

CRITIC^{TE AROHI} HOUSE & GARDEN

FLATS THAT MAKE YOU GO

*“It’s almost worth
\$135 a week!”*

Is Agnew St on this year?

**“DEAR GOD,
PLEASE NO”
SAYS EVERYONE
OVER THE AGE
OF 24**

**HOW TO FIND A FLAT
EVEN THOUGH IT’S ONLY
MAY AND YOU REALLY
SHOULD WAIT UNTIL
AT LEAST SEMESTER 2
WHEN YOU CAN TELL
HOW COLD AND
MISERABLE THE PLACE
WILL BE**

\$1000 not enough to buy outdoor furniture?

MAKE YOUR OWN

LETTER OF THE WEEK WINS A \$30 VOUCHER FROM UNIVERSITY BOOKSHOP



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Please be assured that many academic staff within the university are equally as frustrated as students with how long it is taking the central university to finalise arrangements and release an exam timetable.

We have provided the university with information around how we intend to deliver exams online, in many cases multiple times, some weeks ago, at the request of the university, where central administrators are moving at glacial pace in actually actioning anything (as an aside, also rest assured that many staff are finding the function of central support services such as AskOtago, ITS, HR/payroll etc to be well off the mark during this period, and in many cases this is making it difficult for us to resolve issues on behalf of students).

As far as staff are aware, all exams will be delivered online, in the regular exam period (June 3 - 17). What appears to be concerning and misleading are today's social media statements by the university saying that students will be able to complete exams remotely "if required". We have no idea what that means, the university has already committed to teaching and assessing remotely for the remainder of semester 1.

Good on Tim Lamb for emailing Harlene. Her response was predictable and uninspiring. If we can correct him on one point though, students are not "customers" of the university. The only people on campus that seriously think that are the same deluded neo-liberal administrators who can't make any decisions (other than the need to stop spending any money) right now due to a crippling case of analysis paralysis.

Please remind the students that us teaching staff genuinely give a shit and are trying to do the best we can by them right now, but we are up against a hell of a brick wall.

Sup GC's

Just wanted to say cheers for featuring articles written by and about bi people. Helped me come out to a lot of my friends. Before this week I had only told 3 people but now heaps more know. It's reassuring knowing that others are in the same boat. Much love from Invers. Stay safe through all of this mucky shit going on.

.....

Not so much a news tip as a hat-tip... I'm an Otago staff member and am dismayed by the university's response to "Opinion: Otago Fucked Up with Covid-19". I agree with points raised in the piece. Many university staff have been trying to do what's best for students. This included advocating for an earlier shutdown. At Level 2, the Government was advising us to work from home if we could, but our employer was advising us to work from work. Senior management were balancing many considerations and trying to do the right thing, and they got it wrong. They should own it. They should not be shutting Critic out.

.....

After the ODT item on the University boycotting Critic I read some of your items on the web, including the one which offended. I was impressed by the standard of reportage. I found the editorial in question well-written, considered, and to the point.

Clearly some of the functionaries have thin skins, or the commentary hit home. The Vice-Chancellor should never have allowed the idiocy to proceed. Can your student rep raise this at Council? With care it can be framed as a governance matter.

Keep up the standards,
Richard Rowe

I'm a senior academic at UoO - and I want to tell you your "contentious" piece criticizing the University management response to Covid 19 was right on the money. Every academic I talk to says the same. The fact that management has made it personal, and blocked communication with The Critic, is disgraceful.

Clearly it takes people who aren't in danger of being forced to resign to speak truth to power. The exec response was reactive instead of pro-active, and rather than giving academics the authority to act rapidly, trusting in their judgement, the exec was controlling and distrustful. Right up until the day before the lockdown even staff at high risk of a fatal outcome from Covid 19 infection were being instructed to stay at work unless they had approval from [redacted for privacy] to work at home. Students were emailing course coordinators, frightened to come to large crowded classes, and the staff were not allowed to communicate that the classes would be cancelled and moved online. We were instructed to only communicate vague reassurances to the students rather than clear instructions. Many academics were ready to go online well ahead of the actual shut down - and if it were not for the intervention of the government, many would have likely taken action regardless, and taken the consequences upon themselves. Keep up the good work Critic.
Jacinda Arden: A+
The Critic: A
The VC: D

.....

Thanks for all the work that you guys do for us especially love reading your super honest views of issues around the uni! (as well as those horoscopes lol).

Editorial: Ok. Fuck it. Let's Talk About Politics

There are currently very, very few politicians publicly advocating for increased financial support for tertiary students. The Vic Uni hall fee strike got cross-party support. That was pretty tight. It struck a chord in my bleeding cynical heart. But now that Vic's hall fight has been won, I am concerned that students can expect little proactive support moving forward. I am also concerned that Chlöe Swarbrick will go back to being the only politician actively engaging with and publicly fighting for tertiary student concerns.

As we move into Level 2*, before we forget about our six week indoors, we should remember that this pandemic has turned a rock over the state of New Zealand's tertiary sector and revealed some ugly truths. Firstly, that many students are employed in casual or uncontracted work, which is the first kind of employment to go when the economy is hit: the precarious financial stability of students has finally caved in. Secondly, that many politicians and tertiary institutions only see students - particularly international students - as walking bags of money. A leading concern of theirs is not investing in the students they have now, but is how they will attract future students. Thirdly, and just as importantly, this pandemic has proven in black and white that every decision the Government and tertiary institutions make is exactly that: a decision. They can choose to give students more financial support, they just don't want to. Exactly like how half of New Zealand's universities have decided to stop charging fees to absentee hall residents (Massey, Lincoln, Waikato, and now Victoria) while the other half continue to charge (Otago, Canterbury, AUT, and Auckland).

None of these institutions are eligible for the wage subsidy. Victoria University even has the exact same makeup of public-to-private colleges as Otago University, begging the question: what is stopping Otago?

I know at least one answer: the Government isn't stopping Otago, or Canterbury, or AUT, or Auckland from charging students rent for halls they are not using. They don't get involved because they respect the autonomy of the universities. Ok. But so long as tertiary education is individualised and commodified, and tertiary institutions are treated like businesses that need to turn a profit, not a public good, students' wellbeing and futures will not be a priority.

God this editorial is getting boring. I'll cut right to it. Students saw a number of political heads turn their way when the Vic Uni rent strike was announced and was supported by multiple different parties and their youth wings. Now, political parties, who wants the student vote?

Things political parties should do if they want over 400,000 tertiary student votes:

- Implement a Universal Education Allowance, like the one that NZUSA is currently advocating for.
- The abolishment of student loans.

That's it.

*Hopefully. This editorial was written during Level 3 and before the Monday May 11 announcement.

ISSUE 6

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Timetabling

Because of the flexibility of courses of study at Otago, examination timetabling cannot begin until after the last day to delete papers for that teaching period. Therefore, the anticipated dates for the release of examination timetable dates and times (published below) are:

- Summer School: late January
- Semester one: mid-late April
- Semester two: mid-late August

Once the examination timetable has been finalised, each student's examination information will be displayed in the Timetable section of their eVision portal.

As per the University of Otago [Examination and Assessment Regulations](#), candidates are expected to sit their final examinations as scheduled. The main examination centre is Dunedin. In the case of Extramural or Distance Learning candidates, the examination centre is a University-nominated examination venue near their normal study location.

Vice-Chancellor's "Frustrating" Response to Exam Timetable Complaint

Commerce student takes on the Mystery of the Missing Exam Timetable

By Erin Gourley

News Editor // news@critic.co.nz

Otago University has not yet released their semester one exam timetable. A commerce student went straight to the Vice-Chancellor with his complaint and received a response.

Yesterday, Tim Lamb wrote an email to Vice-Chancellor Harlene Hayne outlining his "total dissatisfaction and dismay at the lack of responsibility and communication from Otago University".

Normally, the semester one exam timetable is released in mid-April or late-April. That timeframe is confirmed on the University's website.

Students have not yet received the timetable as of Wednesday May 6. Exams are scheduled to begin on June 3. There has been no communication from the University to suggest that those exams will be pushed back.

The subject line of Tim's email read: "Examination timetable, Where is it?" His email stated that "this failing is not just of those who head the university, but is a management failure at every level".

"I speak not only for myself, but for all students who are still waiting for their exam timetables which are now weeks overdue," Tim wrote. He said as he is "already struggling with distance learning, I'm now having to deal with the added stress of not being able to adequately prepare myself for my exams which I fear will impact on my academic performance."

"Although the exam timetable is typically published by now, I think you will agree that nothing about this year is typical," the Vice-Chancellor responded. She said that the University is waiting for information on Alert Level Two before releasing details on exams.

"I'm by no means satisfied with the 'Response' or lack of from the Vice-Chancellor," Tim told Critic. "I quite frankly feel she has skirted around the questions I have asked."

The "University is working through a complex exercise of establishing the time-table for approximately 1000 papers against a backdrop of uncertainty regarding the conditions that will prevail under Level 2," the Vice-Chancellor said.

"At that stage we will have a much better idea of what will be possible and I guarantee that we will get the information to students as soon as it is available," she wrote. "The key for all of us to remain patient, respectful, and resilient," the Vice-Chancellor said in the final line of her response.

"I'm by no means satisfied with the 'Response' or lack of from the Vice-Chancellor," Tim told Critic. "I quite frankly feel she has skirted around the questions I have asked, and am tailoring my response to her previous email." He said he was "beyond frustrated" with the response and the late exam timetable.

The "university appears to have forgotten that we students are paying customers, and as such we get the right to complain when the university doesn't fulfil their obligations."

Tim highlighted in his comment to Critic that the University of Canterbury released their semester one exam timetable to students on Monday 4 May. Massey University have also released their exam timetable to students.

Tim plans to send a follow-up email to the Vice-Chancellor outlining his disappointment in her reply, he told Critic.

OUSA Academic Representative, Emily Coyle, said that Tim is not the first student to approach OUSA with their concerns about the late exam timetable. "[The OUSA executive] share these concerns and frustrations," she said. "We recognise that this delayed release of the timetable has an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of students at an already difficult time".

After this story was originally published online, the University of Otago published a Facebook post addressing the concerns of students, and referred Critic to that post as their comment. The post said that the University believes that the "process needs to be right and not rushed." They assure students that exams will continue to be held between "June 3 and runs to June 17. These dates will not change."

University Broke Its Own Rules With Delayed Exam Timetable

Critic is narking on the Uni and we're not sorry

By Erin Gourley

News Editor // news@critic.co.nz

Not only has the delayed exam timetable frustrated students, it also breached clause 3(e) of the University's Administration of Final Examinations Policy.

The Policy states that the exam timetable will be provided "six weeks before the first day of final examinations for first semester (normally late April)". The first day of exams is June 3. Six weeks before that is April 22.

One of the purposes of the Policy is to conduct exams in "a manner which provides a consistent and appropriate examination environment for all students".

The University's Facebook post about the semester one exam timetable did not indicate how far away the exam timetable is.

The post backtracked from the April 22 announcement that all exams would be online or replaced with assessments. The Facebook post said "everyone will be able to do their exams remotely if required". It is not clear when a remote exam is "required".

The University would not give comment beyond referring Critic to the Facebook post.

It remains unclear when the exam timetable will be released. "It would be good to know so I can choose which subjects to prioritise first,"

said a third year student.

"This feels like an added stress and anxiety at an already very stressful time," Jane* said.

Jane* received an email on April 22 from the Dean of her department stating that "you will receive your exam timetable toward the end of May". This email was sent to all students in the department with exams in semester one.

OUSA Academic Representative, Emily Coyle, told Critic that she has been assured by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic "that the exam schedule will not be released at the end of May or in the same week of the exams or very close to the end of lectures."

However, not knowing this information, Jane was immediately concerned that the timetable would be released so late. "Personally I am an extremely planned person, and I like to have everything set out day by day, hour by hour, so that I know that come the exam I am as best prepared as possible," Jane wrote in her email to the Dean. "This will not be able to happen if we only find out at the last minute what the timetable is."

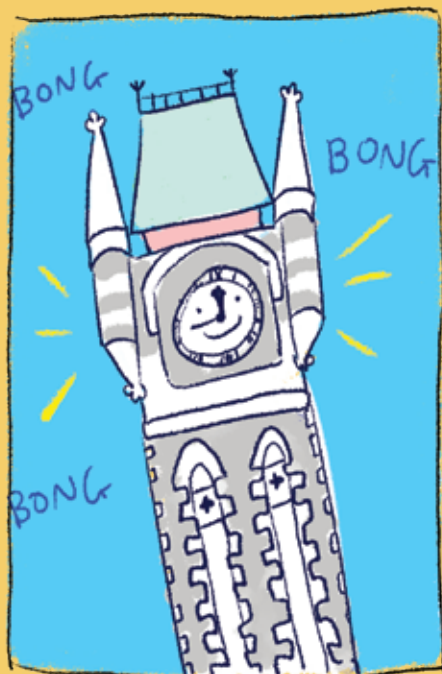
The Dean responded and told the student that the "exam timetable should not change how you study right now or for the next few weeks prior to the beginning of the study and exam

period, by which time you will certainly have it and can plan your study schedule."

