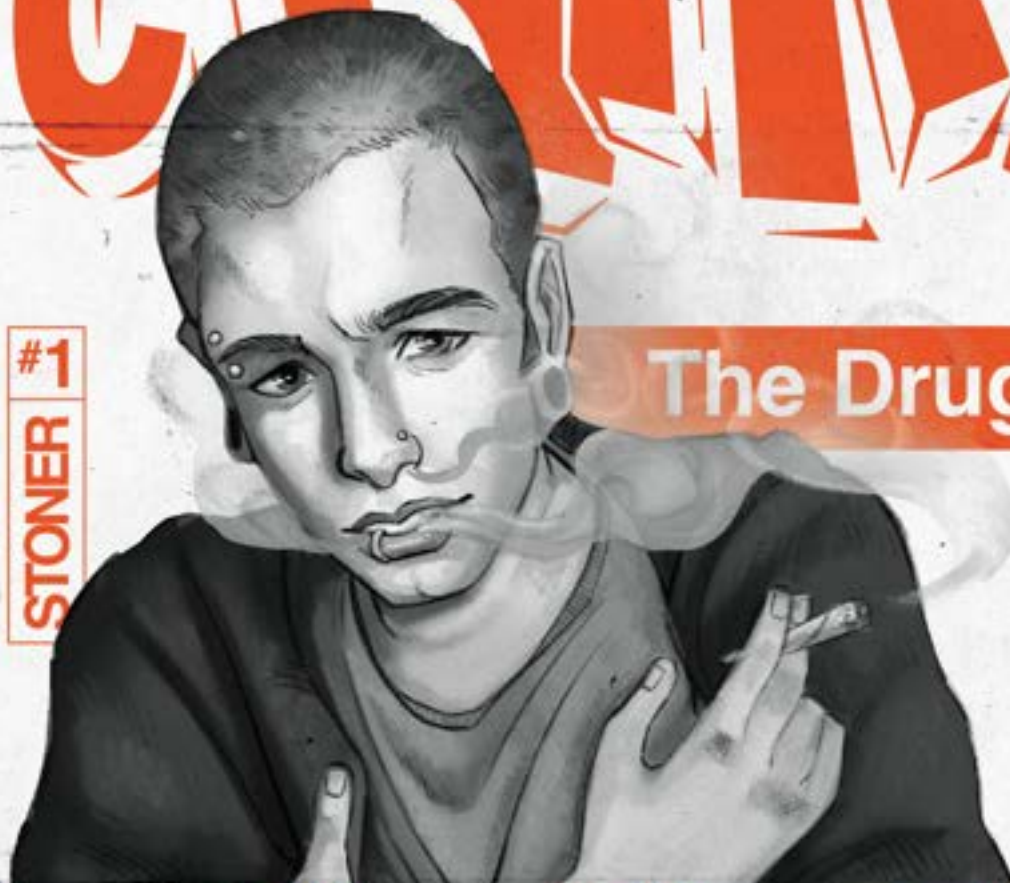


CRITIC

TE AROHI

#1
STONER

The Drugs Issue



#2
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#3
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#4
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TRIPPER

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THE DRUGS ISSUE (07)
13 April 2026

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EDITORIAL: Drugs are Everywhere

Kia ora and welcome to Critic Te Arohi's annual Drug Issue. This happens to be one of Critic's most popular issues (alongside the sex issue – which says a lot about our readership's maturity).

The first article I wrote for Critic in my tenure as Co-Editor was a harm reduction guide for taking drugs, as part of Campus101. Writing about drugs and safety made me realise how skewed the conversation around these sensitive topics can be. A reality of student life in Otago is that you're nearly guaranteed to see drug usage happen in front of you at some point. Whether you agree with the principle or not, looking out for our fellow community members is essential, so having some understanding of harm reduction is essential.

This isn't to say that all drug usage consists of illegality, danger and overdoses. My experiences writing for a student magazine has changed my perspectives on drugs themselves. I think that it's made me remember through lots of research, writing and interviews over the years that 'drugs' is a broad term. It doesn't just mean dodgy white powders in baggies.

