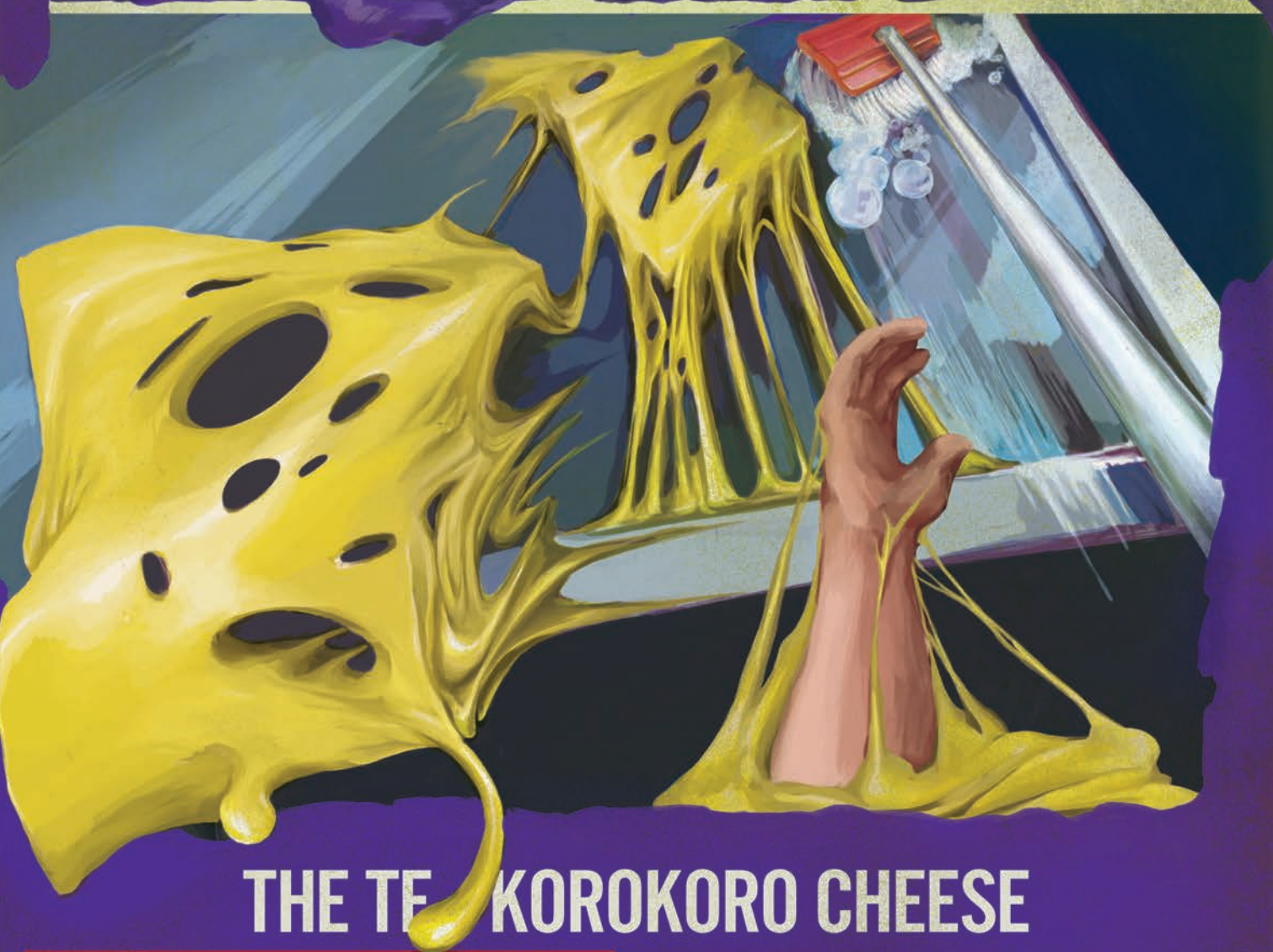


ISSUE 15

te ārohi 100 years



THE TE KOROKORO CHEESE

BREAKFAST WITH ZAC HOFFMAN

BROUGHT TO YOU BY ADJØ

8AM - 11AM



ADJØ

ousa

EDITORIAL: SURVIVING NORTH D WITH YOUR CREW

Like many University of Otago students, when I moved into my first flat in second-year, I went in blind. All I knew going into flat hunting was my sister telling me to chase sunshine, my mum's tip to test the shower pressure at viewings, and that if you don't sign by August you'll be living in a cardboard box. When my three best friends and I signed in the first-year flat July rush, I was so hungover that I vomited in a motel hedge on the way to Edinburgh Realty and treated the tenancy agreement as if it were any old terms and conditions: scrolled to the bottom and signed my life away.

The naivety of fresher me only continued into second-year. I had no idea how to set up WiFi, or that that would be a separate payment to power. I had grand ideas about composting food scraps but didn't know how to sort the Council bins. I was baffled to find out that when the fridge broke, it was the landlord's problem, not ours. Same with the floor caving in, finding mould on the curtains, servicing the heat pump, and removing that one rotting rat corpse from *inside* the walls. I also didn't know that we could ask for rent reimbursement when the landlord renovated the entire bathroom and kitchen, forcing us to outsource showers and live off microwaveable meals (not that we didn't already). If it weren't for my clued-in flatmates, I would almost definitely have been taken advantage of by the Dunedin rental market.

Your first tenancy in Dunedin is a bit like a budget overnight hike in shitty weather; how much you enjoy it will depend on your crew. Sure you're trudging through the literal trenches, the op-shop raincoat you bought isn't as waterproof as you'd have hoped, and you're living off canned tuna and crackers you hope haven't gone soggy. But with the right people, it's a hardship that binds you tighter together, and makes the beer at the end of the trip that much sweeter. Hell, if it weren't for one of you misjudging a puddle and winding up knee deep in mud, you wouldn't be laughing as hard. Without good mates around you it wouldn't be quite the same.

We all know that the flatting market in Dunedin is fucked, and it has been for decades judging by Critic's archives. In 2019, then-editor Charlie O'Mannin summed up articles from just that year showing the depressing reality for North D tenants,

covering landlords who used illegal fixed-term contracts for flats that were legally boarding houses; the impossibility of navigating Tenancy Tribunal cases; and property managers displaying all characteristics of a shitty boyfriend when you bring up issues: being either unhelpful, defensive, or straight up ghosting. Six years later, we're still reporting on the same stories – there are three horror stories in this issue's feature.

There's no immediate solution to the minefield that is student flatting. Landlord licenses have been floated – which would come in real handy with one who has been to the Tenancy Tribunal over 30 times – and Healthy Homes standards are slowly being implemented. While we wait for sluggish political progress to be made, however, the squalor of the student rental market will still be accepted with unsurprised sighs and we'll still laugh at jokes about how awful it is, before fading into a sad silence. In the meantime, though, there are ways to ensure you'll be laughing over trauma-bonded memories at the pub, rather than fleeing Dunedin in defeat. Three students share their lessons learned in Hanna's feature: Google your landlord, trust your gut if Facebook finds feel fishy, and be wary of legally binding strangers to your home – especially ones with criminal records.

The most important lesson I came away with, however, is the importance of good flatmates. It was through the luck of having my three best friends to lean on that my flatting experience didn't scar me. There's something to be said for how a damp, dark, and rat-infested shack can feel like home with the right amount of lamp-lighting, taking turns making the communal pot of soup for your perpetual colds, and – in worst cases – having each others' backs dealing with a difficult landlord or property manager, taking them to the Tenancy Tribunal and poring over legal documents at your janky kitchen table like generals going into battle. Then saying "cheers" with cheap wine to soldiering through it – together.

NINA BROWN



ISSUE 15
21 JULY 2025

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Critic Te Arohi is a member of the
Aotearoa Student Press Association
(ASPA).

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LETTERS



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Heyyyy,

Just wanted to say that Wānaka has a tohutō above the a. This was missed in the last issue:)

Cheers,

A spelling nerd

Editor's response: *True that, our bad*

what guys, did we run out of shades of pink? as scintillating as I'm sure the student census data was for everyone, why was a pre-schooler commissioned to draw and colour the pie charts?? I'm all for artistic expression but let's not sacrifice the integrity of these humble yet powerful data circles. maybe try using excel next time...

sincerely, colourblind and confused

Editor's response: *Apologies if the colours made it difficult to read! You just need to harness the nosiness of Critic and really want to know what students' favourite club is to put in the effort*

LETTERS POLICY

Letters should be 150 words or fewer. The deadline is Thursday at 5pm. Get them into Critic by emailing us at critic@critic.co.nz. Letters of a serious nature directly addressing a specific group or individual will not be published under a pseudonym, except in extraordinary circumstances as negotiated with the Editor. Critic Te Ārohi reserves the right to edit, abridge, or decline letters without explanation. Frequently published correspondents in particular may find their letters abridged or excluded. Defamatory or otherwise illegal material will not be printed. We don't fix the spelling or grammar in letters. If a letter writer looks stupid, it's because they are.

YOUR WEEKLY BULLETIN ROUNDUP

The Editor of Victoria Uni's student magazine, Salient, resigned last week following a Massive magazine article reporting on his sexual assault confession and team requesting him to leave

The Otago Biochemistry and Genetics Students Association is hosting their launch event on Wednesday the 30th of July. Two panels will be hosted about scientific industry and research - featuring some of Aotearoa's top scientists. Tickets available from their Instagram @obigsa

An Otago University student died in a car crash last week near Hampden, ODT reports. A tragic reminder for travelling students to take care on roads this winter

Kiwi pukupuku/little spotted kiwi have been found on mainland New Zealand for the first time in almost 50 years. One was spotted in the West Coast's Adams Wilderness Area in March, according to DoC, Stuff reports

Three friends recently launched Flatly, a free app that helps students and young renters to find flatmates and flats without the chaos of Facebook groups. "It's kind of like a dating app for flatting; matching people based on lifestyle, preferences and vibe."

Admin Vice President Amy Martin is in the big chair this week, taking over from Liam White as acting President while he's away recovering from wisdom teeth surgery

Jett Groshinski was criticised last week for promoting the Regulatory Standards Bill submission he penned in the capacity of OUSA Political Rep on his local body elections campaign Instagram (rebranded from his political-rep campaign account). It was seen by some as a potential conflict of interest between the two roles - the post has now been taken down

Food prices increased 4.6% in the 12 months up to June 2025, according to Stats NZ. Two food groups were largely to blame: meat and dairy.

The Spinoff has launched a new explainer video series on TikTok called 'Now You Know' aiming to deliver "reliable, regular and relevant news content to young New Zealanders where they consume media most"

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Campus Endures 269 Days of Cheesing

Cheese Touch outbreak pending

By Harry Almey

Contributor // news@critic.co.nz

It was the 11th of October 2024. The Uni's Te Korokoro O Te Tūi performing arts studio sat basking in the spring sunshine. But on this mundane Friday at 4:52pm, a slice of cheese was photographed on a window, just above the entrance. Almost a year later, the slice that had sagged, soured and solidified, has finally been washed off.

Louisa, a 5th year theatre studies student, spotted the cheese. She recalled initially seeing it there, stuck to the window, around the October 3rd floods. At first, it irritated her. How dare this happen to an award-winning facility? But time went on. Soon, seeing it day-to-day brought a smile – joy, even. "If [The Cheese] can hang in there, I can too," she said. Besides, someone official would surely note it, right?

But "hang in there" it did. Summer break passed – still there! The Cheese survived O-Week and an influx of freshers (carrying much worse germs than The Cheese). Easter break went by; The Cheese remained.

The square slice sagged into a teardrop shape. "Mystery fluid" began to ooze down the window, threatening to drop on innocent, unaware students below. A "harbinger of doom" was hanging above Te Korokoro. Louisa had to blow the cheese whistle. But by the time Critic Te Ārohi was notified, a perfectly fine piece of processed produce had become "truly green" in a sight worse than the insides of a Castle flat's fridge.

On July 2nd 2025, choking down tears of delight and disgust, Critic did its duty and informed the University of the saggy cheese. A week later, hearing reports of a cleaning crew, Critic

rushed over (in sandals, no less) expecting to record the time of death. Instead, we found a cheery hardworking bloke struggling to destroy the now rock-hard cheese. It was a battle but, after three hours, The Cheese finally fell. And so did Critic's one-sided obsession. It lasted 269 days (heh), longer than any Dunedin situationship.

Critic grilled the University over whether they had noticed the sagging slice, crossing our fingers to not get a cheesy response. A University spokesperson sincerely apologised for the cheese's longevity, stating a request to clean the window was made on 30 January 2025, but that an "administrative error" stopped it from being actioned. The spokesperson added that a review was underway to prevent future lactose-based oversights.

This response also helped clarify how the Property Services department seemingly functions. A long-time theatre studies student, keen to stress how clean the inside of Te Korokoro is, linked The Cheese to arts cuts. They claimed, "It would have been cleaned if it was a science building," and were uncertain if exterior window cleaning came at a cost to the department. The University assured Critic that buildings are treated equally through the formal work request process. When asked if there was a cost involved, they responded, "No."

So now, we're free from fear of the cheese touch (we have enough STIs in North D anyways.) No longer will starving students be taunted by food just out of reach. Was Critic right to report it to the Uni? That remains to be seen, as does the answer to one final question: who dunnit? Our inbox is ready and waiting for a tell-all. We're cheesing in anticipation.