Emily said that students are being heard, and that OUSA has been pushing the University on their behalf. She said that despite the University being accountable to their policy, the "changes made to the timetable have not been as simple as moving what was once a three hour exam held in St Davids to a three hour exam in your bubble. Many papers have made changes to the format and structure of their final exam with practicality and student interest in mind."

However, Emily said that OUSA recognises that the delay in the exam timetable "has an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of students at an already difficult time", and that the uncertainty does not help study preparation and workload.

"Students have already dealt with so much upheaval this Semester and have been expected to adapt and respond quickly, therefore we expect the same from the University," she said.



Don't Be Surprised If International Students Leave New Zealand, Says NZISA President

Who will pay VCs' salaries without their money-bags with legs?

By Sinead Gill

Critic Editor // critic@critic.co.nz



Pictured: NZISA National Executive, who work closely with a much larger representative council of international student representatives from around the country. From left to right:

Top - Maitri Shah (Secretary) and Sabrina Alhady (National President)

Middle - Kamilla Korokhova (Women's Officer) and Aliqah Ramizi (National Vice President)

Bottom - Steven Wang (Treasurer) and Ryan Wei (Public Relations Officer)

International students feel like they have been treated like "cash cows", and the president of NZISA (the New Zealand International Students Association), Sabrina Alhady, believes that New Zealand universities should expect some of their international students to transfer to Australia. She also believes that New Zealand universities "absolutely" prioritise perceived reputation over actually delivering reputable services.

The day after Sabrina officially became the president of NZISA, the travel ban was announced. Since then, her large team of international representatives from around the country have been "hectic" supporting international students and their concerns as New Zealand's Covid-19 response has evolved. "We have been receiving increased reports [from international students] that there are tertiary institutions that aren't sufficiently communicating or supporting them," Sabrina said. She believes that this "highlights a hypocrisy" from tertiary institutions, particularly as recently there has been a number of news articles and politicians pointing to international student fees as being the make-or-break of the universities' financial security. "They want more international students, but where is the support to actually meet that demand for students? There is no point in bringing them in if they aren't going to be adequately supported ... that directly impacts on [New Zealand's] international reputation."

"This is the last time they should be thinking about profit[ing of students]. They should be thinking about the students who are here," she said.

Some universities are "worse than others", Sabrina reported. In some cases international students have only been communicated with through "generalised emails" that had nothing pertaining specifically to international students. "As an international student, you come to the uni and sometimes [services] have an asterisk on them. You don't always know if something is applicable to you. That is why the communication with the international office is important."

International students have told their student representatives that if they had known what little support they would receive over lockdown, they would have "definitely" gone home. Sabrina points out that universities "literally" have an obligation to pastoral care if they want to take on international students.

Sabrina said that how much support is offered to international students directly shapes New Zealand's international

reputation. She said that the international community has been keeping tabs on how Australian universities have supported their students, and it turns out that they are doing a better job than New Zealand.

Not only have Australian universities put money into international student support, but so have their states and local governments; for example, the Victorian Government in Australia have introduced a \$45 million support package specifically for international students. In comparison, the New Zealand Government's increase in course related costs and \$20 million package is only accessible by domestic students.

"I wouldn't be surprised if there was an influx of students going to Australia rather than staying in NZ to continue their education," she said. "Because you can just see from the responses [of Australian institutions] that they are investing in the wellbeing of students, rather than looking at them like bags of money here to bail them out of this issue."

This financial support is important for international students as well as domestic students. "The global environment has shifted so much due to Covid-19 ... it really changes their situation. Whether that means their financial supporters aren't able to support them as much as they could before, or at all, and they're really stressed because their options are so limited." She preemptively addressed those who suggest that these international students should just go home. She suggested that domestic students should imagine themselves in international students' shoes: do you go to your home country, and study online, and risk campus opening up and you miss out on opportunities and experiences? International students had very little time to make that call. "It's really difficult to make that decision," she said.

But because of the reported lack of support for international students, Sabrina's personal opinion is that students will move to a different country to continue their studies. "I wouldn't be surprised if there was an influx of students going to Australia rather than staying in NZ to continue their education," she said. "Because you can just see from the responses [of Australian institutions] that they are investing in the wellbeing of students, rather than looking at them like bags of money here to bail them out of this issue."

"We don't want to be the bail out option and we shouldn't be."

Sabrina said that it feels "awful, honestly" to be thought of by tertiary institutions as cash cows. International students are reportedly being told by their education providers that their fees are directly saving peoples' jobs. "It feels really crappy," she said. She said that international students should not bear that responsibility. Sabrina believes that it is the "basic responsibility" of institutions to ensure that they have sustainable financial practices. "At the end of the day it shouldn't boil down to more international students or fewer staff. Like that shouldn't be the straw that breaks the camel's back."

"We don't want to be the bail out option and we shouldn't be."

And if tertiary institutions were to ignore the calls for improved wellbeing support systems, and to keep considering themselves as businesses, "then consider the age old adage of 'the customer is always right'".

"International students as customers, their needs are not being met," she said.

Sabrina and NZISA are calling for fee refunds for all students, including domestic students, who are paying for a service they can't access and an experience they aren't receiving. "It's not to place blame, but to recognise that there needs to be consistency in the way students are treated and in the way institutions perceive students as well ... I think [a fee refund] is one way that they can recognise that this is a difficult time for students. This would recognise students beyond the economic."

Sabrina believes that Covid-19 has revealed the ugly side of New Zealand universities' growing reliance on international student fees, which can be around four or five times as expensive as domestic student fees.

International student representatives have been regularly meeting with government officials, Sabrina said, but said that it is clear that the government does not want to tell universities what to do. "There is a lot of respect for their autonomy," she said, "but at the same time, universities aren't exactly being responsible, bringing in international students without considering how that would impact their international reputation. Because at the end of the day, if they're not focusing on student wellbeing and experience, then they're not going to get more students."

Sabrina believes that New Zealand universities "absolutely" prioritise perceived reputation over actually delivering reputable services. She said that universities need evidence to back up these reputations. "I think Otago's done much more than a lot of other unis," she said, referencing the \$1.5 Pūtea Tautoko hardship fund, which is due to open any day now and is available to international students as well as domestic students. Sabrina also praised Otago for listening to international students after concerns were raised about a lack of communication. "Now, they have dedicated time and resources and dedicated sessions with international students," she said. "But there are some unis who are straight up not acknowledging the hardship of international students or aren't talking to them, or aren't dedicating time to asking how they're feeling or checking up on them."

Sabrina believes that Covid-19 has revealed the ugly side of New Zealand universities' growing reliance on international student fees, which can be around four or five times as expensive as domestic student fees, depending on the area of study and the institution. "There is a rising rhetoric from institutions that they want more international students and more revenue," she said, "but when you scale up that size, you need to scale up the support services available."

"This could have been a really good opportunity for unis to step up and show their support for international students who are facing hardship during this time. That could have really changed the whole game and have done wonders for New Zealand's international reputation." Sabrina said tertiary institutions can't expect students who have had a terrible experience to not leave and tell other students about that experience.

Even as we move away from quarantine life, "there needs to be more focus on wellbeing". Sabrina said international students are consistently reminded of the value they bring New Zealand tertiary institutions, and how they enrich the experience of domestic students on campus, "but where is the investment in our wellbeing? Where is your investment in our non economic value?"



Level 3 Parties Held Throughout Dunedin

“Hello, police? Boy, do I have some tea for you.”

By Kaiya Cherrington

Staff Writer // kaiya@critic.co.nz

House parties have reportedly broken out during Level 3 lockdown around Dunedin's student area. Despite the restrictions outlined by the government that gatherings of ten people maximum may be permitted for ceremonies, and to only make a small addition to your bubble, some students have attended parties beyond their respective flats.

Covid-19 conditions for the Level 3 alert level outline that people who attend permitted ceremonies must also maintain physical distancing and take note of all the people who attend for tracing purposes. Students interviewed by Critic have stated however that the parties were “pretty normal,” and some breached the Level 3 requirements.

One student who attended a party in the student area, Holly*, described the party as a typical “breatha get together”. She believed that everyone there knew what they were doing wasn't appropriate given the circumstances, but she felt it was “nice to pretend things were normal for a bit”.

Holly reckoned it was a pretty normal party, the only difference was that hitting Suburbia was definitely not an option. Her friend who went to the same party summed up that it was “all good. Just a couple beers with the mates.”

Tom* attended a different party the day Level 3 was announced. Tom described that there was a group of flats essentially in one big bubble, and the 25 of them were excited to see

each other. He said it was “tons of fun” and although some were worried about hiding the party, they essentially thought it was “no big deal” due to the mingling already happening between the flats.

He doesn't think others should risk breaking their bubble, and said “having law enforcement show up wasn't scary – it was embarrassing. We all know better.”

However, a police officer showed up the next day and told Tom and the flats that he had been warning partygoers all over Dunedin about the risk of these parties. Tom said “the police were understanding” and it was no big deal as long as they remained in one big bubble, however they were warned about the message they were sending to other flats by setting a “bad example”.

Tom stressed that “by hosting a party we were sending the message that we don't care... and we don't think the rules apply to us, which I definitely don't support.” He doesn't think others should risk breaking their bubble, and said “having law enforcement show up wasn't scary- it was embarrassing. We all know better.”

Another student, Liam*, was excited to see his friends after a long four weeks. The students who still were at Liam's flat went to another party with “definitely more than ten people” in attendance. “It was really chill, we knew everyone there which was good.” However he understood that he was breaching the lockdown.

Liam and his friend Dan* agreed that “we knew it wasn't right,” they just looked forward to seeing other people and feeling a sense of normalcy. Dan said “for ages we have only been looking at the faces in our flat. We were kind of going crazy.”

Liam reckons that his mistake shouldn't be repeated by other party-goers who want a night out. “That's the last and only time I breach lockdown rules,” he said. “I don't wanna risk getting fined, I'm too poor for that shit.”

Prime Minister Jacinda Adern reported that there were 685 breaches of Level 3 lockdown on the first weekend it was announced, most involving social gatherings. She continues to stress that people shouldn't undo the hard work everyone has already done by breaking their bubbles, and that she “[doesn't] want to see our team of 5 million punished for the behaviour of a few”.

*Names have been changed for privacy



Agnew Street 2020 Will Be An Uphill Battle

If we go a year without a street party, will Dunedin cease to exist?

By Erin Gourley

News Editor // news@critic.co.nz

Agnew Street Party organisers will face an uphill battle against concerns from emergency services, emails released to Critic under the Official Information Act show. Suggestions to stop or mitigate the risks of Agnew include an eight month alcohol ban in the area.

"Numbers attending the event are now at dangerous levels," the Proctor said on February 3 2020 in an email sent to the Fire Service, the Southern District Health Board, two members of the Dunedin Police, St John's ambulance services, the CEO of the Dunedin City Council, and the CEO and President of OUSA.

The Proctor wrote in the email that "what [he is] hearing very clear from the Dunedin community - namely you, is that the event can no longer be supported and/or tolerated."

"This message needs to be communicated by you to the 2020 tenants of Agnew Street early in the student year," he wrote. "The message should not come from the Vice Chancellor, nor I, but from you - speaking as representative of the Dunedin community," the Proctor wrote.

He then arranged a meeting with Agnew Street residents and the recipients of the email in mid-March. That meeting never went ahead due to the Covid-19 lockdown, a current resident said.

The Agnew Street resident told Critic that "things aren't looking too good" for the 2020 Agnew Street party. Since "regulations around isolation are

unclear (in terms of what we can/can't plan) at this stage, we have chosen not to [plan the event at this time]," they said.

The group discussed putting an alcohol ban in place over the street in 2020, either for the 48 hours of the party weekend or for eight months.

There is still some hope for those looking to attend the street party. "If time permits and it becomes socially acceptable to hold a large gathering, then we would look at further planning of the event," the Agnew Street resident said.

Police communications before the 2019 party show that the cops were not happy about the event going ahead.

"I believe all attempts to stop this event should be undertaken," Sergeant Ian Paulin said before the 2019 party. He described Agnew Street 2018 as "a diabolical mess".

One of the 2019 Agnew Street organisers was threatened with prosecution if they accepted sponsorship from Nitro. The Proctor emailed him on August 6, 2019, to say that if the organisers did accept the sponsorship, "it starts falling into the realm of section 235 of the Sale and Supply of

Alcohol Act, being a place of resort." Critic confirmed last year that Nitro did sponsor Agnew Street 2019.

Concerns about the 2020 party were raised by emergency services at a debrief after the 2019 Agnew Street party, notes released under the OIA show.

The notes record that 33 people from the 2019 party ended up in the emergency department. The emergency department said they were not warned that the party was happening. St John's staff "had to administer ketamine at least once to a female who was biting everyone".

There was also a lot of MDMA use, which Sergeant John Ferguson described as "a worrying trend". He noted that "Dunedin has the highest per capita for MDMA in the waste testing procedures in the country."

