen Colbert would call "Truthiness", but that's a different rubric entirely. By most standards you care to mention, National's record points in the other direction. Where Labour managed to deliver nine straight

surpluses, National had to seriously cheat and fiddle the books to deliver even one – of wafer thickness. Bill English's "fiscally neutral" tax cuts for the wealthy saw working class families paying more tax thanks to the GST hike, while putting somewhere in the vicinity of a five and a half billion dollar hole in the books. The Asset Sales process kicked off in National's previous term in government was also an expensive waste of time which left us worse off than before.

The only way they can even perfunctorily appear to be rhetorically justified is through those self-same appeals to Myth: that part-privatizing an asset already subject to corporate governance structures somehow makes it more efficient; that decreasing taxes on the wealthy (but increasing taxes on those who have the highest marginal propensity to consume) will somehow resoundingly boost economic growth; that less money flowing into the government's coffers for social spending and economic stimulus somehow makes everybody better off.

And yet, the broad preponderance of The Electorate appears to buy into the Myth – or at least, they did up until relatively recently. There are small signs that a growing weight of incontrovertible, crashing reality is beginning to derail this particular myth-perception.

Still, this must come as cold comfort to several opposition parties. Thanks to the strength and depth of their myth-making, National are perceived as far superior to Labour when it comes to fiscal management – even though their records on same are utterly the inverse. Meanwhile, The Greens can submit endlessly detailed, fully costed Alternative Budgets and it does nothing to alter many people's perceptions of them as little more than ecologically minded economic lightweights whose main commercial visions are some form of semi-literal "pipe dream" surrounding legalized cannabis.

Whether that is because the Myth of one group of adherents is so broadly and easily ascribed to as to effectively drown out the Myths of another, or merely because the 'lesser' Myth is just resonates less with the Electorate all up, is an exercise in discretion which I shall leave up to the reader.

But the plain fact of the matter is that if we want to shape the course of events around us in the political sphere, we would do well to learn the art of Myth-Making; rather than becoming, as is every hack's habitual hamstringing, hidebound by hairsplitting detail.

For it is only once we have worked out how to tell truly compelling stories that we can ask our fellow-men to join us and live within them.

Everything up to that point is just a faerie tale. ■



The Number Games

Last week I attended graduation ceremony number four. On arrival, a frantic clipboard-toting woman slapped a label onto my shoulder. For the next three hours I was to be known as graduand number 409. It took forty-five minutes for the frazzled administrators to herd 600 soon-to-be-graduates into eight chronological lines.

I guess it was a special day. I shook the Chancellor's hand. I drank bubbles. I dressed up like a wizard, smiled for cameras, and listened to speeches. My parents were proud. I was relieved, because I don't have to write essays or sit exams anymore. Now I can earn \$40k in a year instead of negative fifteen thousand.

Like everything the University of Auckland does these days, graduation was efficient – or, more accurately, it tried to be. Instead of one ceremony per faculty, Law and NICA shared the 7.30-10pm slot. Presumably the organisers thought it too awkward to ask either a well-respected architect or judge to give a speech, because inevitably one of the two faculties would have felt like a third wheel.

Instead we heard from Sir Michael Hill, the jeweler and self-made millionaire. "I find being here quite strange," he began, "because I never went to university." Sir Michael proceeded to tell us how he was once a shy young man from Whangarei, whose teachers told him he'd never amount to anything. After high school he had a twenty-year long apprenticeship in his uncle's jeweler shop. At several points he was nearly moved to tears by his

own story, revealing how his uncle was a bully and always hated him. How everything changed when his first house burned to the ground one fateful evening. "I was a complete failure!" he near-sobbed into the microphone. That's when the second chapter of his life began.

He opened a competitor store around the corner and never looked back. His current goal is to reach one thousand stores across New Zealand, Australia and Canada over the next few years.

Sir Michael closed with three pieces of advice: be yourself, don't overcloud your mind with technology and, strangely enough, meditate on the toilet. The second point was particularly disparaging, since the audience consisted almost entirely of twenty-somethings about to spend the next forty years of work staring at a computer screen.