OUSA Exec Gives Birth to Student Charter

Pleaseeeeeee give us a student bar already

By Gryffin Blockley

News Editor // news@critic.co.nz

OUSA's proposed Student Charter was finally approved at last week's Exec meeting, birthing it into the wonderful world of policy and bureaucracy. The charter outlines key issues and priorities that students are facing in Dunedin – unfortunately lowering the price of butter did not make the cut this time round.

A charter is a formal document that outlines a list of priorities and purposes for a group. In OUSA's case, they are here to advocate and support Otago University students (and be the brains behind \$4 lunch). The Exec created the policies that could help improve the student experience, with consultation from the Politics Students' Association (POLSA).

The policies in the Charter are ranked by priority. Fortunately OUSA knows where students' interests lie – point number one of the Charter is securing a student bar. Rental warrant of fitness, a map of safe walking routes at night, and a council-run 'social harm reduction' grant are among other policies listed.

Rounding out the list are policies such as advocating for reinstatement of the tertiary precinct planning group; completing the Albany Street pedestrian and cycle link; supporting the development of a 'Dunedin Sound' music festival; establishing general emergency housing for students; securing a direct student airport bus service; and supporting the return of the Southern Passenger Rail service. Surely an RnV equivalent lands in Dunners soon?

The Charter ties in well with both the upcoming Politics Week and local body elections which will be held later in the semester. The priorities laid out in the Charter creates a criteria of what OUSA (and taura) want to see from ideal candidates.

The question of Political-Rep Jett's conflict of interest for his well publicised run for Council did not escape the charter conversation at last week's meeting. President Liam opened up a

"can of worms", as he put it, pointing out that Jett did have some part in shaping the Student Charter. This created concerns for some members of the Exec because many of these policies are potential campaign points for Jett to run on, taking away from OUSA's neutrality as he is a Labour Party endorsed candidate.

Liam said that he had a lengthy conversation with someone who had concerns about Jett running on the Student Charter. Liam and Postgrad Rep Josh pointed out that the charter was made as a collaboration, and that Jett's contribution was primarily the airport bus policy. Academic Rep Stella had issues with this and was "disappointed" in how the conflict wasn't managed earlier seeing as this could be perceived as early campaign work. Finance and Strategy Rep Daniel reckoned she had a fair point, but didn't think anything could be done at this stage.

OUSA CEO Debbie had one small note, flagging point number four, a Dunedin City Council social harm reduction grant, as being unlikely but high priority. Overall though, the table consensus was that they were comfortable with the Charter proceeding. "Putting it out to the world for students to consume and candidates to live by," said Liam as the motion to endorse was passed.

Daniel said that the Student Charter ties into all of the things happening in Politics Week. He explained to Critic that OUSA will also be creating a voting magazine, ranking every candidate on how 'student-friendly' they are based on these student charter priorities. (Way to rip off Critic much?) Daniel added, "Students should go and vote and exercise their democratic rights [for the upcoming elections]."

Politics Week will run from the 8th to the 13th of September, while voting for local body elections closes on October the 11th. Check up on your POLS-major friends to make sure they're not frothing at the mouth by then.



Graphic by Connor Moffat

The Rise and Fall of the Green Solo

A (disposable) angel has gained its wings

Ah the kakariki takitahi, a force that once breathed minty nicotine into the lungs of breathas and sheathas alike. But no more, for its reign hath come to a halt. Before the eve of June 17th there was a time when you couldn't walk down George Street on a Saturday night without seeing the bright green nic-stick in someone's hand. In a devastating end to exam season, mint solos (and all their dispo cousins) have been banned from the public eye entirely.

The Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Amendment Bill (No 2) was passed in December of 2024 and gave businesses six months to commence the disposable vape ban and comply with new retail visibility requirements. This included ensuring vape products were not visible from outside or within their store from wherever the public can access, as well as from online stores entirely. Failure to comply would risk a penalty of \$400,000 for manufacturers, importers and large retailers, and \$50,000 for any other person. Turns out a green solo is worth a lot more than Critic Te Ārohi may have previously stipulated (RIP *The Green Solo Alternative*, issue 1).

So, what does the student body have to say about this? Does anyone even really give a shit? Cue Critic. Third-year student Te Awhirēinga told Critic that the banning of disposable vapes “may not be as convenient, but like, neither is trashing the planet” (bars, girl). The environmental argument was strong from the random selection of interviewees on campus, with second-year Psych major Reuben commenting he already doesn't like vaping, saying, “It's terrible and so bad for the environment.” This will certainly cause a decline in green solo mortality via drunken stomping. But who knows, maybe flattened lithium-ion batteries will be the new pavement-Picasso work. Hopefully not.

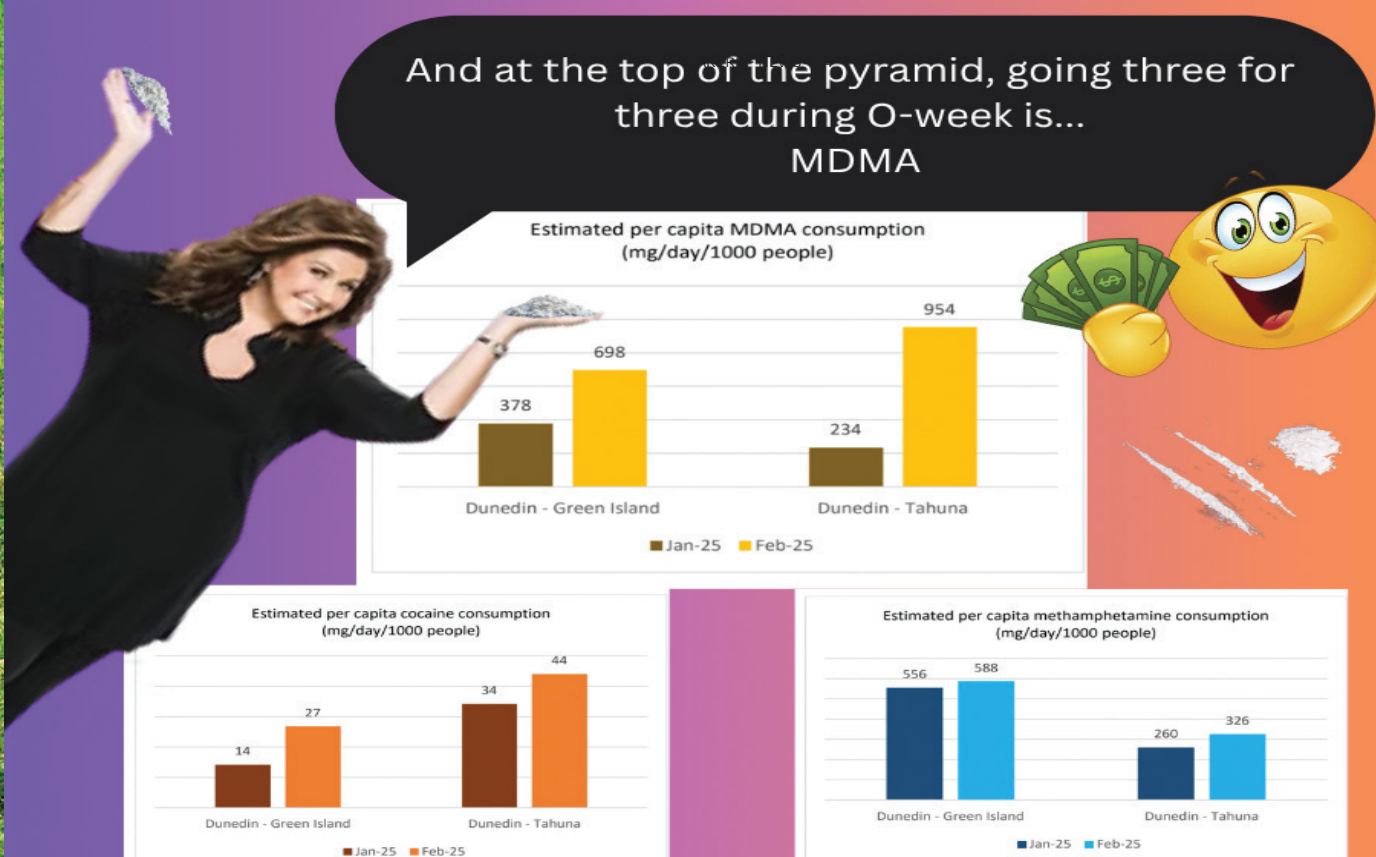
However, no one seemed to think that the ban will do much to prevent youth from accessing vapes. Another third-year student, Kate, reckons that preventing access to disposables won't solve the problem when reusable ones are still available. She stated simply, yet wisely, “If you're gonna vape, you're gonna vape.” The average 1000-puff solo was about \$10 from your nearest Night ‘n Day; a reusable vape with a rechargeable battery, charger, and flavour pod can be purchased for about the same price. “It will just make people more resourceful with getting their vapes,” Te Awhirēinga added.

The majority seemed to think the likelihood of long-term commitment to vaping will only increase now that there is no other alternative. Although, it does remove the convenience of popping into Night ‘n Day for a midnight mish now that the only nicotine option is cigarettes with images of popcorn lung on the front. Some mused that people may make a reluctant return to the slushy machines for their fix. Not everyone agreed, though. Second year dental tech major Lauren said to Critic, “If you're going to vape, at least commit to it.” And well, now there ain't much choice.

It remains to be seen what the future holds for the lungs of the youth, especially with such lack-luster education on the long term effects of vaping. Studentville will undoubtedly bounce back from this development, with a certifiable track record in making do in trying times (like running out of cash before pay day and living off noodle sandwiches). For now, students' beloved dispo-solos have disappeared into a cloud of (mint-flavoured) smoke, never to be seen again.

By Zoe Eckhoff

Staff Writer // news@critic.co.nz



Graphic by Molly Smith-Soppet & NZ Police

Breaking News: You Might Be on Meth and Not Even Know It

Police tested your O-Week wees and the results are in

By Molly Smith-Soppet

Staff Writer // news@critic.co.nz



If you felt like O-Week hit harder this year, it wasn't just the hangxiety talking. We felt the same, so we've done it again; we hit up the Police to analyse everyone's piss, and fuck you had a good O-Week! There was a dramatic surge in MDMA consumption across Dunedin during February – but who's surprised.

Using the powers of the Official Information Act (OIA), the police legally had to hand over piss data to Critic Te Ārohi. Technically we didn't get a breakdown of your wees (which probably would have told you to drink more water), we just got a couple of graphs about the wastewater. But boy did these graphs show some interesting trends. Let's just say many students were “gearing up” to prepare for a semester of hard work.

At the Tahuna treatment plant, which receives wastewater from North Dunedin, the Central City, the Peninsula and Port Chalmers, MDMA levels were up from 234mg/day per 1000 people in January, to a whopping 954mg in February. That's a quadrupling in just one month and easily out paces last year's 71% increase. If only Castle was 400% more on too. Lindsay, a postgrad student (self-proclaiming they don't know a lot about drugs) said that it's “not a shock” but reckoned that drug trends are “probably changing”.

The Green Island plant that services suburbs west of the city also got a bit rowdy in Feb, jumping from 378mg to 698mg, making the whole of Dunedin ground-zero for what Critic can only assume was an onslaught of sweaty, gum-filled, and DnB-fueled partying.

Methamphetamine consumption also crept up, especially in Tahuna, rising 25% to 326 mg/day. Green Island remained

Dunedin's ‘methed up capital’, topping out at 588mg, suggesting more Dunedinites are running on fumes than one might expect. Cocaine made smaller, but still noticeable, moves. Tahuna went up from 34mg to 44mg, while Green Island nearly doubled, from 14mg to 27mg. While not quite the new Ponsonby, there's definitely more powder in Dunedin's pipes than last year.

Third-year quantity surveying student Adam was unsurprised at the rise of drug use in Feb. “People just wanna have a good time,” he shrugged. When asked about the rise of meth and coke he suggested that it was “probably just MD[MA] cut with meth and stuff [...] People are just selling what they can sell.” With coke on the rise too, he said, “Coke here is not as expensive as it used to be. At the same time, I reckon the people doing coke are living off daddy's money.”

While local wastewater data suggests rising drug usage, national drug checking data from KnowYourStuffNZ paints a more complex picture. Across Aotearoa, meth was detected in some unexpected places, like powders presumed to be cocaine, MDMA, or amphetamines (like Ritalin), highlighting the importance of getting your shit tested before you roll up your \$5 note.

The most disturbing trend that KnowYourStuffNZ noted was that synthetic cannabinoids, including AB-MDMSBA, were found in white powers thought to be benzos. In short, meth is back. Or maybe it never left. Either way, it is showing up more, in more places, and not always where you'd expect. Dunedin's wastewater proves we're using more of it and national drug-checking suggests we might not be doing it on purpose. So test your gear and avoid the risk of being an accidental meth-head.



University of Otago Reveals Rainbet Sponsorship

"\$22.5 Million Dollar Hand of Blackjack!"

By Anderson Coomer
Shitposter // criticaltribune@critic.co.nz


A University of Otago spokesperson, operating under the Instagram handle @UoOslaps, has revealed a controversial new partnership with offshore gambling platform Rainbet.