The Proctor was also concerned that op shops were promoting Agnew by advertising costumes for the party.

The debrief then moved on to "how we can stop or at least majorly mitigate the risks". The group discussed putting an alcohol ban in place over the street in 2020, either for the 48 hours of the party weekend or for eight months.

The group then decided that the eight month alcohol ban might be unrealistic, but could happen if the Council decided to implement it, so it was "still a possibility".



Proctor Asked Police to Arrest Students for Couch Burning

Still unclear whether Dave Scott knows that he's not a cop

By Erin Gourley

News Editor // news@critic.co.nz

The Proctor asked police to arrest and charge students with couch burning offences, according to emails released to Critic under the Official Information Act.

A spokesperson for the University of Otago said that they "continue to expect the Code of Student Conduct to be the principal means of responding to student offending." They said that "the University has long made plain its zero tolerance approach to students lighting fires due to the inherent and serious dangers this activity poses."

A chain of emails from 30 September 2019 until 7 January 2020 show the Proctor repeatedly asking the police to make more arrests for couch-burning. The Vice-Chancellor emailed police to support the Proctor's position in January.

When an Otago Polytechnic student arrested for couch-burning in September 2019 was released by police with a pre-charge warning, Proctor Dave Scott described the outcome as "disappointing". He requested that "anyone caught lighting a fire, or adding to an existing fire in North Dunedin be arrested and at the very least a diversion [a less formal type of warning] being progressed" in an email to police on 30 September 2019.

Superintendent Paul Basham said "I am reluctant to get involved in a specific case but happy for police to engage with the University on the broader issue." He passed the Proctor's request on to Inspector Matenga Gray, who ghosted the Proctor for a month.

The Proctor emailed again on 30 October after "four more fires on Saturday night in the Castle/Leith Street area". He told the police that they should "arrest and pre-charge warn" students caught couch-burning "back to the Proctor's Office for us to deal with them". For non-students, he said the police should "arrest and charge" or take their names so they could be summonsed by Campus Constable John Woodhouse.

"I have not had any names forwarded [from a couch burning incident over the weekend] and S/Constable Woodhouse cannot find any arrest charge sheets," the Proctor wrote. "It would appear no action was taken."

Otago Coastal Area Commander, Inspector Matenga Gray, refused the suggestions in his reply on the same day. He said that "[a] 'blanket' approach doesn't fit with our intent and it's a case by case issue for us".

"History has shown us that strict enforcement is the only solution that works," he said. "I would very much like to see 2020 as a year we again put our collective feet on the throat of this re-emerging issue."

"Merry Christmas," the Proctor wrote on 3 January 2020 before advocating for a stricter approach to couch-burnings for the year ahead. He passed on

the statistics on 2019 couch fires, which increased from 13 in 2018 to 43 in 2019.

"History has shown us that strict enforcement is the only solution that works," he said. "I would very much like to see 2020 as a year we again put our collective feet on the throat of this re-emerging issue."

The Proctor raised the concern that non-students ("young tradesmen and apprentices") in North Dunedin were not being held to account. "We are, largely due to the CCTV network in North Dunedin holding students to account under the Student Code of Conduct where there is evidence of fire lighting," the Proctor said. "The piece of the puzzle that is missing is holding non-students to account in a consistent manner by police."

Vice-Chancellor Harlene Hayne emailed on 7 January to add her "strong support" to the Proctor's position. "In the wake of [redacted] tragic death last year, the University is working tirelessly to make changes to the safety of North Dunedin."

"Happy to discuss further," Inspector Matenga Gray replied. "I'll arrange a meeting."

A University spokesperson confirmed that the University "has highlighted for the Police that many non-students are attracted to the campus area and engage in criminal behaviour that endangers students and sees them unfairly blamed for illegal activity."

OPINION:



TO RECYCLE YOUR SHRINE OF EMPTY BOTTLES

BY HENESSEY GRIFFITHS

When you move into a flat, one of the first things you think about is decoration. You decorate your bedroom with the things you want, in an effort to best describe your personality. You create your lounge area as a communal space that showcases your mutual interests and your identity as a flat. There's so many ways for you and your mates to express yourselves.

So why is it that having a designated area for a shrine of your empty bottles of alcohol thought to be the finest form of interior design?

In most flats, it's common to see hoards of empty alcohol bottles or cans. You can always see at least one empty wine bottle floating around someone's room, or a lot of empty beers that have been left on the designated beer pong table. It may be due to sheer laziness, or just because you think having fifteen Billy Mav's stacked on one another looks cool. But at the end of the day, it doesn't matter. On a basic level, showcasing and proudly displaying all your empty booze has stopped being cute. Now, it's tacky. Is it meant to be a physical signifier of how big your dick is? I mean, you can at least repurpose them and put some candles or flowers in them to make them have some sort of functionality. Otherwise, there's just so much recycling you're going to have to deal with at the end of your lease. I get it, sometimes you forget about them to the point where it just becomes a natural part of your flat decor, but how hard is it to just put them in a recycling bin?

Even looking around my room now, the two bottles of empty wine I have forgotten about would be enough for me to buy a succulent Chinese meal, which in hindsight, would have been much nicer.

However, I think the issue here is more than just superficiality. Parading and showcasing empty bottles is just fuelling the cycle of Dunedin's competitive drinking culture. Everyone knows that Otago Students and drinking go together hand in hand; it's all a part of the quote-unquote Otago Uni experience. The danger in this is just how competitive the drinking here has gotten. Every Sunday, you're bound to get asked "what'd you do last night?" to which you're then expected to boast about how absolutely cunted you got the night before. Responses are generally blasé, with a casual "oh yeah I sunk two goons and a whole box and I can't remember anything". There's an impetus that you've always got to go hard or go home. There's no point in half assing it, so you put your body and liver on the line to get absolutely destroyed. This then starts the toxic competitive side of drinking. A strong sense of pressure always controls us to try and drink more, because being hungover the next day is almost seen as a cool status point.

Drinking can be a social lubricant, a fun way to hang out with mates or go meet new people at some random party. Seeing empty bottles littered over a flat has come to represent some sort of trophy and status symbol saying "yeah we love to get drunk". But in reality, it's more of just a physical reminder of how much money we waste on drinks that you won't even remember enjoying. Even looking around my room now, the two bottles of empty wine I have forgotten about would be enough for me to buy a succulent chinese meal, which in hindsight, would have been much nicer.

The reality is that Otago's drinking culture is unlikely to change. Everyone has the right to do what they want, and if it's drinking, so be it. But we need to eliminate the competitive element from it. Drinking shouldn't be considered some kind of ego competition, because it only resorts to harmful behaviours that can have serious consequences to your body and self.

The empty bottles proudly displayed around your flat would look better at a recycling plant. There are so many different ways that you can decorate without having to rely on alcohol, anyway. Go to an op shop and find a tacky painting to draw over. Get some nice house plants that you can care for while your liver recovers. Go to Kmart and get some fairy lights or some shit. Find some nice ways to make your home a home, without feeling the insistent need to fit into the Dunedin student archetype. You gotta have at least some sense of individuality. If you weren't doing this intentionally, though, then let this at least be a reminder for you to take the bins out.

RAs Get Pay-out After Controversy

In this economy, \$20 is nothing to turn your nose up at

By Erin Gourley
News Editor // news@critic.co.nz

RAs who stayed in their residential colleges for the lockdown are now receiving \$20 more per week than RAs who left their residential colleges.

The \$140 pay-out was announced following the outrage from RAs who remained in their colleges for lockdown and were ineligible for a fee rebate. A group of RAs who stayed in their college spoke to Critic about this controversy. The RAs, who were ineligible for the \$120 rebate, felt that they were doing much more work with very little recognition.

The University chose not to comment on this story, but confirmed that the values of the residential fees rebate and the pay-out to RAs who stayed in their colleges were correct.

The residential college fees rebate

On April 7, residents at Otago University-owned colleges were emailed the announcement of the residential fee rebate. In this email, the University stated that they were "committed to passing on to residents who have gone home the direct cost savings being achieved by the Colleges as a result of the current lockdown situation".

The estimated cost of those savings was \$120 per week. The \$120 was credited to each resident's college account to be used against future costs. The sum would be "multiplied by the number of weeks each student is unable to return to his or her College this Semester," the email stated.

The rebate applied only to the residents "who have gone home". This included RAs who went home.

"Not once has anyone reached out to us to ask for our opinion"

The controversy

RAs received this announcement at the same time as the residents. The University did not provide any clarification to RAs about whether the rebate would apply to them, which caused initial confusion. OUSA Residential Representative Jack Saunders then confirmed that the rebate did apply to RAs who had left their residential colleges.

RAs who remained in their residential colleges assumed that the email would apply to their colleagues who left for the lockdown. That would mean their colleagues were receiving \$120 credit on top of their full pay. The RAs who stayed were not receiving any payment from the University on top of their wages.

Jack confirmed that a "group of RAs who remained feel that the University hasn't taken them into

account when allocating the fees rebate, as RAs who went home and are theoretically working less are being paid the additional \$120 on top of their base salary."

"Not once has anyone reached out to us to ask for our opinion," one RA told Critic at the time. They believed the University was "not thinking about the people who were affected by their decisions".

All RAs continue to be paid by the University, whether they stayed in their residential college or not. Their wages cover their residential college fees. The RAs said that their colleagues who left their jobs would be paid the rebate on top of their wages, effectively making a windfall of \$120 per week. An RA described this as "double-dipping".

They confirmed that their colleagues were able to do some work from home, but without being physically present it would be difficult for them to provide pastoral care. "Realistically they can do some work from home but it's not more than about four hours," said one RA. RAs at university-owned colleges are paid for 38 hours per fortnight.

Jack confirmed that most RAs who left "are unable to [work the full 38 hours a fortnight] due to the hands-on nature of the RA work".

"All we want is some advocacy, we just want someone to realise that we are being fucked over," an RA told Critic.

There was pressure to occupy the residents, who were anxious about the situation and bored. "The [college management] insisted that we come up with activities to do with the group every single day," an RA said. "In a normal situation, we would not be doing that."

The extra work

RAs who stayed in their residential colleges said that "pastoral care" responsibilities had become almost unmanageable as a result of Covid-19. The extra work added to their concerns about the RAs who left receiving the rebate.

"The rest of us RAs who have chosen to stay here are now working extra to cover their shifts, and getting absolutely no recognition for that," an RA said.

The transition into Alert Level Four was difficult for RAs. "It's hard, it's just draining and we're only a few weeks into this," said an RA. "We're expected to be always happy, we're expected to be role models, but it's really hard when we're not being taken care of by

the University."

One RA described a student coming to her on the first day of the lockdown having a panic attack. "We don't get to go through it like every other person has. We have to put other people before ourselves."

There was pressure to occupy the residents, who were anxious about the situation and bored. "The [college management] insisted that we come up with activities to do with the group every single day," an RA said. "In a normal situation, we would not be doing that."

A central concern was that RAs have to police the 'bubbles' that the students are in, which has been unmanageable at times. "Our main job description is pastoral care," said one RA. "That does not involve going around and telling people that they have to get 2 metres apart. That is a security job."

"That just dampens the mood and it reminds them that it's a shitty time and they can't escape it." The RAs felt that there was conflict between their roles in terms of keeping students happy and policing the bubbles.

The pay-out for RAs who did not leave

The University has now decided to credit RAs who stayed in their colleges with \$140 per week of Alert Level Four.

The RAs who stayed in their colleges credit OUSA Residential Rep, Jack Saunders, as being the reason why a resolution was reached with the University. They are "humbled" by the new decision to pay them \$140 per week, and said that pastoral care has become easier as students have adjusted to the lockdown.

"We are glad that the University has reached out to us and thanked us," said one of the RAs who spoke to Critic when the rebate was announced. "It was far more than we ever expected."

The news of the \$120 rebate came at a time when RAs were facing increased workloads due to the lockdown. They feel that now their workloads have returned to normal levels as students have adjusted. "The students have been really respectful of us and the rules, even though at first they were annoyed at how strict they were, they have now come to realise how important it is."

RAs who stayed will now receive \$20 more per week than their colleagues who left, but only for the period of Level Four. According to the email, the residential fees rebate will continue for RAs who left their colleges for as long as they are away and not using the college's services. It is unclear whether the University will continue the payment for RAs who stayed on that basis.

DIY FLAT FURNITURE

BY A BUNCH
OF STUDENTS,
EDITED BY SINEAD GILL

Pallets and their younger brother, the beer crate, are God-tier DIY materials. You cannot fight me on this. This is a universal truth. Between pallets and beer crates you can make literally any kind of furniture known to man. For years, my bed base was four pallets slapped beside each other, no nails or sawing required. For the last three months there has been a small pallet tucked away behind my Editor's desk in the Critic office, just in case I am called on for a DIY project in a pinch. The following projects were done by students with basic handiness, so there is no excuse to not follow the pallet furniture dreams you planned with your flatmates back in January but didn't know where to start.