Don't get me wrong, the speech was perfectly interesting. Michael Hill is a household name in New Zealand, so I was mildly curious to hear his origin story. The issue wasn't so much that a huge jewelry business isn't overly applicable to Law or NICA students, but rather that it's not particularly relevant to university students at all (perhaps with the exception of Commerce graduates, (entrepreneurship etc etc)). I'm sure that hundreds of high-profile individuals have spoken at UoA graduation ceremonies over the years, so I appreciate the effort involved in securing different speakers each time.

Even so, the speech was a sad reflection of the university's apparent lack of interest in learning (except to the extent that it boosts job and salary

prospects, more of an expensive box ticking exercise than an educational experience). Throughout the entire three-hour affair, no one mentioned the value of education apart from in monetary terms – not the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor, nor the Chancellor himself. The academic staff sat silently on the stage behind these grey-haired administrators, some clad in regalia earned from highly prestigious universities, others no doubt worrying about whether they'd be able to fulfill research quotas for the year.

In addition to our knight in jeweled armour, we heard from the Chancellor. Congratulating the graduands on their fine achievements, he noted that in terms of life outcomes a degree has an estimated value of one to four million dollars. Graduates have better health and earning potential than New Zealanders with only secondary school qualifications. He urged us not to forget our *alma mater*, because UoA relies on its graduates for support: moral and, of course, economic.

Despite my criticisms, I'm glad I went to the ceremony (unlike one bored Fine Arts student, who walked out halfway through). After all, I'll probably only graduate once. The pomposity of processing into the auditorium, singing in Latin, and finishing with the national anthem appealed to my pretentious side. In fact, it was a fairly accurate commemoration of my time at university: impersonal with an overemphasis on the importance of financial productivity.

I'm sure I'll never be as rich as Michael Hill. I'll never love STEM subjects as much as Stuart McCutcheon. As far as graduates go, I'll probably let the University of Auckland down in many ways – but I think that's probably a good thing. ■

Flip-Flopping

WITH ADITYA VASUDEVAN

Politicians get lambasted, in almost every election around the world, for flip-flopping on their policy positions over the course of their career. They're painted as inconsistent, disingenuous, and unpredictable.

You only need to look as far as the treatment of Hillary Clinton during the American democratic primary for evidence of this. It is very easy to take such criticism on board and assume a candidate has no principles, that a candidate is merely an opportunistic political climber. But if it means a politician's stances more accurately reflect the views of the population when he or she gets into office, what's the harm?

The public obsession with consistency relates to the public obsession with personality. Part of Bernie Sanders' charm is that he's consistently

stood by the same principles of democratic socialism over the course of his long, long, long career as a Senator. We see him as a principled candidate. He warms us from the inside, like a microwave, in a way we never thought politicians could or would. We do this because it's easy. We spend our lives judging the people around us on moral and social grounds, so the easiest way for us to judge politicians is just to extrapolate those moral and social criteria and see whether the nebulous evidence we hoard about politicians' lives ticks the right boxes.

Politicians aren't our friends, though; however much some people may want to, they're probably not going to have a beer with John Key on a Friday night. Politicians are agents of the public – they're meant to enact policy that most closely matches with what the public wants and needs. Flip-flopping is a terrible word. It sounds like a fish out of water. When politicians change their stances because they know it will win

them an election, that's democracy *working*. Who cares what they actually think or feel. They work for us, and they should do what we say. I'd happily replace them all with a set of perfectly reactive policy robots that have their robot fingers on the pulse of the population's wishes.

There's one more thing about ideological purity that irks me: lack of compromise. When ideologically pure politicians refuse to compromise on their 'principles' they are making a pretty arrogant statement. They are asserting that their segment of the population's political views are objectively correct and that another's are objectively incorrect. Even if we assume they are

100% right, not compromising doesn't pass that legislation. It gets trammed. We halt. We need to stop seeing politicians as aspirational bastions of moral and political righteousness. They are agents of our democracy, there to ensure the most representative policies are enacted. ■



the people to blame.

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