In an Instagram reel featuring a desk littered with paperwork, a leaked law exam, and printouts of boomer complaints from Facebook, the spokesperson declared, "Our financial position is fucked. Last year we operated at a \$22.5 million deficit. Let's see if we can win it back on Rainbet."

The reel then shows the spokesperson playing a hand of blackjack, drawing an eight and a four against the dealer's king, before hitting – and drawing a ten.

The University declined to comment on their financial situation, before saying, "Nah seriously though, I don't even have a problem. It's just a bit of fun with the boys."

This announcement follows recent news from the University outlining a 6-7% increase in course fees and a goal to boost student numbers by 6.9% by 2026 to avoid requiring a government bailout.



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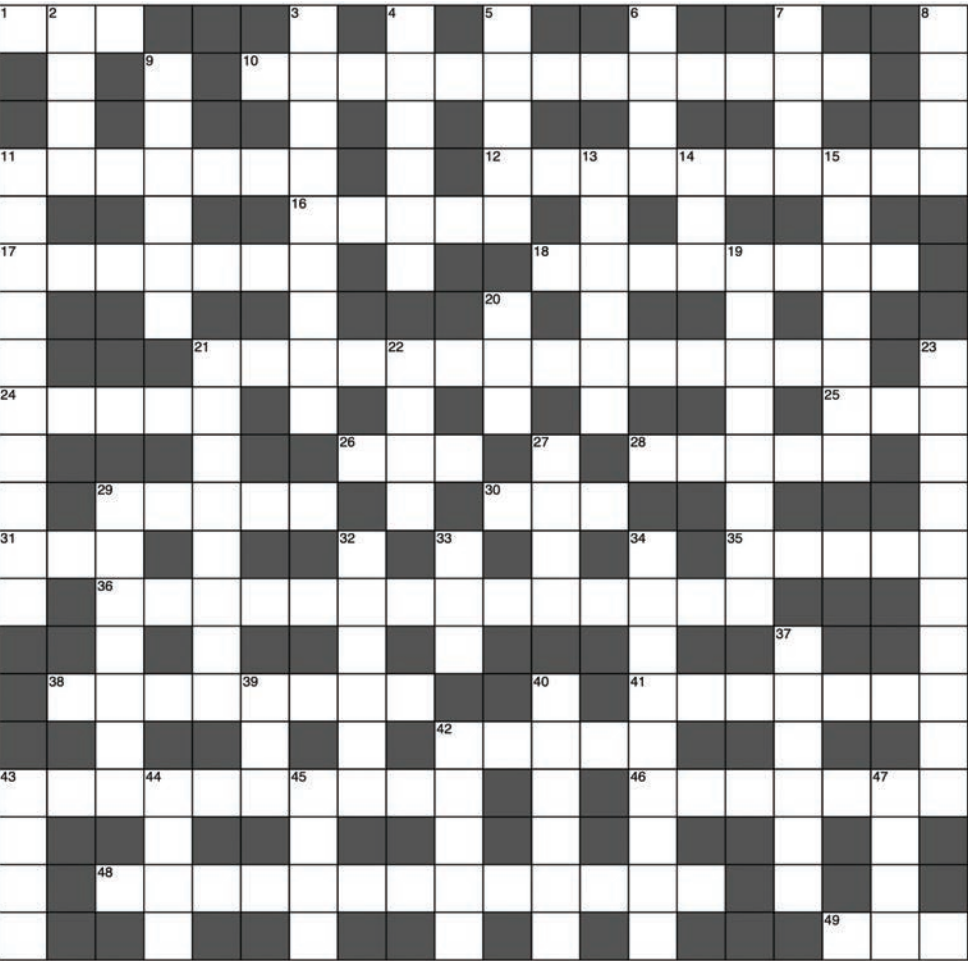
Cryptic clue: 9 Down is the key to unlock the connected answers

ACROSS

- 1 50 in cities, 100 in the country (acr.)
- 10 '50s blonde bombshell (2)
- 11 Courtroom reality host (2)
- 12 Scuba must-have (2)
- 16 Protector of the Truffula trees
- 17 Chilean desert
- 18 Will Jordan is one
- 21 "Paint me like one of your French girls" actress
- 24 That movie where Sebastian Stan's a cannibal
- 25 Cricketer Tahuu
- 26 Charlotte's Web protagonist animal
- 28 Smallest 39D
- 29 French hat
- 30 Louisville Slugger is one
- 31 Regret
- 35 Fiesta island
- 36 Human histories
- 38 Where 26A is slaughtered
- 41 Mental asylum patient
- 42 'Your Love Is My Drug' singer
- 43 Andy Bay sweet treat shop specialty
- 46 Jojo Siwa claims to be a what (2)
- 48 Language contractions
- 49 Legolas, for example

DOWN

- 2 Home of the llama
- 3 She wants your bad romance (2)
- 4 Healthy elevator alternative
- 5 To-do tray
- 6 'King ____'
- 7 James K. Baxter, for example
- 8 Rooster
- 9 Key to unlock connected answers: A Booze Review moniker (Issue 1)
- 11 Historic French heroine (3)
- 13 WAP singer (2)
- 14 Shoe company and Greek goddess
- 15 With expertise
- 19 Poseidon's kingdom
- 20 26A's home
- 21 Time-saving route
- 22 Manner of walking
- 23 Furlough
- 27 Primer



- 29 'Come on, _____ let's go party'
- 32 Final syllable
- 33 UV-blocking stat (acr.)
- 34 Australian surfwear brand
- 37 Snake-eating mustelid
- 39 Foot finger
- 40 Hiccup's missus
- 42 Family car
- 43 Danny Zuko's beauty tool
- 44 Non-binary
- 45 Gordon Ramsay, for example
- 47 Not fake

ISSUE 14 CROSSWORD ANSWERS
ACROSS: 1. GATO 10. CANNABIS 11. DENTIST 12. SEA 13. AMAS 15. SATIRICAL 16. MAFIA 17. BANH MI 19. ORGY 21. NGERU 24. ISLE 25. DOGMA 26. STAMPEDE 28. PERFORMANCE 31. ANAKIN 34. ACCENT 35. BUREAUCRACY 38. WILLIAMS 41. RECAP 42. LION 44. FAULT 46. HAKA 47. SCONES 51. HAIKU 52. WIRE PHOTO 54. ISIS 56. RAS 57. PIRANHA 58. SUBURBIA 59. GALA
DOWN: 1. SCISSORS 2. INSTAGRAM 3. HAIR 4. BIRCH 5. ADAM DRIVER 6. KNIFE 7. HIJAB 8. GTA 9. OBSTINATELY 12. SLUG 14. MAHOGANY 18. ABDOMINAL 20. DUE 21. NEEDIER 22. US 23. HERO 27. PINEAPPLE 29. FUCKWIT 30. EMBARRASSING 32. BROCCOLI 33. ACT NATURAL 36. CALM 37. CATACOMBS 39. LOG 40. SEASONAL 43. OF 45. LAWS 48. SHARK 49. GIANT 50. TROUT 53. POUT 55. SPA

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NEIYBECZMG CAMIPKWEZBFLNKEWCLOU
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BFJNVHECOZQEANMNNJKZNC SUVMGCD O
BGEQBCRMONBK ERWVZODZPHJLCNSNJ
EHDLVWQHJNSJLNKEXQJAFTEWHBUNFI
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CARNIVORE
POPTROPICA
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RAINBET
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GREEN SOLO
BEWARE
BASELINE

WORDFIND

EASY

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HARD

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SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Illustrated by Tevya Faed

There are 10 differences between the two images





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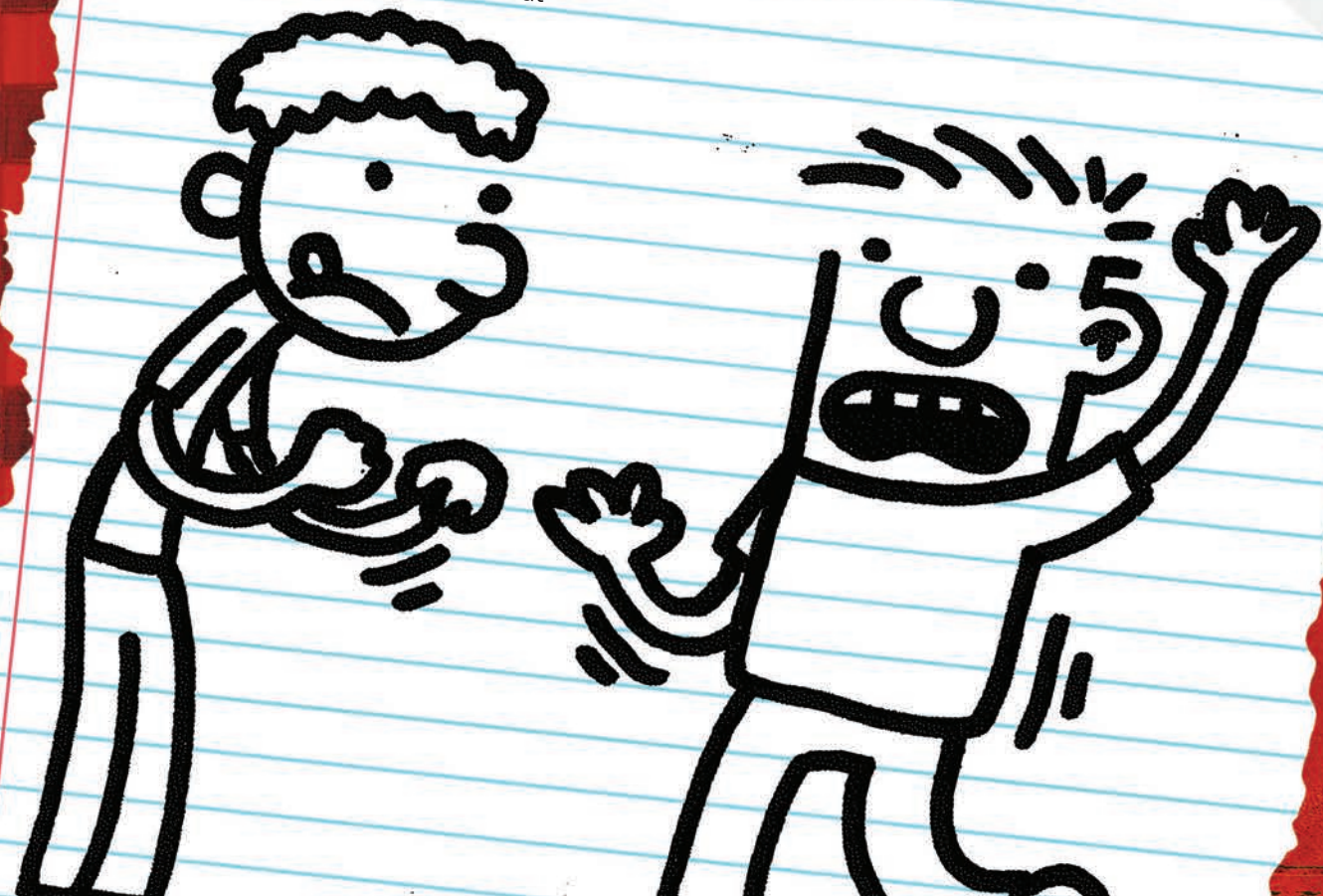
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By Hunter Jolly
Illustrated by Connor Moffat



Conflict is inevitable when you live in close quarters with other people, especially when you may have conflicting ideas about what cleanliness looks like and what acceptable sleeping patterns are. Whether tension manifests in passive-aggressive remarks about your innovative pot-soaking method, or full-on shouting matches over the boom of a JBL speaker, there is a near-guarantee that something, at some point, will disrupt the delicate peace of communal living. Thankfully, I've not personally been involved in long-lasting flat feuds, but I've seen it happen – and dawgs, it's not pretty. But fear not! Critic Te Ārohi is your salvation if you've been forced into playing hide and seek in your own home. As you eat your dinner from bed, enjoy a carefully curated list of five unique and (probably) flawless strategies to swiftly settle your flat 'beefs' before they escalate to something even less desirable.

Disclaimer: Critic Te Ārohi is not liable for any incensed flat arguments caused by trying these methods.