Note: Pallets can typically be found around the industrial/harbour area on the side of the road. A car to collect them is encouraged, but not necessary. If you need a trailer, Campus Watch lend them to students for free. If you see a stack of pallets behind a business' fence, there's no harm in asking if you can yeet one. All else fails, then the back of Bunnings usually has a stack, and so long as you don't take the blue ones, it's fine. Check with an employee if you feel suss. Also, you should probably use a measuring tape in these projects but it is probably fine to eyeball it.

PALLET COFFEE TABLE BY BRAD, PETER AND JULIAN

At the start of quarantine, Brad, Peter and Julian got drunk and carried a pallet halfway across Dunedin. They then spent a whole day deconstructing the pallet and assembling it into a proper table, without any construction experience.

Requirements:

Hands, a cheap shitty handsaw, a pallet, spare nails.

Method:

Step one: Use a hammer and your bare hands (literally) to rip all the planks off individually, remove the nails.

Step two: Use your cheap shitty handsaw to cut some of the planks down to the length you want for the legs, make sure they are even lengths.

Step three: Of the pallet planks, 5 will be the tabletop, but make sure to keep 2 extra ones handy. These will be the cross-bars, which will be nailed underneath the tabletop, and the planks will be running in a different direction from the tabletop planks. The legs will be nailed to this part of the table.

Step four: Slap the 5 planks onto the 2 cross-bars to create the tabletop. Nail them the top planks into the cross-bars.

Step five: Nail on the legs, ideally reusing some of the nails from the original pallet to hold the thing together. You can nail the legs by lining them up to the side of the crossbar and whacking the nails in horizontally for ultimate strength, but you can also nail it from the tabletop into the legs.



A FUNCTIONAL BAR BY JOSH, TIAHLI, QUINN, ANDREW, SAM AND MEG

Josh and his flatmates knew they wanted to build a bar before the lease had begun, but it took a quiet afternoon and a "couple of boxes" before they launched into it. They did it in three hours, but to be fair they were drinking Flames as they did it, so it probably made them faster.

Requirements:

A saw, a hammer each, nails, two pallets that are the same size, something else long and flat (these guys used the sides of an old broken dresser) to become the benchtop.

Bonus: Fairy lights for aesthetic but also so you can find your alcohol when it is dark and you're rummaging under the bar.

Method:

Step one: Chop one of the two pallets in half so that they are roughly half a meter or less in width.

Step two: Nail these half pieces into the sides of the whole pallet so it forms half a box.

Step three: Nail your long and flat piece of whatever to the top of the half box to form the bench top.

Bonus step: Nail other long and flat bits below to make shelves. Maybe don't store bottles on it though, just in case.



SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE UPGRADE BY SEQUOIA AND HER FLATMATES

This team turned their "prison-yard" chic outdoor area into a cute, prison-yard for white collar criminals. She bought the green turf from a wholesaler on TradeMe.



PALLET TABLE DELUXE™ BY BEN MCCLOY

Ben gives you the pallet table deluxe, featuring rustic (nail) beer openers on every corner and a secondary slide out section to double the length of the table. Legs to be decorated by bottle caps after a post-Covid red card.

Requirements:

A table top (the large rectangle pallets are best for this), 4 "standard" pallets, a packet of 6-inch wood screws, a drill or socket, claw hammer, hand saw.

Ben's secondary table comes from the tip, so recommends to do the same, otherwise double your pallet and repeat the steps until you have one large and small-enough-to-fit-underneath table.

Method:

Step 1: Realise you have a big deck

Step 2: Realise that size isn't everything if you can't use it.

Step 3: Outdoor furniture.

Step 4: Realise you're a bunch of uni students who are broke af

Step 5: Pallet table.

Step 6: Bunnings* (Mitre 10 is inferior)

Step 7: Ask the Bunnings guy for some pallets, get told that they put the scrap ones out by the delivery

entrance, ask about that one right there with only one sheet of gib on it, get told "yea bro. Go hard."

Step 8: Go hard.

Step 9: Realise you forgot the 6-inch wood screws and go back to Bunnings* *

Step 10: Using a claw hammer, pry apart the scrap pallets to individual bits of wood, you will have "frames", "slats", and "spacers". Make sure you save the nails. Also make sure you leave the gib pallet as that's your tabletop.

Step 11: Nail together two "frames" of the scrap pallets to make one leg. You need 4 legs. The "slats" of the pallets will be used later as leg supports.

Step 12: Cut the legs to size using a hand saw make sure they're cut flat otherwise you'll have a wobbly table.

Step 13: Cut holes in the corners in whatever side of the gib pallet you want to be the bottom (often one side is in much better nick, you want this to be the top) holes should be cut so that the legs can be screwed in directly from the top as well as the sides for stability.

Step 14: Screw in legs.

Step 15: Pallet table.

Extras as seen in photo:

Step 16: Half hammer in two nails close together at each corner on an angle, ensuring they will open beers.

Step 17: Flatmates acquire secondary tabletop from dump, realise that by pure chance it fits perfectly under the current pallet table.

Step 18: Using "spacers" and "slats" construct a cavity below OG pallet table in which the dump tabletop will sit.

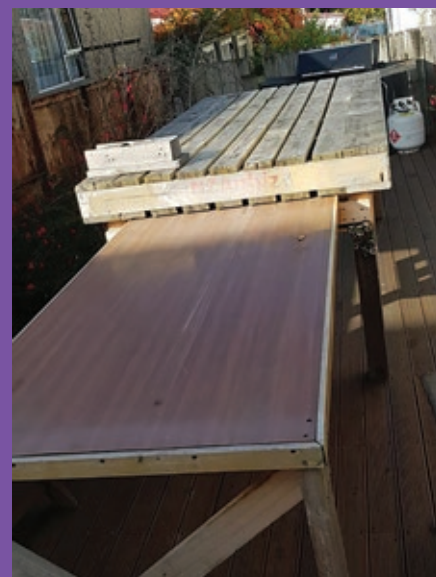
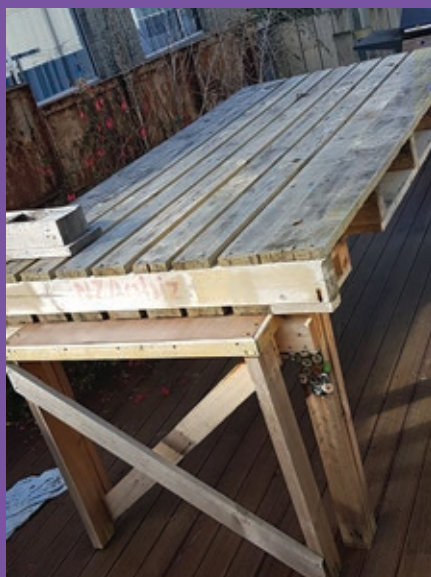
Step 19: Slide dump tabletop into cavity and decide which end you want it to slide out from. At the opposite end, secure a "spacer" to the top of the dump tabletop to prevent it sliding all the way out.

Step 20: Using "slats" construct legs on the slide-out side of the dump tabletop, also using other slats as cross supports to stabilise the legs.

Step 21: Extendable pallet table.

* Bunnings snag required

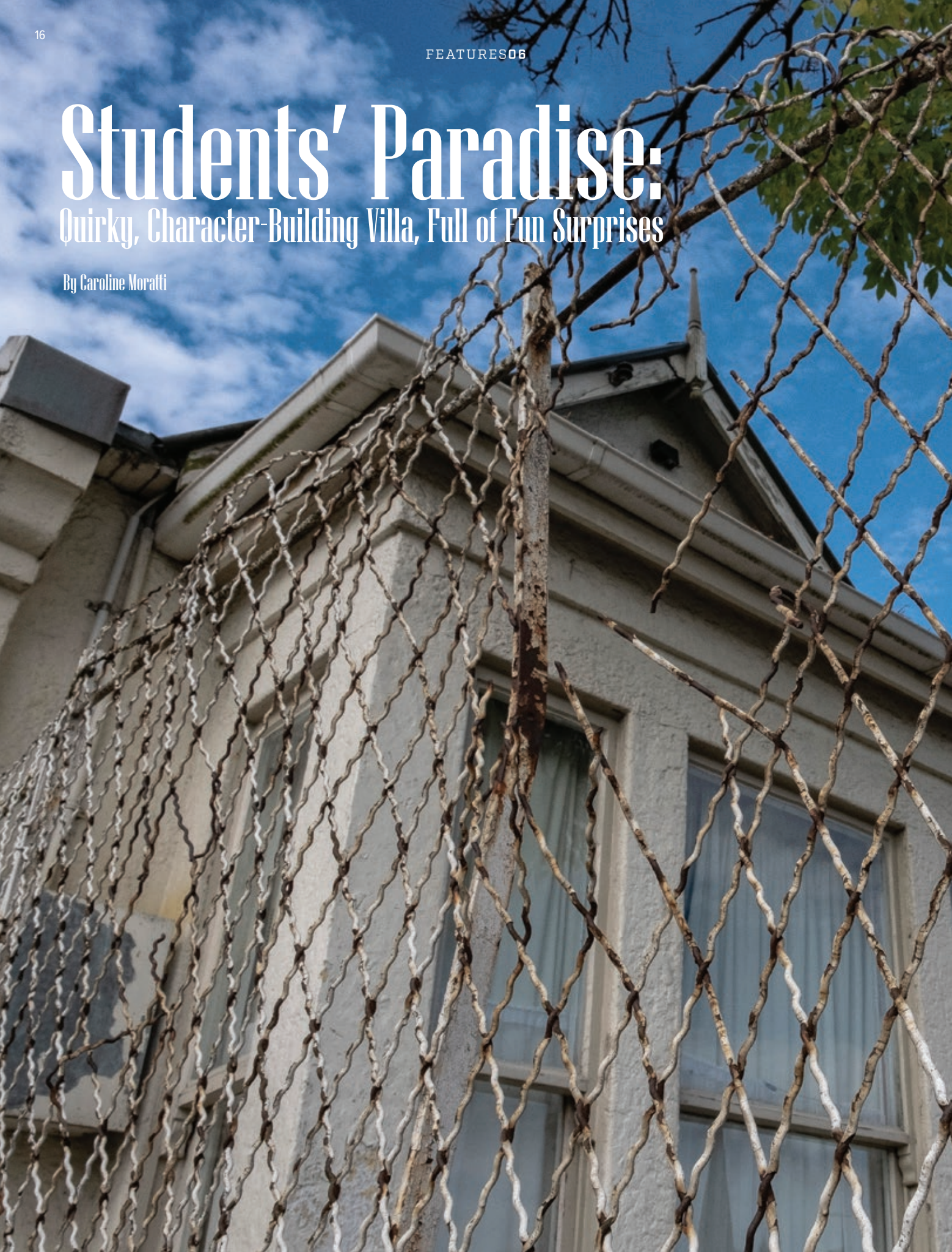
* * secondary Bunnings snag required (happy accident)



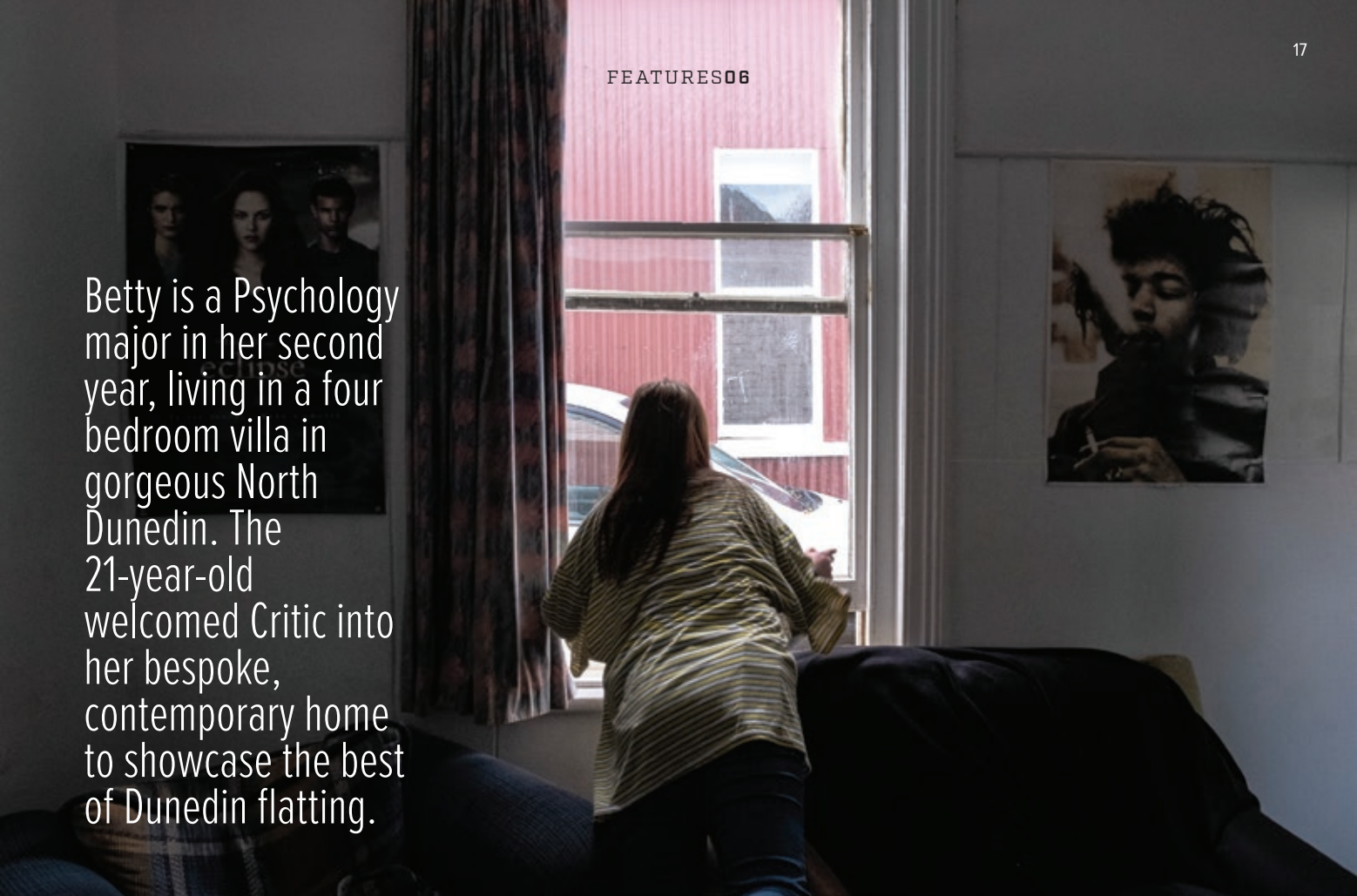
Students' Paradise:

Quirky, Character-Building Villa, Full of Fun Surprises

By Caroline Moratti



Betty is a Psychology major in her second year, living in a four bedroom villa in gorgeous North Dunedin. The 21-year-old welcomed Critic into her bespoke, contemporary home to showcase the best of Dunedin flatting.



The first thing you notice upon entering is the striking placement of the mattress in the hallway. Upended against a wall, the mattress creates a stunning focal point in the narrow space, acting as a conversational piece. Betty explains the flat isn't allowed to get rid of the mattress installation, despite ongoing pleas by the tenants. Outside too, more furniture owned by the landlord sits, bundled under a spunky turquoise tarpaulin.

The house itself is on a spectacular lean, due to sinking foundations. When you walk around the flat you can feel the gaps in the carpet; of history beneath your every step.






Mould on the ceiling also works to draw the eyes upwards to the height of the room, creating a remarkable sense of space. It's an alluring property, one that Betty and her friends are proud to occupy for \$135 each a week. "It's really close to uni, and we left it a bit last minute, so it was either a house here or one really far away, and none of us drive," she discloses.



The flat invites an open, honest approach to living. None of the doors fully close, due to the foundation problems, so the friends share a communal approach to their daily life, redefining their conceptualisation of privacy. Some windows are without locks, serving as a warm invitation to strangers to join them in their humble abode. The house backs Castle Street, so the neighborhood is alive with character and sparkling broken glass. The communal living doesn't just apply to human beings, but rather

God's creatures of all shapes and sizes. "We also have a really bad slug problem," laughs Betty. "They're in Lydia's room. She gets so many slugs. We think they're under her bed...we just pretend they're not there, because we don't know what to do! She doesn't want to pick her bed up!" The slug trails glisten throughout the flat, a whimsical element that helps to add texture to the walls.



Betty is looking forward to making the most of the beautiful villa in winter, saying, “oh, we’re fucked. Like our house is cold now, it’s colder in the house than it is outside. I spend most of my day in bed.”

Upon entering the kitchen, one is struck by the dazzling and playful arrangement of colour. The cabinetry, painted a bold blue, contrasts against the pale yellow of the walls, delighting the visual senses. “It’s not even like a nice yellow, it’s like a piss yellow,” Betty explains. Defecation is a primary theme throughout the flat to create unity and help tie together the living spaces through this central idea. The house contains two toilets, but only one currently works at the moment, a bold contrast. The drainage system to the house is broken and, with their landlord refusing to pay the two thousand dollars it would take to undertake such a repair, Betty says “we’ve had plumbers come three times to unblock the drain, and each time they’ve said it’s just gonna block up again.” When the drain does fully block, the flat is left to fend for themselves without water for entire weekends, which means no showering, no washing machine, no use of the bathroom or sink. The first time this happened was two weeks into moving into the vibrant home, which meant frequent trips to the nearby university toilets. The centrality of the flat to nearby commercial bathrooms is a huge selling point. The fecal theme carries through the house to the garden patio, where sewage often pools as a result of the blocked drain. The overall effect is breath-taking and really emphasises the smooth indoor-outflow flow of the property.

A few months into her lease, how does Betty feel about her beautiful home? “It’s funny now. Like it’s gotten to the point, what month are we in? We’re in March right? [It was May] Oh fuck. So the first month, it was stressful, and you get to the second month, and it’s like, this is ridiculous. Nothing’s ever going to be fixed, so what’s the point in even caring?” She gushes. This carefree approach is evident in the flat’s approach to interior design, from Twilight posters strewn around the lounge, to party lights in the working toilet. It’s a space that works well for both relaxing and entertaining. Betty is looking forward to making the most of the beautiful villa in winter, saying, “oh, we’re fucked. Like our house is cold now, it’s colder in the house than it is outside. I spend most of my day in bed.” Betty’s flat is just one of many Dunedin charmers that will undoubtedly appear on the rental market for next year. With such an array of character and amenities, what’s not to love?

The Great Critic Suburb Review

By Caroline Moratti

The journey from hall to flat is like from womb to breast; it involves sweat, tears, and a lot of involvement from your mother. But where to even start looking? Let's say you hop onto TradeMe Property, ready to search - but what suburb do you pop into that little box? Consider looking beyond the obvious Castle Street spots, Dunedin has a lot of suburbs that are treasures waiting to be opened. God, I feel like I'm advocating for gentrification. Thankfully, students are poor, so it's almost like the opposite. Go forth and lower house prices with your partying.

The prices listed is data I stole from ENZ, who looked at the 2018/2019 average weeklyrent for a 3-bedroom unfurnished house in Dunedin. I then divided that by three to figure out a single room price. Maths, baby. Now, obviously, a studio room will be more expensive than a single room you share in a flat of six or whatever. Prices might also have risen since then. Don't take these prices as gospel, they're just a vibe about the differences between suburbs.

GLENLEITH/LEITH VALLEY

Pros: Cheap rent, quiet and close to nature. This is Affleck would jog in the mornings in a 90's film, take
Cons: Like Woodhaugh but just more shit. This area is
sunlight at all, it's pretty dark and damp so be wary of
culture.

Average Rent: \$136

WOODHAUGH

Pros: Willowbank chips, and good proximity to Uni/NEV shops/Ross Creek. This is where I buy weed. Just a nice vibe
Cons: A bit dark. Your neighbours will be a weird mix of nerds and ex-Castle Street breathers. You will get addicted to
Average Rent: \$133

MAORI HILL (macron not included)

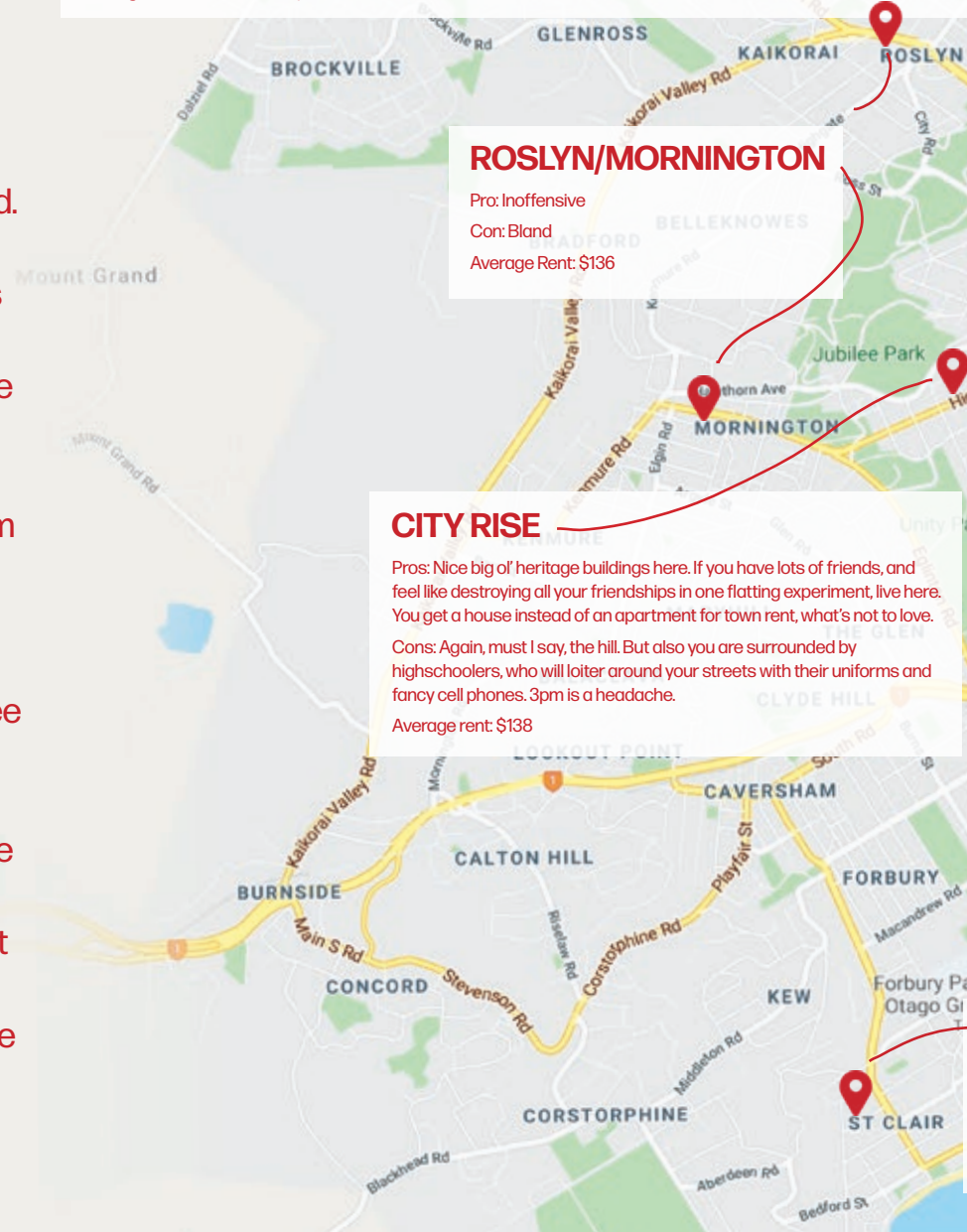
Pros: Hot soccer moms. One of the richest suburbs in Dunedin, so some privilege might rub off on you.
Cons: Having to explain to my parents why I would want to live in the same neighborhood as them but not move home. If
you so much as let the microwave beep, your neighbours WILL call noise control on you.
Average Rent: Somehow only \$150

ROSLYN/MORNINGTON

Pro: Inoffensive
Con: Bland
Average Rent: \$136

CITY RISE

Pros: Nice big ol' heritage buildings here. If you have lots of friends, and feel like destroying all your friendships in one flatting experiment, live here. You get a house instead of an apartment for town rent, what's not to love.
Cons: Again, must I say, the hill. But also you are surrounded by highschoolers, who will loiter around your streets with their uniforms and fancy cell phones. 3pm is a headache.
Average rent: \$138



PINE HILL

Pros: The nice, posh sounding name. Close drive to Mt Cargill for scenic crying/car sex.

Con: The sounds and traffic from State Highway, the fuck-off hill, having to explain to everyone exactly where you live.

Average Rent: \$120

NORTH EAST VALLEY

Pros: Probably some of the cheapest rent in Dunedin and another student hub. Walking through the botanical gardens to get to university is one of life's little pleasures. And, of course, Beam Me Up Bagels.

Cons: The op shops are devoid of clothes for anyone under the age of 60, New World is expensive and the bagel shop closes at 2:30pm. There are no liquor shops around for kilometres. You will spend the entire year only drinking either wine or cider.

Average Rent: \$120

OPOHO (macron not included)

Pros: Nice view of the valley, with the SPCA in close proximity for lots of cat cuddles.

Cons: Being close to a Knox cult. The Hill! Oh, the hill. You will have good intentions to go to the SPCA, but never actually go and beat yourself up about it. Also, lots of Professors live in this area, which makes for surreal bus rides, but hey, you might consider that a pro.

Average Rent: it's a mystery. Probably about NEV prices though.

NORTH DUNEDIN

Pros: Close to Uni, you'll never feel more like a student than when you live in North Dunedin. Fatty Lane, the prized gem of North Dunedin, boasts more takeaway options than you could shake a baby at.