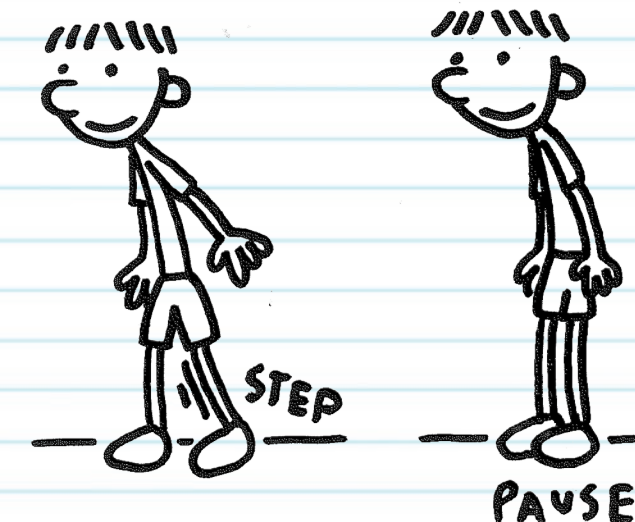
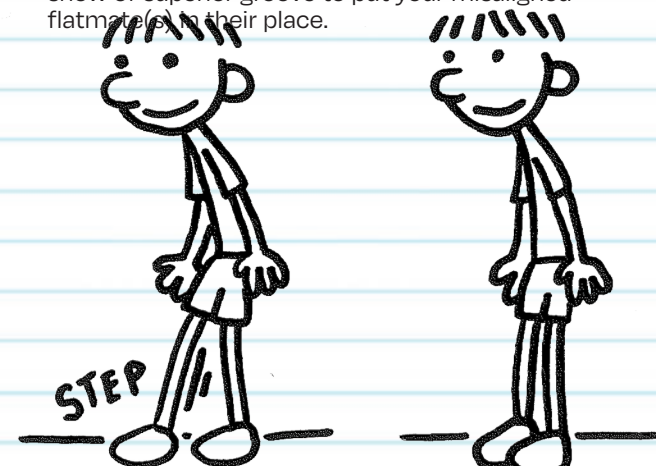
1. A duel

Communal living means confusion over flat ownership, making move-out day awkward if someone tries to make away with your cast iron pan. You might find that you end up having to prove yourself to be the alpha, and THIS is how you do it. Back in a more "civilised" society, when two folks had a disagreement the go-to way to squash the feud was to march outside, draw pistols or blades, and go at it until one person's mind is subsequently changed – or minced. Now, there's no place for such unnecessary violence in today's age, because we all have so much to live for (GTA VI) and your flatmate's death might complicate future rent payments. Thankfully, there are alternative options out there. You can go to Kmart, grab a couple of lightsabers, and clash to restore order to your flat. You can 1v1 in a game of paintball. You can even take a pillow and wallop each other with onslaughts of over-head swings. Not only does a duel leave you with a clear, undisputable victor but it also installs a mutual respect between you both as admirable and unyielding warriors, both fighting for peace and finality to whatever issue has arisen between you. One piece of advice I must tell you is DO YOUR RESEARCH! Watch the Star Wars prequel trilogy, watch *A Fistful of Dollars*, and find whichever pillow is best for your preferred combat style. Making the extra effort can be the difference between whether you get a flat PlayStation or not on move out day, so lock in.



2. A moderated dance-off

There are times where things can get quite competitive between flatties – whether it's fighting over who's more deserving of passenger princess privileges in your flatmate's car before a New World run or trying to one-up each other by cooking the superior flat dinner. At times like these, you may need a little bit of friendly competition to at least temporarily establish yourself as the 'top dog'. If you're a subscriber to the belief that "violence isn't the answer", here's a more ethical alternative. Simply find a snazzy location – abandoned warehouse, privately-booked club venue, closed-off CBD street, you name it – choose a song each, take a week to practice, and then perform in front of a live crowd and put your trust into the power of the people. They will decide the winner, thus ending the feud as a sensation of mutual respect unites you once again. The main thing you cannot afford to get wrong is the spectacle and scale of it all. Do NOT half-arse this. It has to be the stuff of legends. Go and learn some form of dancing, even if it's copying your Fortnite skin as it emotes in the lobby like an ungodly alternative to 'Just Dance'. A great method for one-on-one flat beefs (nothing asserts dominance like maintaining eye contact while aggressively twerking) but can also work beautifully for flat 'civil war' scenarios, where you can choreograph the ultimate show of superior groove to put your misaligned flatmate(s) in their place.



3. Get a flat pet

Nothing unites humanity like cooing over a furry friend. Adopting a flat pet will totally change the dynamic of your relationship for the better. You will no longer merely be flatmates, but instead, you will be caring and devoted co-parents to a very special creature of your choosing – rats, guinea pigs, puppy, kitten, horse, stick insect, regular stick, wallaby, turtle, rock, cicada – and co-conspirators in its secret existence from property managers. When adopting your chosen critter, make sure you use it to catalyse your bonding activities with your flatmate. Go for nice walks at Silver Stream, take it shopping with you, go and frolic in a paddock together. There is, of course, the small chance that becoming parents will in fact not save your relationship with your flatties. Apparently even married couples sometimes do this wacky thing called 'getting divorced' (shoutout to my parents!) but that's not a guaranteed outcome. While this method is one of the less-likely to have a 100% success rate it still might bring you closer together as a flat. Wholesome vibes. You'll just have to be conscious of the fact that friction might arise if someone isn't pulling their weight in caring for the animal, so be sure to negotiate a concrete list of terms and agreements to do with cleaning schedules and vet bills.



4. Kill 'em with kindness

Who doesn't love Mr Beast, eh? Get your problematic flattie whose dirty underwear compromised your last inspection a sweet treat to butter them up and soothe their pride. You can feel confident knowing your flat won't be at risk next time the property manager comes knocking if you asked them to pretty please put the skid-stains away after offering an iced chocolate from Night 'n Day (expenny, but holy gosh they're good). Either that or fork out \$417 to get AJ and Big Justice to ask for you in a personalised Cameo. In any case, flip the script on your flatmate to show you're a lover, not a fighter.

5. Shatter their heart and spirit, ensuring that they know never to frick with you again!

This one is, like, not even cool. It's devious and frankly degenerate, but I want to share the scheme

anyway. Take notes if you fancy becoming a certified Lex Luthor-level supervillain dickhead. I imagine this one is strictly reserved for truly abhorrent offenses that are not easily forgiven. Let's say, for example, your flatmate absolutely botched their attempt at cooking dinner for the flat. This cannot be allowed to slide. Firstly, catfish your flatmate on a dating app. Set up a profile under a false alias, spend time tailoring it to be exactly their cup of tea, while still keeping it as authentic-feeling as possible. Next, you want to win their heart at any and all costs. Say whatever you need to, have whatever silly conversation they initiate with great enthusiasm, and keep the charming energy at maximum power. After weeks of flirtatious messaging and letting them hear exactly what they want, it's time to kick-off the grand finale. Organise a date – a romantic dinner at No. 7 Balmac (to demonstrate true culinary skill). Give them a time, say you've got it all booked in, and let them know just how excited you are for your special night with them. When they finally arrive at the venue, all nervous with butterflies fluttering around their stomach, that's when it all happens.

You know that one scene in 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' when Chirag mogs on Greg by dressing up as his crush, summoning him into the art room, and then having the whole class jump out and laugh at him? Well that's what we're aiming for. Once they spot a figure seated at a distant table, matching the visual description of their love interest, you'll turn around revealing that it's been you all along. Then, quite ceremoniously, the others join in. As the target looks around in a disoriented panic, they'll see all their friends and loved ones dispersed throughout the restaurant, all pointing and laughing uncontrollably at their embarrassment. Then in comes the staff. Cooks, bartenders, waiters, and waitresses all rush out from their stations, cheering and clapping, flipping and boogying, popping champagne and ferrying out rows of balloons from the kitchen area as 'Baby I'm Yours' by Breakbot and Irfane pumps from the speakers. What your flatmate rival thought was the romantic connection of a lifetime was really all just a ruse – an absurd ploy designed to put their very soul through a woodchipper, inhale the remnant shards, and vomit them into a scody campground long-drop. It's cruel, but it's justice; it's heinous, but it's kinda funny. It sends the perfect message to not only your unfortunate target, but to anyone else who might have dared to oppose you. You might make an enemy for life, but screw it, this is what happens when you frick up your flat cooking. Sometimes, there has to be consequences or we do not learn.

6. Go to the OUSA Student Support Hub.

I guess this is an option too.



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A Slice
Of Our
Opinions:
Pizza
Reviewed

Takeaway pizzas are a cornerstone of the "I can't be fucked cooking" catalogue: when your parents couldn't be fucked trying to satisfy your picky childhood palate with homecooked meals, a pizza party; or when your flatmate couldn't be fucked fulfilling more than the bare minimum of Maslow's hierarchy of needs for their flat meal.

In line with doing the bare minimum for your next meal, we took it upon ourselves to take the decision-making out of it. Christ knows you're sick of deciding shit. Critic Te Arohi ordered the standout pizza from six different pizza places in North D and North East Valley (because we couldn't be fucked going any further out) and pitted them against each other in the second great Critic pizza review.

We used three metrics for this review. Firstly, the value metric (cm²/\$) to find out the optimal ratio of square centimetres you can get for one dollar (borrowed from the inaugural 2021 review) – the higher the number, the better the value. The second metric was taste and appearance which was decided across Critic staff. The third was a grease splatter reading by our Orb – like a star-sign reading but somehow more arbitrary.

*Disclaimer: Sizes were measured on the iPhone measuring app. We have doubts about its accuracy but we couldn't be fucked finding an actual ruler.

By Adam Stitely & Stella Weston
Illustrated by Jimmy Tannock

Domino's: Pepperoni (\$7.99)

Domino's has no soul. Buying their pizza leaves you with the same pit of guilt as getting one-shotted by an online advertisement for some Temu dupe that you don't need – and that's before you remember OUSA has included the chain on their BDS list. The pizza was also cut extremely unevenly in a way that screamed corporate conveyor belt. Swiftness was clearly prioritised over quality, leaving one tiny slice that would definitely get left to the neglected friend whose ability to speak is still somewhat up in the air. Cheese was minimal and skewed to one side of the base, while the other was almost entirely overwhelmed by the sauce which gave the same "acidic aftertaste" as eating raw tomato paste. Anyway, we got the Pepperoni. Pepperoni placement was also shit. That being said, it's a Domino's Value pizza. You know what you're going to get: definitely not greatness but certainly a feed that would satisfy a carb-craving, then be forgotten in the fridge and still be edible a week later.

cm²/\$: 56. Domino's being \$8 is a scam.

Taste & Appearance: 5/10. For how much you should pay for this.

Grease Splatter Reading: People ordering Domino's believe the earth is flat.

Pizza Hut: Classic Cheese (\$6.99)

If Domino's is Maccas, then Pizza Hut is Burger King. There are some differences but at the end of the day it's the same thing. It's the illusion of choice, except here the pizza is a dollar cheaper and gives you less cheese, less sauce, and about 6x more bread. The base was compared to focaccia at one point. Despite the lack of it, the sauce was less metallic and honestly pretty good – you could even taste herbs! The cheese had more flavour that you could actually taste while still remaining inoffensive. Overall a more satisfying munch – this pizza would tell you it loves you and then ghost you, but it does give good head. Shoutout for online banking being an option here and the only guy working on a Monday lunchtime definitely not giving a fuck if we paid or not.

cm²/\$: 75. Officially the best value for money that Critic could find.

Taste & Appearance: 6/10. Like a warmed up New World pizza bread.

Grease Splatter Reading: People ordering Pizza Hut want to be different. They wear suits to philosophy lectures and refuse to vote to "fight the system".

Sal's: 5 Boroughs (\$45)

Sal's is a gentrifier. They are one step away from making you order from a QR code and hanging up a neon sign that says something like "pizza heals the soul". Feeling like contributing to this gentrification, Critic went for the '5 Boroughs': a NYC blend of mozzarella, ricotta, marinara, and pesto. A pizza that would go down well after ordering a \$10 matcha latte. Don't get it twisted though, Sal's is damn good. Upon first bite one staff member said, "Wow, so that's incredible." The pizza had huge fuck off EVEN slices with artfully arranged blobs of each topping, with a lovingly squirted black garlic sauce swirl. The crust was gorgeous, charred from what we assume was a woodfire oven and puffed like a Chilli Dhaba naan. While the pools of grease might tempt an almond mum into dabbing with a paper towel, a nonna would slap her hand away and passionately rant about the nutritional benefits of olive oil. Sal's is just not in the same league as Domino's or Pizza Hut in terms of taste but that's reflected in the rough price of \$45. That said, a pizza can feed two people – or one determined sub-designer who was subsequently "put out of commission".

cm²/\$: 35. Takes away from the savings for another pair of Veja shoes.

Taste & Appearance: 9/10. Like "ironically" wearing a 'I Love NY' shirt.

Grease Splatter Reading: People ordering this pizza will post a story of it in the middle of an Instagram slacktivism run.

Filadelfio's: Curious George (\$30)

Ladies and gentleman, Critic has found the new "does pineapple belong on pizza": banana on pizza. Filadelfio's in North East Valley's Curious George pizza is a decades-old curiosity, boasting a combo of ham, chicken, brie, and banana in what we can only assume was a munchie experiment. Sure, this was your parent's favourite pizza place and they took you here on your first weekend in Dunedin after carrying all your bags into halls. But no amount of tradition or nostalgia excuses putting banana on a pizza. This pizza was definitely made by a mum who's always too busy for you, and she took everything off the kitchen bench and put it on this pizza. It worked this time, and honestly the banana made it, but that didn't make it necessary to offend every single Italian. Despite being a cheesy delight, this was still overall a dry experience, like a fairly mediocre hookup. And just like a mediocre hookup it left you with post nut clarity that you didn't want to eat anymore, and overwhelming guilt for daring to in the first place.

cm²/\$: 19. Somehow the least value for money as well as the most offensive.

Taste & Appearance: 7/10. Flat average, one piece is enough.

Grease Splatter Reading: People ordering this pizza feel the call of the star spangled banner and are determined to succeed in Hollywood as a TikTok influencer.