Cons: Broken glass on the street, loud parties at night. If you're not living for the sesh, you might not want to live here. Often located awkwardly halfway between New World Centre City and New World Gardens.

Average Rent: \$133

WAREHOUSE PRECINCT

Pro: The vibe is closest you'll ever come to feeling like a girl in a NYC romcom. Beautiful, vintage buildings. Vegan coffee shops and microbreweries, it's a liberal's wet dream.

Con: I'd have to sell my organs to afford to rent an apartment here.

Average Rent: Another mystery, but probably for the best we don't know this one.

CITY CENTRE

Pros: Close to town (duh) so no freezing walk back from the clubs at 2am.

Cons: Unless by some God-ordained miracle your flat has a garage, there's no parking. You don't need to own a car in Dunedin, but my goodness it helps sometimes. Any sort of greenery or garden is hard to come by too, so you better be content with a late afternoon beer by the pot plants.

Average rent: \$138

SOUTH DUNEDIN

Pros: Excellent op shops and secondhand furniture. Since not many students live out here, it's easier to find things with a more youthful flare. You're close to Pak'nSave and The Warehouse for cheap shopping and eating, plus only a short walk away to the beach. Fuck, I could be a real estate agent.

Cons: The walk to uni is devastatingly long, but it is flat. Still, I'd shudder at the price you'd pay in Lime Scooters over the year. If you like to party and stay out late but can't afford an Uber, this isn't the best drunk walk home.

Average Rent: \$118

ST CLAIR

Pros: Hot surfers. The beach. The ice-skating rink for cute Winter dates. A lot of rich people live here so it's prime dating territory.

Cons: Don't even think about walking. You'll either need a car or be really comfortable with the Dunedin bus system. Every time it's even remotely sunny, the entirety of Dunedin will flock here, take your parking spaces and steal your seats at your cafes. Thankfully, Dunedin is often grey and bleak.

Average Rent: \$134

FLAT HUNTING TIPS

BY CAROLINE MORATTI

Every year, Critic tells freshers not to sign up for a flat in first semester. Every year, freshers fail to heed that advice. So, we thought, what the hell, let's just roll with it. Although the global pandemic might have delayed flat hunts a bit, rest assured the season will soon be upon us in full heat. The following is a range of Dunedin-specific advice that won't be found in your average university-affiliated propaganda. Mainly because we use words like 'fuck'.

HOW TO LOOK FOR A FLAT:

- Join a bunch of Facebook Groups, like Otago Flatting Goods, Dunedin/Otago Flatmates & Flats Wanted. The more pages the better. A lot of flats will only be advertised on here instead of the big, official sites.
- Scour TradeMe and real estate pages. Accept that you'll have like over 30 tabs open, make peace with the chaos.
- Ask your friends. Make embarrassing posts on Facebook. Some particularly good, central flats only travel from word of mouth.

DON'T: Knock on flat doors, unless you're really desperate. But just, it's weird. Let people live, okay? I need at least an hour to emotionally prepare for a Zoom call from my friends, let alone an unannounced flat tour from strangers.

BEFORE YOU LOOK AT THE FLAT:

- Do your research beforehand. RateMyFlat is a bit of an outdated website, but gives you a solid impression of what some tenants from 2014 thought of the flat lol.
- Have a talk with your group around expectations. If the rooms are different sizes, would the group be willing to reduce rent for a smaller room? One shit room can make or break a flat if no one's willing to be the one to sleep in it.
- Have a list of priorities. For my flat, we all wanted decent sized rooms and a nice lounge. That was it. When we found that, we signed, despite not having a garden, despite the entire house kind of existing on a lean. I can live with a lean, I cannot live with sleeping in a single bed. For you it might be the total opposite.

WHEN YOU'RE INSPECTING A FLAT:

- If the tenants are there when you're viewing the flat, literally just ask them their thoughts. Note that this isn't always the most reliable source - some landlords give their tenants a bonus if they help get the flat signed for next year - but it can't hurt to ask. Ask them specific questions so you don't just get the generic "yeah haha it's a really good flat" answer.
- I know it's hard with different timetables, but it really pays off bringing your entire flat group to the viewing schedules. If you like the place, you can all agree just to sign it/apply for it right then and there, and voila. If only one member has seen it, there's often a lag with convincing your flatmates it's a good flat, they'll want to see it too, and often by then the flat is as good as gone. There's nothing more shitty than losing a flat you liked because you were too slow to get your shit together. Having your group at the flat viewing also gives you more confidence to really inspect the place. Talk through the rooms, see how sound proof they are! Just fucking go nuts babe.
- If you can't bring your flatmates, take lots of photos. Send them to the group chat immediately. But remember, judge a flat by its worst room, not its best room. Someone has to live there, after all.
- That being said, don't be intimidated by large flat viewings. Turning up to a flat open home involves 30 other hopeful residents, which makes you anxious and feel like you have to sign straight away. If you're unsure, then feel free to wait. Honestly, the right flat is often like your dating life. Sometimes you consider the wrong people, because of your circumstances and the pressure from the other people around you. But the right one? Then, often, you just know.

A POSSIBLE CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE SIGNING A FLAT:

- Does it have somewhat decent parking on the street or property? Even if you don't have a car, this is a question worth asking. Moving into a flat becomes a massive problem if there's nowhere for a friends or parents car to park to unload furniture and belongings.
- How much sun does the flat get? God I know this sounds like the most middle-aged thing ever, but it turns out wine mums are onto a good thing here. North-facing windows are the best. Try and avoid south-facing, if you can. It'll help with your mental health, mold, and everything, I promise. If I had a north-facing window I'd probably have a boyfriend by now. I miss direct sunlight, that bitch works hard.
- Shower water pressure. Dunedin showers are notoriously bad, I've bathed under a dribble before, which can suck for masturbating/recreating human warmth. I know it can look weird, but don't be afraid to quickly test it in an open home. The shower pressure that is, not the masturbation.
- How soundproof are the walls? Having to repeatedly hear your mate have sex is the quickest way for a friendship to collapse. Or get weird.
- Can the size of the kitchen withstand a few dirty dishes? In my 2nd year, I had the cutest, but the fucking tiniest kitchen. We all loved it, until like one person forgot to clean up immediately after dinner and there was no avoiding the mess. You want enough bench space that if a few dishes build up, you're not going to want to immediately move out.
- How would the space work if you want to host parties? Is there an obvious flow to the house?
- Do the windows close properly? Once I viewed a flat on a beautiful, dunner stunner where the flat windows were all open to let in the sun. I signed the flat and needless to say, come winter, they did not close properly and we had a problem.
- Is the source of heating in a good place? If it's in a lounge, great. If a heat pump is in the hallway, or a bedroom that used to be a lounge in the 19th century, then not so great.
- How private are the bedrooms? Will you have to close the curtains every time you get dressed to avoid the neighbours? Are the neighbours cute?
- Where is the bathroom located? Look, from all my flatting experiences, my bathroom has always been located off from the lounge. It's not a biggie, but literally every time there's guests in the lounge I have to be self conscious of how loudly I shit or piss. If the bathroom is off a corridor, that's ideal.
- What's the neighborhood like? If you're looking to study in a party-area, you're going to get fed up pretty fucking quickly. See if you can hear the neighbours, and check for overflowing bins as a sign of a party flat.
- What's the vibe you get from the landlord? Personally, I've always avoided signing with agents in favour of independent landlords that are much more likely to fix things, keep in contact and just altogether be a good cunt. Things will go wrong, you just want someone there to help make it right again.
- How well do you know your flatmates? If any flatmates have chemistry, be cautious. They'll probably fuck and then make things weird for the group dynamic.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, DON'T SETTLE:

If a flat just doesn't give you good vibes, don't sign it. Even if it's the end of the year and the flats are all drying up. Even if you've literally looked at 20 other places. Even, even, even. In my years as a Dunedin student I have realised that there is nothing worse than a shit flat. Even if the rent is cheap and you can put that money into power. Even if the location is close to uni. If the vibe is off, it's off. Winter is already hard enough as it is, you don't want to make it worse by living in a damp, cold, small room. It's better to live further out and have a decent house. There's lots of flats in Dunedin, there's no shortage. Worse case scenario? You might not live with your friends, which is not the most terrible situation to happen. If you have a shit flat, you will probably

get miserable and hate your friends anyway. Your friends can always come round to your room as visitors, but you don't want to be the person telling them to shut the fuck up past midnight on a weeknight. By not settling, this doesn't mean to be unrealistic. You're probably not going to get a kitchen island or a cute vintage fireplace (still, every year, I hope). This means standing your ground in the face of peer pressure to be chill and cool. Signing a flat is a big deal. That's your home for a year, come good, come bad, come breakup and party. Can you cry there? Can you laugh there? Dear friends, can you build a life there?







How to Look After House Plants

By Asia Martusia

Congratulations, you have a bouncing baby houseplant. Doesn't it look divine amongst your fairy lights and polaroids? Here's how to keep it big, strong and alive so that it can one day look after you in your old age.

Light of my life, fire of my loins

Different plants require different amounts of sun. Dunedin's stupid grid system might have produced Baldwin Street and a road called Harbour Terrace which doesn't even have a harbour, but it makes it easy to place your plants.

If your child enjoys lots of light, point it up towards North D Maccas. The sun and dazzling golden arches are perfect for cacti, kalanchoe and other succulents.

West or East towards Unipol will ensure maximum swoleness for shady fellas like ferns and begonias.

South doesn't get much, but works for philodendrons, peace lilies, or spider plants. If you live in a shitty dark flat, which you do, invest in a cheap purple light. Recall the blissful days of mixing colours in primary school. Red light encourages photosynthesis and blue light helps plants develop, so if you combine them, you obtain maximum plant power without looking like a cop #acab. People will also think you are growing weed and it will make you much cooler.

Stay hydrated

Slurp up some water with your hydro homie. Don't overwater or their roots will drown and rot -- this is why the little hole at the bottom of plant pots is important. If you aren't sure whether your plant needs watering, dive into third base and give the soil a big ol' 5cm finger. If the soil sticks then it's wet enough for the time being. Keep it wanting more, you dirty dog.

If your plant likes it moist, spritz them with a misting of water; placing pebbles around the base helps contain humidity, too.

Plants such as cacti and succulents retain water and don't need much, which is why they're popular amongst people who love the aesthetic but can't commit to the bit.

Share a hot steamy romance

If you have a plant which craves humidity, such as a monstera, take them along for a sensual shower. Light some candles. Blow out the candles so they don't set your plant on fire. Don't be shy; you're beautiful the way you are. Share an intimate moment which makes you forget that time exists. Don't get soap suds on your plant, unless they have mealybugs (gross fluffy bug things), in which case do. Rinsing your plant keeps them pest-free.

Repot & cut away new growth

If your child is getting too big for his britches, gently relocate him to a different home, like my parents did when I turned 18. Don't worry - the roots will regenerate. Trimming your plant at a 45 degree angle above a sprouted leaf encourages new growth, especially in winter. Pluck off dead bits.

Aggressively breathe

I don't actually know if talking to your plants helps them grow, but if you've got shit chat then you can always just heavily breathe some juicy CO2 on them. Apparently the vibration of your voice also helps, so you could also try epilating really close by.

Poo on them

Plants love poo but also egg shells, seaweed, kitchen scraps, banana peel, garden clippings and coffee grounds. Squelch them into the soil for an occasional tasty snack. Some cafes such as Morning Magpie even give out free coffee grounds at the end of the day.

Careful though: poo and coffee grounds are very acidic and can burn your plants if they're not into that.



Give up and buy a plastic succulent

You tried and you failed. You are a horrible mother. Luckily, just like a silicone reborn doll, you can buy a new and better artificial child. Your Instagram followers will never tell the difference.

Basic baby plants for noobs

Peace Lily — the easiest plant ever. When it starts to wilt, water it. It'll perk right up. Doesn't need much light at all, so perfect for livening up your miserable flat. You can sometimes find them at Countdown.

Philodendron — decadently art hoe and very hardy. These are the plants you see on Pinterest. Prefer indirect sunlight but can tolerate the gloom. Give 'em a finger and water when the top 25% of soil is dry. The leaves will droop a little when they want more or less water, then spring right up again.

Tradescantia/spiderwort — these ornamental delights are criminally underrated, probably because they're considered pests, so don't grow them outside unless you hate the environment. They grow like NUTS with a weekly water and make you feel like a druid. Can be kept in low-light but develop sick purple zig-zags in the sun. You can hang them in a basket or have them delicately draping from a pot. Trim occasionally; it's super easy to propagate the stems in a cup of water if you desire.



How to Feng Shui Your Bedroom

By Naomii Seah

Every culture has its own superstitions. You've probably heard some of these from your grandma, or your mother or father, or your auntie. For me, it's always been Feng Shui. My dad touts it like no tomorrow, and whenever I tell him something that's going wrong in my life, his answer is always: your Feng Shui must be bad. As of writing I've not yet rearranged my room, but passing his advice on to y'all must be therapeutic in some sense, right? Anyway, here's all the advice my dad has given me. If you've had a run of bad luck recently, it might be time to rearrange your room. For your life force to flow correctly and all that.



The Bed

Buy as big a bed as you can fit into your crusty, cold flat. The bed is the center of rest and is therefore of great importance. Make sure that you don't place your bed in direct alignment with a door. This is important as Chinese custom dictates that when a person dies, they are laid to rest in their coffin with their feet facing the door. This is to let the soul of a dead person walk out the door rather than back into the house. Souls are generally pretty important, so don't let yours walk off in the middle of the night.

The bed also should have a headboard, or at the very least be backed onto a solid wall. This represents your sense of strength and security. Whatever you do, you'll have a solid backing behind you. Some websites also say not to buy barred headboards as it may feel like a prison.

Finally, make sure the ceiling of your room is flat above your bed. A sloped ceiling will put pressure on you while you sleep. If your bedroom does have a sloped ceiling, buy a four poster bed, or hang a sheet above your head, I don't know.

Mirrors, Reflective Surfaces, Electronic Devices

Try not to have any electronic devices in your room. The modern reason is that it disturbs your sleep due to the electromagnetic forces associated with electronic devices.

Also avoid mirrors or reflective surfaces like glass or a TV directly opposite your bed. The traditional and badass reason for this is that if you wake up in the middle of the night and see your own reflection, it will take away your soul.

Plants

Plants in the bedroom are not recommended in Feng Shui. They give off a strong Yang energy, which is the energy of growth and movement, and so are not optimal for a good night's rest. One small plant is acceptable if your room is quite large, as it should not unbalance your energies. Don't put your plants right in front or beside your bed, as again, it has connotations of putting flowers on a grave. If there's nowhere else for your plants to be, bring more yin energy into your room with lush fabrics such as velvet or a shaggy rug in an oval or squiggly shape and pattern. Good luck to all the tumblr girls out there.

Colours

What colours you should have in your bedroom depend largely on the year you were born, and your corresponding Chinese zodiac sign. I've done the hard work for you, and collated all the good colours for each zodiac in this article, from 1997 - 2001.

Ox (1997)	Fushia and cream
Tiger (1998)	Grey and purple
Rabbit (1999)	Pink and yellow
Dragon (2000)	Ruby red and grey
Snake (2001)	Bright yellow, baby blue and peach

More generally, soft earth tones are encouraged in bedroom decor, to create a tranquil space. Also pastels like blue, purple and green can invite healing energy. Whatever you do, don't decorate your bedroom in exclusively white and black, and these colours are reserved for funeral ceremonies.

Positioning

Your bedroom door shouldn't face a long hallway. Long hallways act like a channel for energy, and directing all that energy into your bedroom will disrupt your sleep. If this is the case for you, place a crystal ball near the entrance of your door to prevent bad energies from entering. You can also optionally place a chest of drawers beside the door to break the flow of energy.

Shelves

Try to avoid books in your room. They stimulate the mind, and therefore their energy interrupts sleep processes. If you need shelves in your room, don't put them directly opposite the bed, as the shelf acts like a spiritual blade and will cut your spirit. Similar to the long hallway, if there is no other arrangement in your room, you can put a chest of drawers at the foot of your bed to break the flow of energy.

If you follow all these steps, the yin and yang of your bedroom should be in harmony. If it isn't in harmony, you will experience interruptions to your life. I'm not saying rearranging your room will make your life better, but think about how many bedrooms out there have unbalanced energy, potentially leading to a mass disruption in daily life... yeah. Maybe my dad was right after all. I'm off to rearrange my room.

FLATS THROUGH THE YEARS

FIRST YEAR



SECOND YEAR

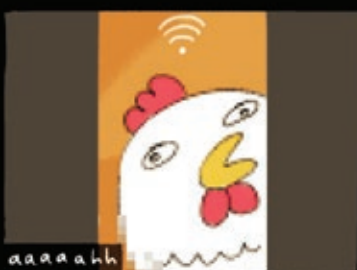


THIRD YEAR





Surely town when we get back? Xo



No Thanks



Survival of the fittest doesn't really apply here.

Sims 4 has made a resurgence during the lockdown. With no social interaction and nothing to do; what else will kill five hours in the blink of an eye?

Killing sims is a sport. I'm sure everyone with the game has tried it at least once, and it's harder than it looks. But how about seeing which stereotypical student survives the longest in a house that is doomed from the start? No, not a flat on Leith, but close enough.

Of course there are so many different people who study at Otago, but a select few stereotypes volunteered as tribute. The Law student, the snooty type, bit of a hothead. The bitch who sleeps all day yet manages to fly by. The small town boy, gumboots on and a bit out of

his depth but trying his best. The A+ student, studies all day yet somehow manages to have a perfect vitamin intake and colour coded notes. The breather, you know the type. The arty girl who drinks coffee 24/7, will only buy from an op shop and is probably better than you in every way. And the sporty jock type, gym boy, bit of a playa, will definitely see him roaming Tinder.

A sims flat was thrown together, fit with a BBQ inside, an indoor pool, no privacy and two beds. A dance floor too! Absolutely spoilt. Except there were no bins or sinks to minimise cleanliness and maximise disgustingness. They had everything they needed, but I guess everything was still not enough to keep them alive.

The BBQ was the first killer, and the jock was the victim. The fire lasted a painfully long time, taking at least a sims hour to kill him. The rest of the sims just stood and watched, making no attempt to extinguish the fire, much like watching your friend kiss a guy who went to Knox and being unable to intervene.



The fire continued to rip through the house for a sim day or two as the other sims watched, and the lord saviour Grim Reaper was trapped as a temporary house member.

Once the fire stopped, he left. I hated to see him go but I loved to watch him leave.



Next up, to no one's surprise, the girl who sleeps too much. It was a given that her desire for sleep would be her downfall, and during her monthly workout in the pool, she unfortunately drowned. There was no hope from the start, but her passion is undeniable.

RIP sleepy girl, you will be missed.



After the first two deaths, the remaining five sims took a painfully long time to cark it. After sims weeks passed and half the house was burnt down, the decision was made to remove everything they needed to survive for my own sanity, and see how long they last.

Of all the ways to die in this house, you would've thought someone would die of embarrassment following them pissing themselves all over the floor. Yet hunger was the culprit for them all. Country boy, perhaps from Te Puke of all places, was the first to starve to death of the remaining five.

He collapsed in a puddle of piss, but to be fair, the whole floor was covered in piss. We were rooting for you country boy, we were all rooting for you.

Next up: the Law student.

Her hotheaded-ness surprisingly didn't kill her, but again, she died of hunger. Hunger for the rark or hunger for food? We will never know.



She could save her grades but couldn't save herself.

The A+ student starved to death, facing a burnt down kitchen. If only the fridge worked. Then maybe she could have sat her Physics exam like she dreamt of.



The arty girl was the last to starve. Surviving her protest journey against palm oil was more dangerous than living in that flat, but the determination wasn't enough. Even though she was 100% better than all of us, perhaps without her, the rest of us will look better. Enjoy heaven, or maybe Buddha Stix - they're both the same.



Against all odds, in the plot twist of the century, the breathas was victorious.

Breathas were officially the most powerful and resilient people.

His flat had a makeover fit with a spa bath, spa pool, and the best furnishings. He was rewarded with meal platters, a margarita, and a nice long bath. He sat on his new couch facing his flatmates who just weren't good enough. He reflected on his life, feeling 'very sad,' and existed in loneliness. He had proven himself worthy... But at what cost?



The Critical Tribune

Exams To Be Held on Minecraft Server

Following a special announcement over the weekend, the Critical Tribune can finally reveal the reason behind University's delay in releasing the semester one timetable. After a month of consideration and "intensive" planning with Mojang, Otago Uni has agreed to host the world's first ever tertiary exam over Minecraft.

"Otago is known for its world-leading innovation," a University spokesperson told the Tribune. "As soon as we saw a spike in

'Minecraft' searched on our college and Uniflats internet proxies, we knew that this would be a sure-fire way to keep students #engaged with the #otagoexperience".

The University has assured the Tribune that the exam timetable will be released sometime this week, just as soon as someone figures out how redstone works.



YES?

By Sophia Carter Peters

ops).

e getting felines. I didn't know what age they
d likely be more work, so when two three-
knew I was in for something. Obviously I fell
ther students rated their experience.



Chloe has had animals her whole life, so moving out of her parents' house was a weird transition. Even with flatmates she said that "the first couple of months in this house felt odd". She began donating kitten food, saying "I've always loved animals, so I feel like I needed to do something to help out." So, when a volunteer from Auckland-based Gutter Kitties suggested fostering, all she had to do was convince her partner.

She eventually signed up and took on four kittens. She considers her experience a "foster fail", since she ended up adopting one of the four. However, she said that fostering kittens has made her flat feel "more like home". Chloe said her partner wasn't impressed at first since he allegedly hated cats, but has "slowly learned to love our foster fail, even if he'd never admit it".

Despite this so-called fail, she highly recommends fostering to anyone else who has time to be at home. Which is probably all of us right now. "It is so rewarding to know you're saving lives," she said. She described passing on her foster kitties to forever homes like being a gift for both you and the family. "I had a lady cry with joy because I selected her to adopt one of the kittens - that really solidified it for me - I am actually making a slight difference in the world."

Madison is another student fostering animals, alongside her partner. They are doing it through Crossed Paws, a Dunedin-based program, and began after their own cat passed away. "We weren't ready to get another cat, but felt like we had the space in our home to give to cats or kittens that needed it," she said. They've had six foster cats so far and have been taking on two at a time. Fostering cats in pairs is an advantage, so that the cats can have a buddy and learn to be comfortable around other animals.

They have been fostering for nearly three months, and weren't really expecting to be fostering during the lockdown. Now that they have, though, Madison said "I think it was important in our routine, as you have to get up at a certain time to feed them, make sure they have a clean space, et cetera. Also, they're not allowed outside so you spend a lot of time playing with and entertaining them." That's not to say fostering is without its challenges. "You can't get away from them when they're being really full on or annoying."

Currently, Madison is fostering two kittens named Doc and Timmy, and sincerely recommends fostering. "All of their expenses are paid and you just get to hang with kittens all the time! I would say it's the easiest volunteering you'd ever do."

You also give an animal an even better shot at finding a permanent loving home, while getting some great pet therapy. "Being liked by an animal is a pretty cool feeling, and so is being able to work with young cats and turning them into loving, confident social house cats is pretty lovely."

For those who aren't able to foster animals, Critic spoke to Elliot, who has been fostering his flatmates' weed plant, Skunk Blink Blink. "She's calm and gentle and mostly likes napping in the sun and being left alone."

"She [Skunk Blink Blink] is pretty low maintenance and we don't spend that much time together, but we catch up most days for a drink... I honestly didn't think she would last a week in the Dunedin cold but she's stuck around this much. Whilst we haven't really gotten much use of her, she's fun to have around."

EATING MY BACKYARD

Can Foraged Foods Make a Delicious Dinner?

By Wyatt Ryder

I've always liked the idea of growing my own food, but I am a very lazy man. Last week, though, I had a realisation: I'm already growing food. If animals can eat weeds, why can't I?

I grew up rural, so I had a vague idea of what was out there in terms of edible weeds. I did a brief Google search to make sure I wasn't going to poison myself, enlisted my brother (Finn) as a taste tester, and got to work on chowing down some weeds.



Fried Dock Leaf

Dock leaves are wide, veiny leaves that grow close to the ground. They are handy because they're a natural antidote to stinging nettle. If you get stung while out in the wild, you should find one of these bad boys and rub 'em all over your irritated skin. I figured if I was smearing them all over my arms and legs anyway, why not eat them?

The older leaves taste bitter, while the smaller, younger leaves are more bland, according to my highly scientific taste test. I picked a handful from the back of the old shed, seasoned them with salt and pepper, and tossed them in a pan with some olive oil. According to the internet, these can be eaten raw. I just fried them until they looked tasty.

Upon a hearty sniff, I discovered that fried dock leaf smells like strong kale. Finn described the dish as "depressing to look at". We agreed that it tasted sad. Overall, it was just a shitty version of spinach.

My brother's verdict: *"This tastes like what I imagine dock leaf would taste like."*

Gorse Flower Tea

Gorse is a trash-tier bush. It's enveloped in a thick layer of thorns. It's notoriously invasive. Everybody hates this stupid fucking hellplant. I think consuming gorse is an effective way to take revenge and demonstrate your natural hatred for the plant.

The one good thing about gorse is the gorgeous yellow flowers. Like most flowers, you can steep these in boiling water to make tea. The issue is gathering these flowers. Avoiding the thorns isn't hard, but if you mess up you'll feel it. Gloves are essential. A tablespoon or two of petals make for a nice cuppa.

I separated the good petals from the buds, and gave them a good wash. Tiny insects like to vibe in gorse flowers, so obviously it's essential to evict them before drinking. Once the petals are clean you can just put them in your teapot, or toss them in a mug with some boiling water for ten minutes to steep.