Hell Pizza: Lust (\$23.50)

Hell's Lust pizza was almost enough to move us to tears. Not because it was the murder site of every red-blooded animal on the planet, but because we had never seen something so beautiful. A slice with a stick of butter is the new eggs and steak. There was a perfect amount of grease – pretty wet for a pizza but dry for a pizza called Lust, an objectively gross name but we'll let that slide. The bbq-smothered base was really only there to carry the carnivorous topping and was without a doubt the low point. But when you're tasting "literal fireworks" (direct quote) the low point ironically isn't in hell. Staff writer Molly admitted mid-bite that if she was fucked up enough, she would cry at the sight of it. This pizza could convert the Pope to paganism. Vegans and Christians look away.

cm²/\$: 28. Worth it, every cm is covered with meat.

Taste & Appearance: 10/10 for the meatlover

Grease Splatter Reading: People ordering this pizza know pleasure, they know exactly what they want in life, in the bedroom, and in food – and it's this pizza for all three.

Poppa's: Poppa's Special (\$10.99)

Full Poppa's appreciation here – vibes are incredible and if you couldn't gauge their love for scarfies from the old Ori' posters on their walls, you can taste it in their pizzas. However, the size of this pizza (we got the regular) was a travesty and definitely limited its ranking. It did have a good heft to it though and a nice array of toppings to make up for being so miniscule. A nice fuck you to the "picky eaters" who steer clear of onion, mushrooms, olives, and other basic-ass dislikes. Cheese and sauce were both perfect, and the corn was a surprisingly welcome pop of sweetness.

cm²/\$: 20. Would make for a good study break lunch.

Taste & Appearance: 7/10. Tasted like the best and most flavourful frozen pizza you've ever had.

Grease Splatter Reading: People ordering this pizza are absolutely determined to achieve their goals. They will leave Central long enough to swallow this whole and that's all the time they have.

Disclaimer: Based on true stories. Identifying details have been changed.

It's that time of year. You and a few friends (or randoms from Facebook) band together to form a flat. The hunt begins: endless viewings, frantically handing in applications, long debates about whether a dishwasher is a necessity or a luxury. The housing stock in Dunedin isn't that great anyways, and maybe washing dishes with your flatmate will just bring you closer (doubt it).

But fresher beware: a little bit of mould and subpar amenities could be the very least of your worries. Read on at your own risk, and hear the cautionary tales of Kaia*, Charlotte*, and Aiden* – victims of flatting horrors far beyond your domestic flatmate tiffs.

LIGHTS. CURTAINS. EVIL LANDLORD?

Kaia was looking forward to the dregs of Dunedin winter slipping away last September, but she was nervous about not having signed a flat by the time campus cherry blossoms bloomed. It felt like everyone else at Carrington had signed. Future flatmates Cam* and Tristan* had displayed a stress-inducing lack of urgency in finding a second year home, perhaps not feeling the pressure due to being Dunedin locals. Kaia was from the area too – generations of her family had been to the same Dunedin high school. However, she didn't feel like moving back in with her family. So, she took the lead.

Despite scouring every rent site in her search, stock was limited so late in the year. And even with what felt like hundreds of applications handed in between the three of them, Cam, Tristan and Kaia were often ghosted by landlords. It was hard not to feel discouraged. Then, finally something promising: a flat on Queen Street, advertised on OneRent. It was Healthy Homes compliant, boasted a new kitchen and bathroom, and some nice couches that came as chattels. "It's gorgeous," Kaia sighed, her fingers moving swiftly across her phone screen. Sending the property link to her flatting chat, she typed, "There's a flat viewing in a few days."

But when the trio arrived at the flat, things looked a little different. "It's grottier than I expected," she whispered to Cam as they stepped gingerly around piles of dirty laundry on the living room floor. It was smaller than expected, too. Unwashed dishes were piled in the sink, and while Kaia had wanted to take some pictures for further consideration, it felt a bit weird given the current tenants were lounging around during the viewing. Kaia found Tristan hovering in a doorway, staring into an unkept bedroom while a young man of about 20 played on his computer, curtains drawn. He didn't look up. The landlord, Tanya Mullen*, was a short woman of about 65, with sunken eyes and bushy eyebrows and scraggly hair to match. She wore a cap and zip up hoodie underneath a garish pink and purple furry coat. She was soft spoken, often conversing at a volume where you had to reluctantly lean in closer to hear what she was saying.

Despite the flat not exactly being in the condition that Kaia expected, the trio felt they had limited options – they needed to sign something soon or risk flat hunting running into exam season. They optimistically reckoned that the state of the flat could be improved with a little bit of TLC – the current boys who occupied the place didn't seem like the cleanest of people. A fixer-upper, if you will. Plus, this place was in the Goldilocks zone of North D – not too far out in North East Valley, and not some Castle Street squalor. Beggars can't be choosers.

Summer arrived, and despite not signing the flat of her dreams, Kaia felt excited when she, Tristan, and Cam each set up their weekly \$208 automatic rent payments. Even though Tanya hadn't been particularly helpful in setting up power or gas, instead yelling "I've told you already!" down the phone at Tristan (she had not), the three were so happy to begin their unsupervised lives that they took a trip to the property in January to show their families. They hadn't gotten the keys yet – Tanya had told them that move-in would be delayed until February following a flat inspection. It's fine by us, Kaia had reasoned, despite not being given an explanation for the delay. They all lived in Dunedin, anyway so they shrugged it off.

The visit unsettled the trio's optimism. When they walked around the property, the place hadn't changed. Peering through

the windows, dishes were still piled dirty in the sink, and grass overflowed from the gutters. A Subway wrapper lay discarded on the kitchen floor. One of the couches Kaia had been so excited about was missing, replaced by a lawnmower parked in the living room. The three flatmates sent Tanya a text requesting to meet and chat about the state of the property. Kaia returned a few more times after that, and what she saw disturbed her. Sometimes the curtains would be open, other times closed. At night, the lights would even be on at times. One visit, Kaia slammed the door on her car and leant back in her seat before turning to Cam and Tristan. "I think Tanya is staying in our flat."

Things developed quickly from there. Kaia's parents were friends with a lawyer, who advised that they go to the police to serve Tanya with a trespass notice in order to get her out of the flat. Using the address written on their tenancy agreement, the flatmates and their parents went to knock on Tanya's door to serve her the notice. The place looked like a junkyard. Boxes and random papers were piled high in the rooms, so many bits and pieces that it all blended into an unidentifiable rat's den. They could see Tanya lurking inside, but they couldn't coax her to the door. Annoyed, Kaia worked the notice under the front door, feeling it push against other letters that had also been crammed under the gap.

Later that day, Kaia's mum, Tristan, and his dad went by the property again. Just as they were about to get out of the car, they saw Tanya making her way up the sloped path to the front door. "You can't be here," they called out. "We've issued you a trespass notice, you have to give us due notice before accessing the property!" Tanya froze before turning. It was like a dam had broken – her eyes narrowed, face getting red before she opened her mouth. "Fuck you! You can't tell me to get off my own property, you bitch!" Grabbing from a glass bin within arm's reach, Tanya approached Kaia's mum, shaking bottles in her face. She kicked another bin at Tristan's dad before storming off. They called the police.

The next morning, Kaia received an email that Tanya was canceling the move in inspection scheduled for the next day. Kaia contacted the Tenancy Tribunal to apply for a hearing a few weeks later.

It was at this point, in the midst of drafting legal documents, preparing for beginning study, and researching how they were going to get out of this tenancy, that Kaia and the others Googled 'Tanya Mullen'. Holy shit. This was not her first rodeo. News articles, Facebook posts, Tenancy Tribunal hearings all warning of the monstrous landlord Tanya Mullen. According to a 2020 article, she'd already been in the Tribunal 31 times since 2016.

The first Tribunal hearing was three hours long in the Dunedin court rooms. The adjudicator sat at an elevated table at the front of the room, looming above at such an angle that she could peer down her nose and fix her beady eyes on Kaia in a way that made her skin crawl. To make matters worse, Tanya brought in mounds of evidence at the last minute that left Kaia scrambling. One of the papers that Tanya submitted was an AI overview of "what is a narcissist?" that Tanya had helpfully annotated at the bottom: "These tenants". Regarding the trespass notice, Tanya suggested that you could not "trespass the Queen from Buckingham Palace", using another AI overview to elucidate her point.

Their labours didn't go entirely to waste. The flatmates were partially compensated for the rent they'd paid for a flat they didn't have access to. But the Tribunal was unwilling to make an order allowing them to break the lease. Frustrated and confused, Kaia scheduled a rehearing and an actual court date, set for the middle of the Semester One exam period. They'd asked Tanya to settle the dispute by signing an agreement that would let them out of the tenancy and allow costs to lie where they fall, but Tanya demanded the payment of \$30,000 for the money she would be supposedly losing out on in breaking the contract.

One of the only good things that came out of this situation was a blossoming friendship with the Queen Street neighbours, who frantically messaged the trio one night to tell them that it looked like someone else was moving into the property. When Kaia came by to check out what was going on, she met a lovely couple who confirmed that they'd signed a tenancy agreement for the property just the other day. Kaia hesitated before telling them her

By Hanna Varrs Illustrated by Gemma McKinney

FRESHER BEWARE

story, cringing as she watched their eyes widen to the size of saucers. She just felt bad.

At the date of the rehearing, Kaia, Tristan, and Cam were exhausted. After four months of legal battles, they just wanted it to end. The rehearing wasn't even a proper rehearing – just a hearing to determine if there'd be a rehearing. It was brutal and complicated. The adjudicator peered down at them before looking over to Tanya, who was once again surrounded by mounds of haphazard paperwork (with the help of ChatGPT) and then glanced back over at Kaia. She shifted uncomfortably in her plastic chair. "Maybe we should have just paid the \$30,000," Cam mumbled. Kaia shot him an annoyed look. The adjudicator cleared her throat before, to their surprise, zeroing in on Tanya. She grilled her, asking all sorts of questions about whether Tanya had signed new tenants, and how often she had been accessing the property. "May I please see that settlement agreement?" the adjudicator asked, turning her attention to Kaia. Kaia's jaw just about hit the floor. She scrambled to find the agreement that her mum had luckily slipped in at the last minute. Advised that it would be greatly in her interest to take the agreement, Tanya begrudgingly signed right there and then.

It didn't feel real. They were free of Tanya Mullen. When Kaia stepped out of the court house, she cried. It was a bright, clear day, and the sunshine warmed her face. "I think I'll give my future landlords a Google in the future," Kaia told Cam and Tristan over coffee. "Agreed," they muttered.

TENANCY DOWN THE DRAIN

"I just need out," Charlotte groaned, head in her hands. It was going on hour three of perusing Facebook marketplace for flats. She wasn't fussy, but she had a certain standard for her new home. Her current flat wasn't terrible, but the noise was starting to get to her – too many sleepless nights thanks to the bass drop of late-night DnB and the unmistakable crunch of broken glass on the street. With her tenancy ending, she was hoping for a reset: something cleaner, quieter, and outside of the student quarter.

Refreshing the page, a new listing popped up. "Quiet household with a mix of older students and professionals. Located out in North East Valley, with a big fireplace to keep the flat warm all year long. Clean, mature and responsible tenants inquire only please." Perfect. Maybe it was the June weather, but a fireplace sounded extra good about now. Charlotte clicked on the poster's profile: a woman, Anne*, in her 40s – mousy hair, stern disposition. A no-nonsense sort of character. Charlotte didn't mind – she had a healthy respect for chore charts. She sent Anne a message.

It wasn't long before a viewing was arranged. It was a bit of a hike up to the flat, which was situated on top of a hill. Despite the burning in her lungs, Charlotte found herself appreciating the view sweeping over the Botans and the sound of birds chirping. More importantly, there was no glass scattered on the pavement. The flat looked well kept, a relatively big property that boasted four bedrooms and a sleepout that Anne occupied. Anne greeted Charlotte at the door and toured her around. Things were... fine, just a little quiet. The doors to most of the bedrooms were closed, and Charlotte saw no signs of life other than some pieces of laundry out on the line. "We don't really use heaters in this flat," Anne told Charlotte. "We're trying to save power, so we just use the fireplace." Charlotte understood – maybe they got a good deal on firewood or something; she was all for saving a few dollars. "This isn't a flat for you unless you're willing to be very clean," Anne told Charlotte. They had put all sorts of rules in place because of previous tenants, apparently.

Anne explained they'd had 30 tenants in and out over the past five years: "Some people just don't get it." Charlotte frowned, doing the math in her head. That's a turnover of six tenants every year – for a four bedroom property, if you excluded Anne. A little weird, but Charlotte brushed it off. The place looked great. The rest of the viewing went well, and it wasn't long before Charlotte signed the standard form tenancy agreement almost every student is familiar with.