Finn commented that the tea looks like urine, and he was not wrong. The hue was similar to the classic soda Mellow Yellow, but it smelled and tasted just like green tea. It unfortunately did not taste like I'd just risked an armful of puncture wounds for a drink. How boring. I recommend adding a drop of lemon juice to take away the lame factor. Although navigating thick thorns does make you feel like a badass, this tea isn't worth the trouble.

My brother's verdict: "Surprisingly, I actually want to drink it."



Stinging Nettle Soup

Everybody knows this ouch oof bush of pain and misery. What most people don't know is that stinging nettle is a superfood. It's full of nutrients that help lower blood pressure, treat arthritis, and promote a healthy urine stream. That's lovely and all, but I was too busy trying not to sting myself that I fucked up the recipe.

If you search for a nettle soup recipe, you'll find countless pages of high society dishes with a stupid amount of ingredients. That didn't feel very foragey to me. Instead, I found a minimalist recipe which was quite popular in the eighteenth century.

Picking the stinging nettle took a painfully long time because I couldn't find many young plants. If the plant has flowered they can cause kidney failure. I did not think it was worth having kidney failure over quite an average soup, so I avoided those ones.

Once I found some young plants and picked them, I washed my crop. The needles still looked ominous and quite painful, so I got out a rolling pin and crushed them just in case. Was this necessary? I don't know. Probably not.

I caramelized some onions and gave my nettles a quick fry, then tossed them into some boiling water. The recipe calls for you to fry these in a shit load of butter, but my brother doesn't eat dairy, so I swapped it for olive oil. In hindsight, I think the excess amount of butter was probably there to make the stinging nettle have some flavour.

I let the concoction, which by this stage smelt questionable to say the least, to boil for some time. Then I noticed I had mistaken the word 'simmer' for 'boil', and had reduced my soup into a foul looking paste. I added more water to compensate. I made the tactical decision to not tell my brother that I was doing a terrible job.

The next ingredient to add was some stale bread, which I foraged from the supermarket bargain bin. As I watched the bread soak and fall apart I started to regret not using a modern recipe. It didn't look very nice. Then I realised I completely forgot I was meant to add flour to the nettle while I fried it about 15 minutes ago.

Panicked, I decided to just throw it in now and stir it up. I served up a bowl of what Finn described as "dog vomit". It didn't smell particularly good either. We



plunged our spoons in expecting the worst, but it turns out it just tastes really boring. The stinging nettle had nothing to offer in the taste department, and the texture was terrible. Finn told me that what I had made "just tastes like bread, but in a soup format", which is honestly not a bad result considering how awful it looked.

My brother's verdict: "Soup, but bad."



MOANINGFUL CONFESSIONS

How many times have you come close to death? To see the edges of the world grow void of colour, and feel everything growing impossibly distant, only to be wrenched back to unfortunate reality. It happened to me twice in one night, and it was the first time I met with someone I met on Grindr.

The default silhouette messaged me within the first 10 minutes of setting up the app. The conversation was by no means small talk, and within a short dialogue I knew firstly that he was a hung top, and secondly where he lived. After the initial chat, I showered and made my way there, which was a few minutes walk down the hill from my flat, coincidentally, during which time we talked further, but only to discuss what we were liked. I listed rimming, strangulation, and toys as my favourites. Big mistake.

I arrived, he opened the door in his boxers, and took me to his studio room. He got on the bed and removed his underwear as I got undressed. He wasn't one for intimacy as much as 'strictly business,' which isn't my preference, but I was hardly going to complain, so I started sucking him off. Not very long after starting, he said seven of my favourite words: 'I want to sit on your face.' So, I lay back and let him.

Right now, I'm in my element. As possible as it is for a being to be sustained by anilingus alone, I am. Give me the option of only performing one sexual act for the rest of my life, it's this. I'm where I belong. But then he gets a little too comfortable, shall we say, and leans back a little far to block my nose. I don't mind at first, he's probably just adjusting his position, he'll get off soon.

Then I feel that he isn't. He won't have realised, I should let him know. I give him a couple taps on the leg and vocalise, as I would with any other partner, but he doesn't move. I'm at that point where my brain is keenly aware that I haven't been breathing, so tries harder to get air. Again, I try to communicate, but yet he stays. I panic and start trying to push him off, but I've never been known for my strength, but he'll surely notice that I'm trying and yelling into him. This continues for some time, and then a thought comes to me: 'of course, this is how I die,' and everything starts to feel calm.

Finally, he notices something is off. Perhaps it's that I lost my erection, or that I stopped moving, and he gets off. Suddenly able to breathe once more, I gasp and cough, while he sits there, looking a little sorry for himself, but not really. As I'm getting everything back together, he says 'oh, sorry,' a pause, 'do you want me to fuck you now?' I didn't almost die for no pay off, so I agree, because I'm going to at least get something out of this, damn it.

There's a trend that I've noticed with cock size and quality of sex that says bigger is, almost invariably, not better, and it started here. When he first tried to go in dry, I should've left. When he tried again, I should've asked him to leave his own room, but rather I insisted on the lube he should've started with. Nothing could redeem him as a lover, I thought, and nothing could make me think he's worse. But he got worse, when he thought he'd try the second thing I said I liked.

Feeling him inside me was good. Having his hands around my neck, even better. How hard he started squeezing, not good. Just a pointer, the power of strangulation is restricting blood flow to the brain, thus depriving it of oxygen, which requires very little pressure. I don't care what you're into, but you deserve better than to have your windpipe crushed during sex, however, someone thought that's exactly what I deserved on this day.

It quickly becomes too much for me, so I try to communicate, again, for him to stop. Again, he doesn't. After what felt like five minutes of further struggling, I have another thought: 'no, this is how I die,' and something inside me gives up. At last, he lets go, and has the same sorry face as before, while I'm spluttering. Now there was no way I was leaving without cumming, so he starts up again, without trying to kill me.

We both finish without further incident, for which I'm very thankful, and he says something that will forever be a source of amusement for me: 'there's no 'round two' when it comes to me.' Sorry, I think, but did I ask? After what happened, do you really think that I would willingly engage in any sort of physical contact with you? I got out of this alive, and my parents did not raise me only to be accidentally manslaughtered by some big dickd man who's not all that great at sex. But I just say 'me neither.'

HOROSCOPES



Aquarius Jan 20 – Feb 18

Mending unstable friendships is a great idea this week. Stop blowing your friends off for a basic breatha with chlamydia and send them a message about how awesome they are.

Your cereal choice this week: Porridge but pretend it's cereal.



Pisces Feb 19 – Mar 20

Your motivation and determination are two of the many reasons why you are a good sign to be friends with. Your friend also asked me to tell you through this horoscope to do their 5% assignment due tonight please.

Your cereal choice this week: Light and Right!



Aries Mar 21 – Apr 19

Spend some time reflecting on yourself this week. Moisturise, get a massage from your flatmate in exchange for your silence, take the time to wonder: Why can't you settle down? Why do you fear commitment? And bugs too?

Your cereal choice this week: Coco Pops Chex.



Taurus Apr 20 – May 20

Watching back to back episodes of Modern Family on Netflix will bring you comfort this week at the time you need it most. Exams loom and only Alex the genius can help you get through. Have a hot choc too, just for fun.

Your cereal choice this week: Milo Cereal.



Gemini May 21 – Jun 20

Start a twitch channel and stream yourself playing yourself. That's all I have to say.

Your cereal choice this week: Panadol in a bowl of milk.



Cancer Jun 21 – Jul 22

Time to address your destructive money behaviours and relationship failures. Sell the PS2 that you bought on a whim. Realise you were the reason for your breakups. Delete your ex's number. Block Kmart from your browsers. It's for the best.

Your cereal choice this week: 15 weetbix and regret.



Leo Jul 23– Aug 22

Your lack of intimacy has reached its peak and you may find yourself watching tik tok relationship videos to fill the void in your chilly little heart. Don't do it. Delete the app. No sad times thanks.

Your cereal choice this week: Rice bubbles in the shape of a broken heart.



Virgo Aug 23– Sep 22

Take the time to ask yourself, what does success mean to you? Is it when you find leftovers from your drunken night out? Is it when your lecturer passes your sub-par paper? Spoiler alert: it's when you listen to your heart.

Your cereal choice this week: Uncle Toby's Oats.



Libra Sep 23– Oct 22

Positivity will envelop you this week and luck will come your way. Look at the clouds. Is it a dog shape? If it is, you will either win the Lotto or lock yourself out of your flat overnight.

Your cereal choice this week: A bowl of Up and Go.



Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 21

Some may say falling asleep in lectures is your worst habit, but it is what helps you learn. The information flows into your brain through your ears subconsciously, trust me. Your exams don't know what's about to hit 'em.

Your cereal choice this week: Cheerios.



Sagittarius Nov 22 – Dec 21

You'll gain some freedom this week, perhaps relationship wise, family wise, or work wise. Either way, you'll waste this freedom by sleeping in and watching Facebook watch videos for hours on end.

Your cereal choice this week: Homebrand Coco Pops.



Capricorn Dec 22 – Jan 19

Have a sexy drink, turn the lights down low, and put on your favourite movie. Now's the time to romance yourself. We stan self love. Unless your favourite movie is Mars Attacks. No offence, that shit scary.

Your cereal choice this week: Cornflakes no sugar.

BOOZE REVIEW: BEEFEATER GIN

By Dick Bourbonage

In a time of loneliness we all need to find someone, or something, to keep us company. And because I'm a sad, single alcoholic, I've found my companion in a bottle of Beefeater Gin.

To say Beefeater will boost your mood in a time as tough as this would be a bit of a lie. As Albert Einstein once said, "the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result". Well I've been drinking Beefeater every night for the past two weeks, and it always ends in me crying myself to sleep on the couch, listening to James Blunt's Back to Bedlam.

There's nothing wrong with being emotionally vulnerable in 2020, but it sure as hell brings back memories of my old man telling me to harden up after Drew Neemia left Sticky TV in 2009.

The great thing about Beefeater is it's never going to kick you while you're down, it'll gently take you to a near-depressed state and let you wallow in your sadness all on your own, while still never leaving your side.

Beefeater will be a good friend for whenever you need it. Cherish it. Value it. Never underestimate it.

Tasting notes: Sadness, nostalgia, a sense of a wasted existence.

Taste rating: 7/8

Froth level: All of your childhood imaginary friends abandoning you forever.

Pairs well with: Tonic, lemon, ice, and loneliness.

bone apple teeth

with
**Caroline Moratti
& Alice Jones**



The Dish to Make For a Dinner Party:

VEGAN KORMA

I spend a lot of my time and money pretending to be a young professional, when in fact, I'm actually a dumb, poor student. This includes behaviour such as spending outrageous sums of money at bars, buying clothes that do not suit any of the places I go, and practicing fancy recipes to cook for my non-existent significant other. Having a dinner party with your friends and/or housemates is the ultimate young professional move, but what can you make that is delicious, easily scalable for numbers attending, low on dishes and doesn't trap you in the kitchen for the whole evening?

This one. It's a very easy, one pot, kind of very white person, vegan korma. It's like a BYO but you don't have to pay corkage or follow the DCC bylaws of half bottle limits. Have your curry and eat it too.

Ingredients (Serves 4)

1 brown onion
4 garlic cloves
1 thumb sized piece of ginger
2 teaspoons garam masala
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon chile flakes
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 red capsicum
¼ head cauliflower
½ head broccoli
1 large carrot
¼ small pumpkin
1 can coconut milk

1. Add a couple of tablespoons of oil to a large, heavy pot on medium heat and sprinkle in the spices. Give them a stir and allow to bloom in the oil (this releases their aromas and flavours).
2. Slice up the onion, garlic and ginger and add to the pot. Add the tomato paste. Stir occasionally while they soften and the tomato paste turns a deep red.
3. Chop up the broccoli, capsicum, cauliflower and pumpkin into small chunks (don't be wasteful, use the broccoli stalk). Slice the carrot into fine rounds.
4. Pour a tiny bit of water into the pot and scrape the bottom to release any stuck tomato paste, then add the coconut milk.
5. Add the chopped vegetables, lower the heat a little, lid the pot and allow to simmer for 20 minutes.
6. While the curry is simmering, make some rice to go with it. If you still don't know how to cook rice, here is a small recipe: rinse your rice thoroughly with cold water (use a sieve to make this easier if you have one). For every one cup of rice, you'll need two cups of water (use ½ cup rice for each person). Bring the water to a boil, then add the rice. Give the rice a stir and wait until the water has reached boiling again before adding a lid. Lower the temp, DO NOT REMOVE THE LID, and leave to cook for 16-18 minutes, until the rice is tender. Fluff with a fork.
7. Bring the vegan korma to the table with the rice and allow your guests to serve themselves. Two pots on the table, delicious creamy korma and some lovely rice.

Crack open a bottle of wine and try to think of something interesting that happened in lockdown to talk about with your mates. Do not speak of Zoom or click and collect ever again. The breathers are returning to Castle Street. Online learning was the virus. Life is good.

SNAP TRAP



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BEST SNAP EACH WEEK WINS A 24 PACK OF Red Bull



SNAP OF THE WEEK

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