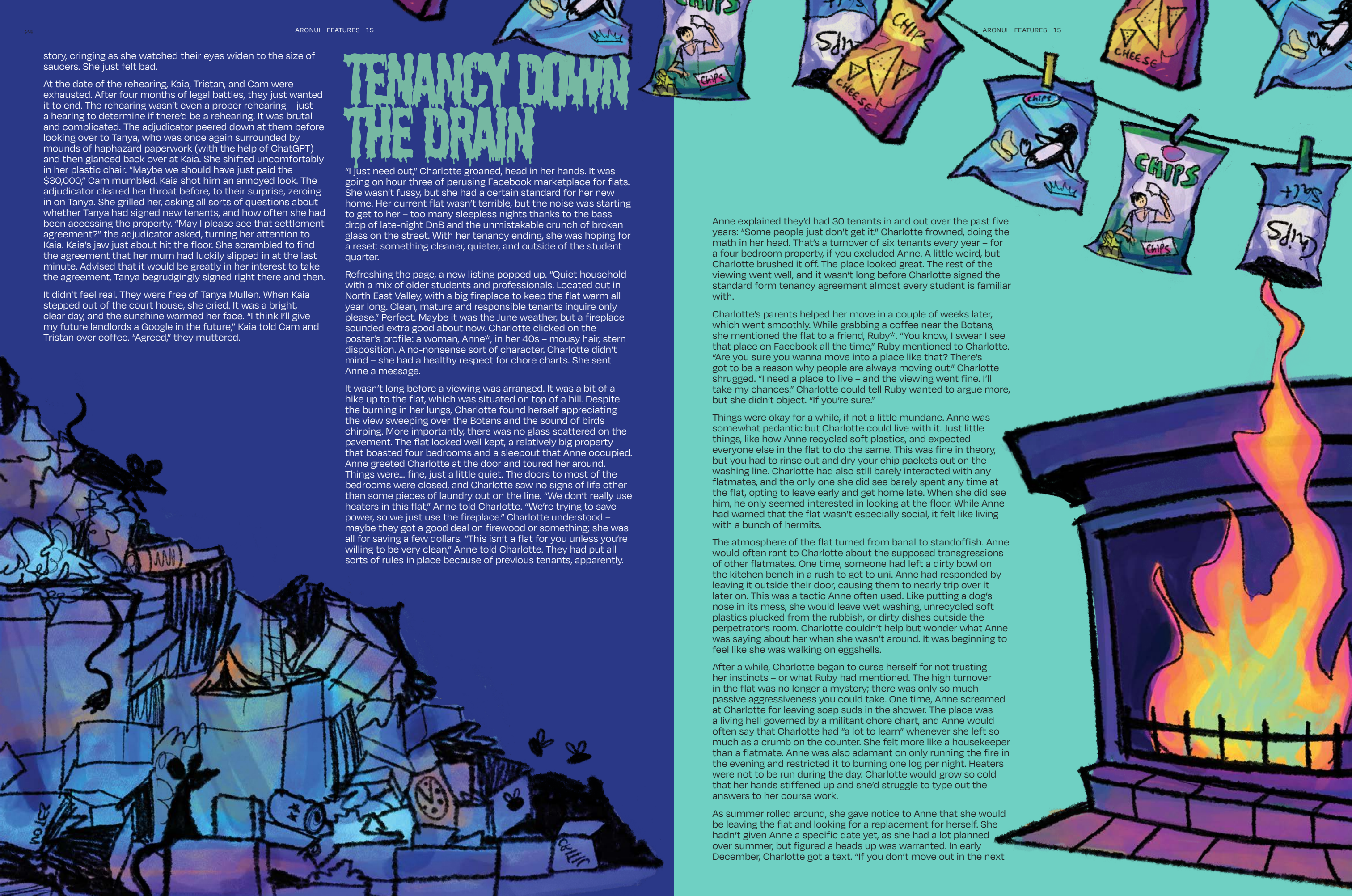
Charlotte's parents helped her move in a couple of weeks later, which went smoothly. While grabbing a coffee near the Botans, she mentioned the flat to a friend, Ruby*. "You know, I swear I see that place on Facebook all the time," Ruby mentioned to Charlotte. "Are you sure you wanna move into a place like that? There's got to be a reason why people are always moving out." Charlotte shrugged. "I need a place to live – and the viewing went fine. I'll take my chances." Charlotte could tell Ruby wanted to argue more, but she didn't object. "If you're sure."

Things were okay for a while, if not a little mundane. Anne was somewhat pedantic but Charlotte could live with it. Just little things, like how Anne recycled soft plastics, and expected everyone else in the flat to do the same. This was fine in theory, but you had to rinse out and dry your chip packets out on the washing line. Charlotte had also still barely interacted with any flatmates, and the only one she did see barely spent any time at the flat, opting to leave early and get home late. When she did see him, he only seemed interested in looking at the floor. While Anne had warned that the flat wasn't especially social, it felt like living with a bunch of hermits.

The atmosphere of the flat turned from banal to standoffish. Anne would often rant to Charlotte about the supposed transgressions of other flatmates. One time, someone had left a dirty bowl on the kitchen bench in a rush to get to uni. Anne had responded by leaving it outside their door, causing them to nearly trip over it later on. This was a tactic Anne often used. Like putting a dog's nose in its mess, she would leave wet washing, unrecycled soft plastics plucked from the rubbish, or dirty dishes outside the perpetrator's room. Charlotte couldn't help but wonder what Anne was saying about her when she wasn't around. It was beginning to feel like she was walking on eggshells.

After a while, Charlotte began to curse herself for not trusting her instincts – or what Ruby had mentioned. The high turnover in the flat was no longer a mystery; there was only so much passive aggressiveness you could take. One time, Anne screamed at Charlotte for leaving soap suds in the shower. The place was a living hell governed by a militant chore chart, and Anne would often say that Charlotte had "a lot to learn" whenever she left so much as a crumb on the counter. She felt more like a housekeeper than a flatmate. Anne was also adamant on only running the fire in the evening and restricted it to burning one log per night. Heaters were not to be run during the day. Charlotte would grow so cold that her hands stiffened up and she'd struggle to type out the answers to her course work.

As summer rolled around, she gave notice to Anne that she would be leaving the flat and looking for a replacement for herself. She hadn't given Anne a specific date yet, as she had a lot planned over summer, but figured a heads up was warranted. In early December, Charlotte got a text. "If you don't move out in the next



five days, I will be taking you to the Tenancy Tribunal. There's too much tension between us. You have to leave." Five days? Panic washed over her.

Things from there are a bit of a blur. She found a new place quickly enough, working as a Kiwi host at UniFlats. With the help of her parents, she moved out as soon as she was home from the kids camp she volunteered at. Charlotte was angry. She'd signed a tenancy agreement – she knew Anne wasn't within any right to kick her out with five days' notice, and now she had no idea how to get her bond back. One afternoon, she filed for an application to the Tenancy Tribunal and emailed local newspapers her story. She didn't deserve to be treated that way and wanted justice.

Charlotte felt small at the Tribunal hearing. Sitting beside Anne in a room that felt like a big, empty classroom, Charlotte received a shock: Anne wasn't a flatmate or even a head tenant – she was the property manager, and her brother was the landlord. To her horror, the Tribunal ruled that this meant Charlotte did not have a tenancy agreement under the Residential Tenancies Act, and was therefore unable to seek any justice due to the flat continuing to be used "principally as a place of residence" by a member of the landlord's family. It was a complete curveball – an exception that she'd never heard of, and one that had now completely screwed her over.

Of course, Charlotte sought out advice at Community Law. She did all the things that people recommended to her, and even applied for a rehearing with the help she got. But she failed. The rehearing didn't work, and Anne didn't lose. Charlotte did – apparently she had no tenancy, despite signing an agreement that asserted that the Residential Tenancies Act directly applied. It was deeply unsatisfying, and there was literally nothing left to do without paying for a lawyer and taking Anne to Court – something she didn't have the resources for. Even by July – a year after she initially entered the flat, and several months after she'd left – she still hadn't got her bond back from Anne. She'd even heard that other tenants in the flat had tried to leave too, and not bothered to find a replacement for themselves given Anne had asserted there was no tenancy. However, Anne still forced them to find replacements, threatening to take them to the Tribunal if they didn't. Charlotte had no clue how anyone was supposed to stop landlords from taking advantage of naive people.

It was hard not to be kicking herself. Maybe if she'd asked the right questions, or listened to Ruby, or researched tenancy law more, or trusted her instincts, she wouldn't have been in this situation. But she just wanted a place to live.

THE HOWE CURSE

The flat was cursed. Aiden was sure of it. In other years, he'd sat in living rooms with his mates, talking shit and smoking cones. One big breatha family. But this place was different: nobody wanted to come over, nobody wanted to sit out on the couch, and the other boys spent more time over at their girlfriends' houses than at the place they were paying rent for. And now, two of his flatmates, Hunter and Scott, had totally backstabbed him: they were moving out. Apparently it wasn't "worth it" anymore, given they could just head up the road and stay with their missus most nights. Aiden felt... lost.

The only flatmate that was staying, Finlay, wasn't exactly the

most social either. The times where Aiden had attempted to drag him down to watch TV or have a few beers had resulted in him perching awkwardly on the couch until Aiden let him go back to his room. However, looking on the bright side of things was one of Aiden's strong suits, and there was a part of him that hoped getting new flatmates to replace Hunter and Scott might result in a couple of new friends that could break the anti-social curse that had clearly settled over this place. It's what Aiden needed. But it didn't prove to be that easy.

Potential flatmates would come in for viewings, but it felt like after a few minutes they'd literally turn and run out of the flat. Hunter's family would come over before each viewing to clean the flat – but to no avail. The boys wouldn't hear back, and they couldn't figure out what was going wrong. Things were starting to get desperate, so when Hunter reckoned he had found someone, not many questions were asked. "He seems like a pretty laid back guy," Hunter told Aiden. "Quiet, doesn't say too much, but nice enough. His name is Gabe Knight*."

Aiden's first interaction with Gabe was unconventional, to say the least. And it didn't even involve meeting the man himself. Instead, he was awoken one night to police outside of his front door talking to Scott and Finlay, who were notifying them that this was now "Gabriel" Knight's bail address. According to the police, Gabe had gotten into some kind of trouble, but they didn't really elaborate. "Maybe it was just a one time thing," Finlay suggested when Aiden closed the door on the police officers. "You know – had a bit too much to drink, did something stupid, that sort of thing." Aiden wasn't convinced, dragging Finlay into his room before cracking open his laptop and Googling the name "Gabriel Knight". To their horror, many articles by the ODT popped up, about how Gabriel had bounced around committing various assaults – even claiming he was part of the Taliban. "Look," Finlay said, pointing to an article that had been published only a few hours ago. '22-year-old arrested for serious assault of two people', the headline read. "That would explain the cops," Aiden grumbled. "Who the fuck did Hunter let in our flat?"

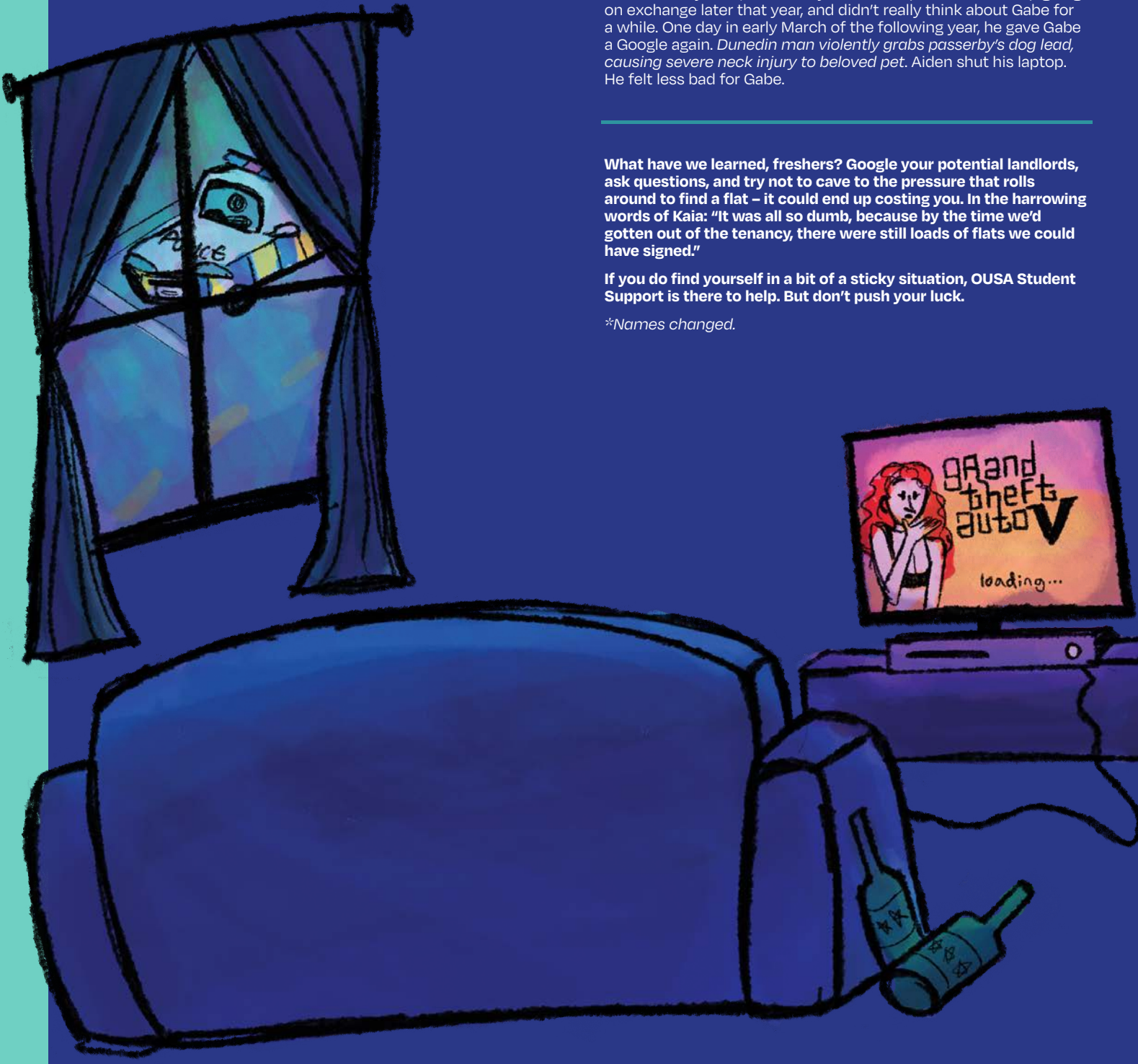
The next afternoon, they gave Hunter a call. "Man, I don't know," Hunter groaned into the phone. "He put the name Gabe on the tenancy form, and only ever called himself that. So nothing came up when I Googled him. How was I supposed to know?" Aiden scowled. "You're a fucking idiot, Hunter." Aiden had met Gabe that morning in the kitchen, and there was only one way to describe him: imposing. He was tall, and his head was close shaven. Hunter had been right in the fact he was quiet, but instead of it coming across as awkward or shy, it felt ominous. They'd chatted politely about playing the guitar – Aiden had seen Gabe owned one when he moved in. But when Gabe left and Aiden opened the pantry, he saw that literally everyone's stuff had been rearranged, moved off their respective shelves into neat, perfect little rows, seemingly reorganised based on some unknown rule. It was just weird.

Aiden went home for a bit – the upside of being a Dunedin local. He wasn't proud to admit it, but he wasn't sure he could stay in the flat for much longer with Gabe around. In between sporadic checks of the flat group chat, he gathered that Finlay and Scott were in contact with Student Support, their landlord, and the police to try and figure out what to do about Gabe. Apparently, there wasn't much they could do unless Gabe broke a condition of his bail. Until then, they would just need to try to stay out of Gabe's way.

One day, Aiden came back to the flat to collect a few things. According to the others, things had gone seriously south, with Scott swearing black and blue that Gabe had begun stealing his food. He knew that Finlay was up in his room and that Gabe was also home due to the loud music coming from the living room. "Hello?" Gabe called out from the living room. Aiden cringed before poking his head around the corner to greet Gabe. "Hey, man," Aiden said, looking around. Beer bottles everywhere, with Gabe sprawled on the couch playing Xbox.

Nice to see he was making himself at home. "Come have a beer with me," Gabe urged, but Aiden shook his head. "Nah, I'm in and out. Got plans," he lied. Gabe shrugged before turning back to his game.

Aiden ran up the stairs and grabbed a couple of shirts from his room before knocking on Finlay's door and entering. Finlay looked up from his laptop in surprise. "He's drinking," Aiden told Finlay. His eyebrows shot up. "That's in breach of his bail – he's not allowed to drink at all." Before Aiden knew it, they'd run up the hill to Finlay's girlfriend's place and called the police. They were convinced that they had him and could finally kick him out. But their hope was short lived – in a stroke of bad luck, Gabe had updated his bail conditions yesterday and was now allowed to drink at his bail address, but not outside. Great.



In the coming weeks, the boys pleaded with their landlord to do something. They'd walk past the flat, and Gabe would be outside drinking and yelling at passersby, while conversing with a Fireball dress-up costume next to him. Eventually, their landlord agreed to have a conversation with Gabe. According to what they were told, the landlord had pretty frankly told Gabe that the boys were uncomfortable with him being there, and would like him to move out. And that was that. One day, Aiden came home to Gabe moving out. "I can't take these with me," Gabe said to Aiden, motioning to his guitar and Xbox. "You can have them."

Aiden had many great jam sessions with the guitar, and the Xbox actually brought him and Finlay closer together. They never ended up getting new flatmates – Hunter just paid extra rent for the rest of the year. Aiden ended up feeling bad about the whole thing – where does a person like Gabe even go? He'd been bounced around the system, and clearly needed help. Aiden ended up going on exchange later that year, and didn't really think about Gabe for a while. One day in early March of the following year, he gave Gabe a Google again. *Dunedin man violently grabs passerby's dog lead, causing severe neck injury to beloved pet.* Aiden shut his laptop. He felt less bad for Gabe.

What have we learned, freshers? Google your potential landlords, ask questions, and try not to cave to the pressure that rolls around to find a flat – it could end up costing you. In the harrowing words of Kaia: "It was all so dumb, because by the time we'd gotten out of the tenancy, there were still loads of flats we could have signed."

If you do find yourself in a bit of a sticky situation, OUSA Student Support is there to help. But don't push your luck.

**Names changed.*

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TŪHURA
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'Breaking your face' would probably deter anyone from a sport they love, but not Jess Lord. Jess did exactly that – nose and cheekbone broken after going face first into a ledge. Now a second-year physio student, she's basically doing her own post-injury rehab in the form of a degree.

Jess started skating in Auckland about seven years ago, after signing up for a girls skate class. "There were maybe five of us," she told Critic Te Ārohi. Now there's heaps more. With skateboarding being added to the Olympic roster in 2020, Jess feels like it has become more mainstream. And that's not a bad thing. "There's just so many more girls skating now," she says. "It's actually fun." Skate culture, once a gatekept land of twelve-year-olds doing ollies and Tony Hawke wannabe teen boys sculling energy drinks, is now a lot more open to people who don't look like the cast of Zeke and Luther.

Jess has carved out a name for herself in the world of skateboarding. While she was still in high school, Jess won the girls street senior title at the 2023 NZ Secondary School Street Championships. That same year, she also placed second in the Women's street open category of the Skateboard Nationals.

While Jess mostly skates in Auckland over uni breaks (where the spots are less "crusty"), she's got a soft spot for skating down at the wharf. Dunedin, she says, doesn't really have a distinct "style" – unless you count "gnarly and crusty" as a style. There's a certain knack to zig-zagging around or ollie-ing over broken glass, and probably broken bones.

When she's not skating, Jess is busy chipping away at second year physio, having recently completed her first placement at the hospital, a pretty dramatic change of

pace from hurling yourself at concrete ledges all in the name of fun. But for Jess, the two worlds make sense together; skating helps her to switch off, get out of her head and be completely present. From Anki flashcards and massaging her classmates to ripping kick flips left, right and centre, what a life.

Jess's advice for anyone picking up a board for the first time? Keep going. "Just keep trying," she says, "If you're enjoying yourself, that's all that really matters." Also, wear some protection. Trust us. Jess's cheekbone would agree.

LOCAL PRODUCE
By Molly Smith-Soppet
JESS LORD

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BOOZE REVIEWS

BY JOAN OF RARK

WSG (What's good) my pimps, playaz, and operators! It is I, Joan of the Rark, presenting to you what I would like to call "Japanese Codys" (JCs). This is for two reasons: 1) I cannot remember what they are actually called (chur to my editor for fixing the title), and 2) I believe this is what they should really be called.

I was a bit sceptical of these when I realised that 24 were packed in four separate six-packs, rather than six four-packs. A minor change, but one that indicates the creator reckons, "Nah mate, four will fuck you up aye, no need for 6." Of course, me being the absolute pisshound I am, I reckon I'll just smash back four calm as aye and break out my trusty Pint Night glass and delete them. Next thing I know I'm involved in a West Auckland backyard boxing battle royale where the prize is one bitcoin until "Cobalt" shut it down for being over the maximum neighborhood decibel level of 60 after 5pm.

These beauties weigh in at 6%, and in a 330ml format, this equates to about 1.7 standard bevs. Considering I acquired a 24-slab (40.8 standards) for 40 dollarydoos, they've categorically beaten the sacred golden ratio of 1:1 standard to dollar. It's lucky this stuff was located, because for a while it was looking like Critic would need to hit up the mad scientists at the Brewing club to beat the ratio, or even worse, the ones in OUSSC. We would like to thank Meenans for coming through and saving us from having to create food-safe paint stripper with either group (we are still gonna do one of these anyway lmao).

JCs are to Codys what vapes are to cigarettes: more concentrated and with flavours that are appealing to children. It has nose hints of watery Berocca and (according to Fang) acrid notes of piss, but tastewise it's much more La Croix than la wazz. These drinks lack much of the acidity of other competitors such as Hyoketsu, registering a lot closer to L&P – though less lemon and more Paeroa.

CHUGABILITY: 1,000,000/10. This stuff basically dives down your throat and cracks an Olympic 10 no splash dive into your bladder, then the cycle repeats. Hakuna matata

HANGOVERNESS: 4/10. They're potent little bastards, but none of the brutal tail you'd expect

PAIRS WELL WITH: The paddywagon tonight my G



COLUMNS - 15

At this time of year it's always handy to have a really quick meal to whip up mid week that'll get you tucked up and cosy asap! This pesto pasta is a speedy, versatile and delicious option that everyone will enjoy, and maybe even leave leftovers for lunch.

INGREDIENTS:

Oil
Salt & Pepper
8 sausages, vegetarian or meat
1 onion (diced)
3 garlic cloves (finely chopped)
135 g basil pesto
300 mL cream
1 vegetable or chicken stock
cube
120 g baby spinach
500 g pasta
Grated cheese

try to go for something nicer than a pre-cooked sausage here – something beef, pork, or Italian style would work well!

a shape like penne, spirals or elbows works well

INSTRUCTIONS:

Step 1. Begin by placing a large pot over medium heat with a little bit of oil in the bottom.
2. Remove the casing from the sausages, and add small meatball amounts of sausage into the pot to brown. Cook for approx. 5 mins on each side of the meatball until crispy and mostly cooked through. You may need to do this in a couple of batches. Once cooked, remove the mini meatballs from the pot and place aside.

MI GORENG
GRADUATE
By Ruby Hudson

3. Place your pasta on to cook in a large pot of boiling water.
4. In the same pan, pour a little more oil if you need and add the diced onion. Cook for 10 mins until the onions are softened, and then add the garlic and a pinch of salt and some pepper. Cook for a further 3 mins or until fragrant.
5. Drain your pasta when cooked, saving 1 ½ cups of the pasta water for the sauce.
6. To pot the sausages were in, add the pesto, cream and a cup of the pasta water mixed with the stock cube. Simmer gently for 5 mins.
7. Add the mini meatballs back into the pot with the pesto-cream sauce, and cover with a lid, cooking on low for a further 15 mins.
8. Add in the baby spinach and cooked pasta, plus an additional ½ cup of pasta water. Mix until combined and allow to sit over the low heat for 3 mins until the spinach is wilted.
Serve up with some parmesan or grated cheese and enjoy a tasty dinner!

DEBATE



By Ella Grayson & Via Hooks

DEBATE

SHOULD YOU DATE EXCHANGE STUDENTS?

FOR:

Who doesn't love an accent?

Winter is the best time of year to smell out the fresh batch of sexy internationals away for a semester to play in the snow of Central Otago, or enjoy the black mould of Dunners. For many of us the fantasy of finding the love of our lives at university is strong, but what's stronger than love? Our horny and delusional imaginations.

Let's set the scene: it's Baaa Bar karaoke night. You clock someone sporting a sexy North American accent. Able to offer any international student's wet dream, you play tour guide for the wonders of Dunedin. You spend hours trading questions of home, friends, family. You end up in love for a semester and have the best time. Then it's all said and done; eight weeks of fun, fornication, and learning about a different culture comes to an end. Sure, your feelings may be hurt but you now have something to tell the family over Christmas, and a place to travel to after uni finishes. Plus, it's great for the plot.

Put yourself, your G-spot, and your feelings on the line, and, who knows, the person you once loved for two months may just be your forever. There's nothing more poetic than reunited lovers. So give it a go, and fuck a Frenchie.

AGAINST:

Would you board the Titanic knowing it was going to sink? Heck no! A new voyage may seem exciting at first, but the end of the semester looms like a great heartbreak shaped ice-berg. You say you won't get too attached, but is that really any better? A relationship where you're bracing for impact the whole time is hardly a relationship at all – and besides will you *really* not get too attached?

Factoring in the time taken to know them in the first place and at least two weeks of sickness (as they inevitably succumb to the Dunedin cold), you'll be poised to get cut off right as you felt like you were getting somewhere. You say you'll keep in touch, but come November you'll be left right off the proverbial floating door. Is that how you want to start your summer? Brokenhearted and forlorn – or worse – embroiled in a sinking long-distance situationship duct-taped together by Instagram voice calls at ludicrous hours?

All of this when there's clearly a much better alternative – friendship! Befriending an exchange student has almost all the same benefits as dating: sharing new foods, culture, hanging about in their heated UniFlat... You're probably more likely to stay in touch, and want to stay in touch, as lower stakes come with a more sustainable attitude. All in all, why risk it? Fall in love platonically instead.



MOANINGFUL CONFESSIONS

ACQUAINTANCE WITH DISADVANTAGES

When I was 19, I started sleeping with a 29-year-old man who thought he was incredibly charming in a sort of post-ironic, tortured-intellectual kind of way. I mostly just thought he was old.

The age gap wasn't a huge deal at first. If anything, I got a kick out of teasing him for it. I'd call him grandpa every time he used punctuation in a text. When he pulled a muscle getting out of bed, I'd hand him Voltaren like a nurse in a wartime field hospital. He pretended to be offended. I pretended to be impressed when he talked about his *first* existential crisis. It was a delicate balance.

The last time I went over to his place, he was curled up watching a grainy black-and-white war documentary on YouTube. Not a sleek Netflix production – I'm talking serious Cold War vibes, with that crackly narration in a mid-Atlantic accent and old trumpet music playing in the background. Nazi flags waving. Marching. Very *educational*.

Naturally, I started to make fun of him.

"Really leaning into the geriatric fantasy tonight, huh?" I said.

He laughed, and then, completely unprompted, said:

"Well, now you've earned the privilege of watching it *while we fuck*."

(It was clearly a joke. I think.)

So we did. Vanilla sex, missionary. Nothing worth writing home about, except that every time I looked over his shoulder, I was met with the sight of goose-stepping soldiers and swastikas flapping in the wind. There's nothing quite like a WWII propaganda reel to snap you back to reality mid-thrust.

That was, as you can probably guess, the last time we engaged in such activities. Something about being filled by a man while a Nazi parade marched across the screen behind him really crystallised the age gap for me.

He was always trying to play the long game – dropping little lines like, "Are you sure there aren't any feelings involved?" As if the occasional weird sex and two free drinks would be enough to make me fall in love. No, sir.

Our friends-with-benefits situation quietly downgraded to what I now refer to as "acquaintance with disadvantages."

Lesson of the Week: If a man invites you over and puts on a war documentary before sex, leave. Unless it's *Shrek 2* in 240p, he is not the one.



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Illustrated by Tevya Faed

RANK 1 COLUMNS - 14


33



You're a little 'in your feels' this week and the weather is pushing you closer and closer to seasonal depression. Push yourself to get out of bed a little earlier every day and by the end of the week you will have a smile back on that dial!

What dinosaur are you:
Therizinosaurus


★ PISCES ★



Avoid all sour foods this week and don't try something new in ANY aspect of your life. Change is not meant for you this week so don't push yourself at all, otherwise you will burn yourself out for the challenges that you must take on from Friday onwards.

What dinosaur are you:
Archaeopteryx


★ LIBRA ★



You're a whirlwind of chaos this week. There is no stopping the destruction and fun that you bring with you everywhere. Everyone around you is aware of the vibes that you control, so remember that the party doesn't start till you walk in.

What dinosaur are you:
Ankylosaurus


★ ARIES ★



The July moon is fucking up your taste buds and making even the most delicious of meals taste like ash. Try to recentre yourself by ensuring you are brushing daily and maybe try a swig of mouthwash on Wednesday to give you a bit of a hump-day refresh!

What dinosaur are you:
Suchomimus


★ SAGITTARIUS ★



As life starts to settle down, try doing some of the things you love. Whether that is having a midday wank or picking up a new book, your need for entertainment is insatiable this week. Make sure to throw yourself into the activity to ensure maximum enjoyment.

What dinosaur are you:
Gallimimus


★ AQUARIUS ★



You have a huge to-do list sitting in your notes app, but you'll be lucky if you even tick off half of it by Sunday. To mitigate this try setting up little rewards to incentives yourself into actually getting off your ass and stop doing sweet fuck all.

What dinosaur are you:
Spinosaurus


★ SCORPIO ★



This is gonna be a great week for Cancers. Like maybe the best, so make sure to breathe in the sweet smell of victory and get everything risky you need to do this month done by the end of the week. Life is looking good for once, so take it all in, you never know when it'll go back to being shit.

What dinosaur are you:
Tiroodon


★ CANCER ★



It's time for a new haircut. Your dead ends are looking manky and a new do will probably give you a wee spark to life as well. Wednesday is looking good for you and your bank account, so shout your friends a round of drinks at Pint Night!

What dinosaur are you:
Pyroraptor

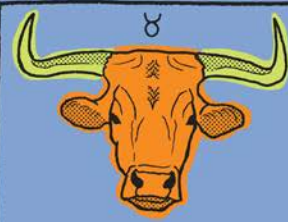
★ LEO ★



Someone has been thinking about you a lot lately. This is not necessarily romantic just yet but if you are open to a short fling then lock in and figure out who your secret admirer is. Keep your heart a little guarded though – they have a lot of potential to break it.

What dinosaur are you:
Dilophosaurus


★ CAPRICORN ★



Keep on top of your tasks this week. Uni has already started to kick your butt and we don't want a repeat of last semester do we? Try being one step ahead of your evil lecturers and get those readings or quizzes done a few days in advance.

What dinosaur are you:
Carnotaurus


★ TAURUS ★



Listen to Beyoncé this week. Shake your tail to 'Virgo's Groove' or cry your heart out to 'Be Alive'. Whatever the mood, she has something that will speak to your soul. And once again, Critic Te Arohi would just like to thank Beyoncé.

What dinosaur are you:
Giganotosaurus

★ VIRGO ★



You are feeling a little uncomfortable in your situations right now and there are many ways of appeasing this. The biggest being listening to those around you for advice, they know you best and can offer a second opinion when you're not feeling great about your decisions.

What dinosaur are you:
Chickens (coz Google says they are)

★ GEMINI ★

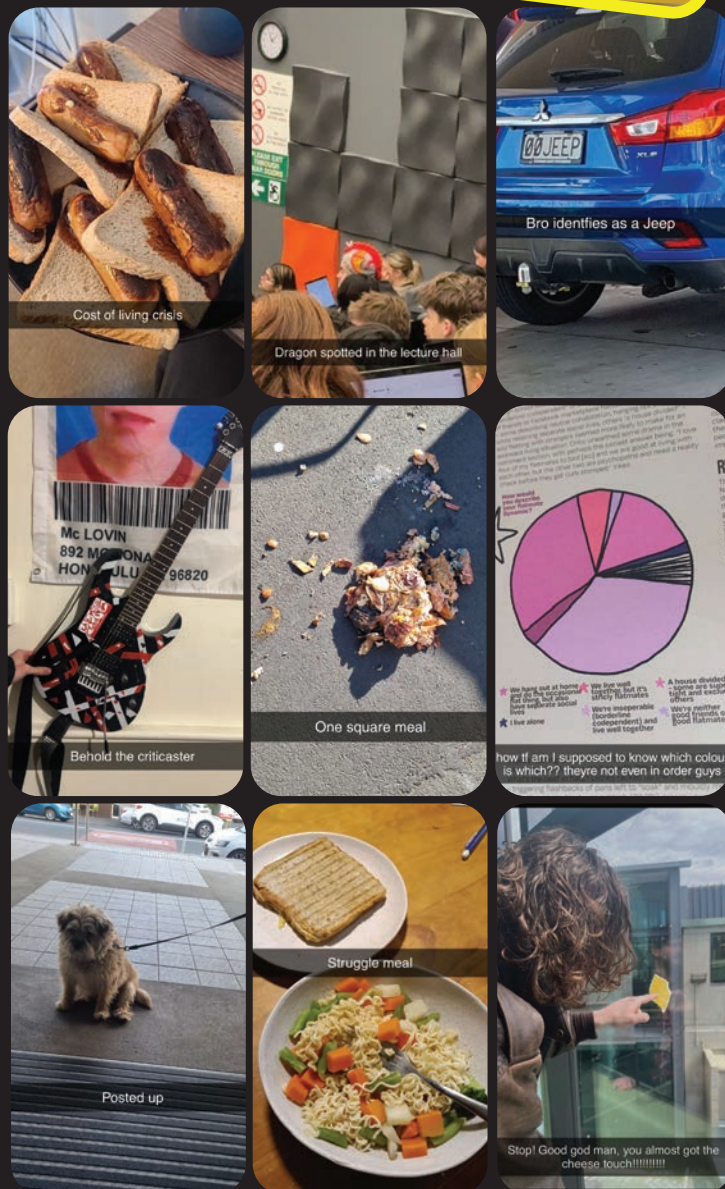
SNAP OF THE WEEK

SEND A SNAP TO US AT @CRITICMAG BEST SNAP EACH WEEKS WINS AN OUSA CLUBS & SOCS SAUNA VOUCHER

CONTACT CRITIC ON INSTAGRAM TO CLAIM YOUR PRIZE



WINNER



OUSa EXEC

LECTURE RECORDINGS POLICY UPDATE



Good mythical morning wee Critic readers.

I am ever so happy that you flicked to the back of the mag and laid your eyes upon our humble Exec column. If you've stopped reading already, you suck.

It's that time of year where we all get a fresh gust of wind to tide us through the remainder of the academic year, and also the time of year where I talk about lecture recordings (see the issue from this time last year). In case you didn't know, there is a SHINY and NEW lecture recordings policy that has been drafted and is out for consultation with staff.

I am running the student side of things. We have a number of focus groups for the policy this week. If you are not involved in the focus groups but are seeking a meaningful opportunity to shape university policy, or perhaps you have too many opinions to keep them to yourself, come chat! Harass me (politely) as I am enroute to class! My email is academic@ousa.org.nz and I'd hope that you'd use it to constructively criticize a policy, but in lieu of you possessing maturity, F1 TikToks will also suffice.

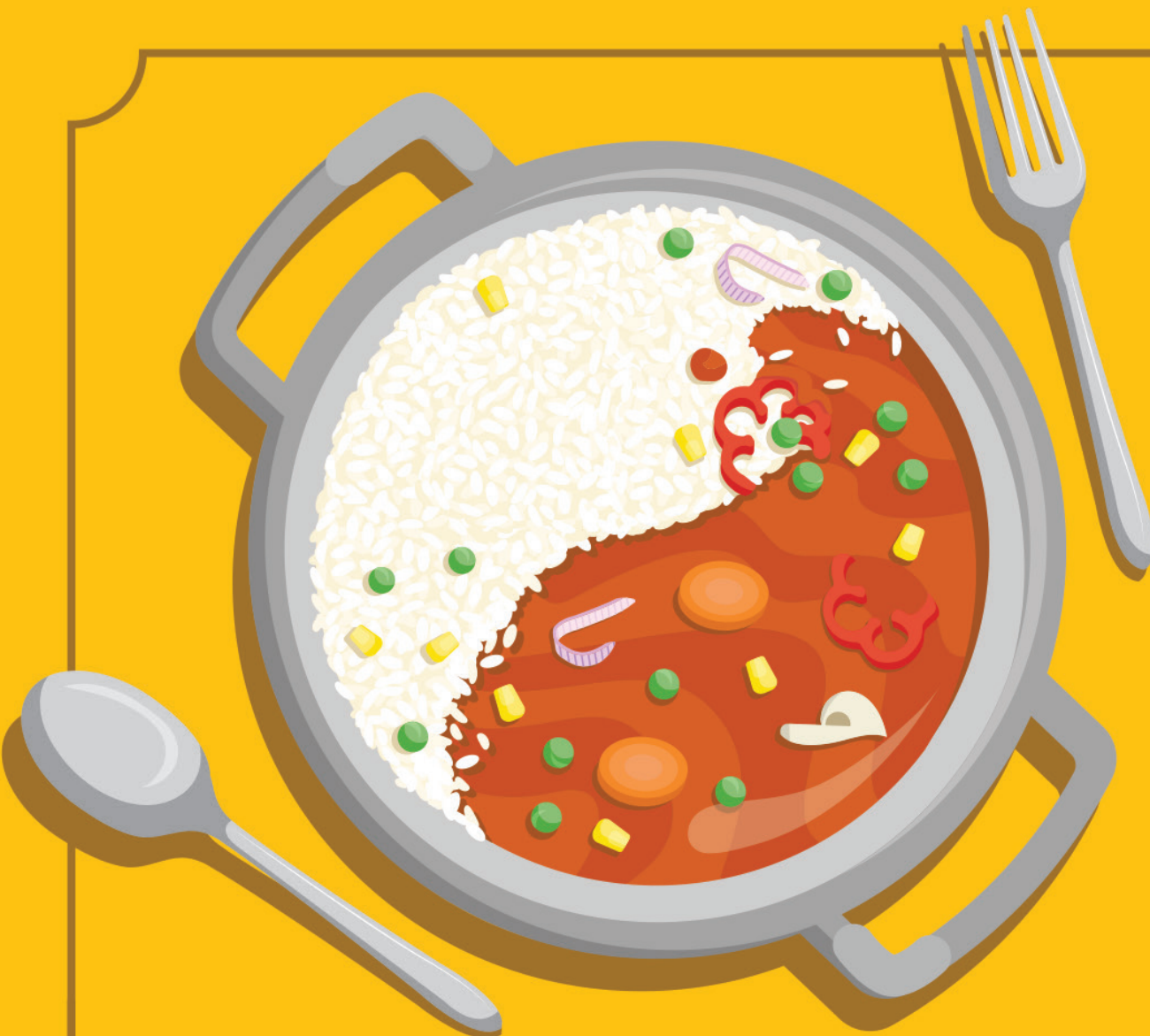
Play hard, study harder Otago.

Stella Lynch
Academic Rep

GreenCard



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