Everyday as students we encounter drugs such as alcohol, paracetamol and caffeine. These drugs are all legal (to a degree), but I've witnessed first-hand abuse of all of these drugs. Alcohol and caffeine may be perfectly legal to buy in most circumstances as an adult, but that doesn't mean that the negative effects you associate with illicit drugs don't appear here. A mate that gets headaches and can't function without their daily Monster is dependent on a drug, even if it's not an illicit one.

This isn't to say that our illicit drugs aren't illegal for no reason. There's a lot of discourse around Aotearoa, and the rest of the world, over what drugs should be legal or not. Everybody making these decisions just wants to keep everybody safe at the end of the day, we just have differing perspectives on how best to achieve this.

My message from this editorial is that drugs are everywhere, not just the illicit ones. When we want to think about how we as a society can reduce drug harm, we need to stop looking at all drugs within a binary of illegal and legal. Abuse, overdoses and dependence can happen on drugs whether they are illegal or not. Discourse around drugs is always in an inherently negative lens. While the harm caused is a good reason for this, it can miss the nuances in society that have led us to view drugs as we collectively tend to.

Many readers of this article will never want to touch illicit drugs in their life – that's perfectly fine, and no social stigma should be given for somebody who follows the law. No matter how you view something as contentious as drugs though, it's time to view the conversation from a wider lens.

Harm reduction is for everybody, users or not. The content in this issue aims to explore Dunedin life and drugs, far beyond someone doing a bump in a festival portaloo. I encourage everybody to read Heeni's culture article about Māori Med Students, and Dylan's one on weed as a gateway drug. These articles explore the nuances and ways drugs intertwine in our lives, rather than purely viewing everything with an inherently negative lens. The more we understand the systems that have caused us to interpret drugs the way we do, the more steps we can take to be safer and more informed for everybody.

Gryffin Blockley 😊

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LETTERS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



Swedish speaker seeking Scandinavian club

Type! need help finding whoever put up the flyers seeking Scandinavian speakers to join their exclusive(?) club. The QR code expired before I could find my fellow northerners ;(. I am hoping if this is published someone from the club will read it and reinstate the QR code! My only other to choice is to walk around speaking my goofy language until someone notices.

Please help!
-A swede

Send a letter to the editors at critic@critic.co.nz to be in to win a \$20 UBS voucher.

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Dear Critic,

I cannot be the only returning student to notice the newly empty rooms in the Audio Visual Conferencing (AVC) suite! Where have all the technicians gone? Not only are they wonderful people, but they are extremely helpful.

With hybrid on-campus/distance papers being offered (I remember the days of distance being done completely by skype calls (very unc of me, I know) or (more often) e-mail), and the ever-present Zoom meetings, surely the university would realize the importance of having more than one technician?

Like all staffing losses, it is terrible to see them go, but surely with the average level of tech proficiency amongst the teaching staff being what it is (we all have at least one lecturer who is contacting IT daily to connect their USB to the theatre computer), this could be considered as a 'bad idea'?

Sincerely,
Jack.

A Zoomer who cannot zoom.

Hello critic team,

Love the energy you're putting into this and I hate to be that guy but in this week's crossword there is a factually incorrect answer. Uhm actually, Smaug is a wyvern not a dragon.

Sincerely,

A person who should be focusing on assignments

Co-Editor's response:

Uhm actually, Smaug is a dragon. Or he kind of is. We Googled it. Tolkien originally designed him to have four legs but the movie adaptation gives him two and his wings to move (which is a wyvern). Smaug is canonically a dragon from the original text, being described as having four legs and Tolkien has said that he is a dragon. So ask Tolkien, not us, about him being referred to as a dragon. Furthermore, a wyvern is a type of dragon, so even if he was technically a wyvern, he would still be a dragon. Boom.

LETTERS POLICY

Letters should be 150 words or fewer. The deadline is Thursday at 12pm. 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 Editors. 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.

THIS PUBLICATION IS AI FREE.

TLDOR!

Baseline happened!

Dunedin Venues Management Ltd have proposed a capacity reduction for Forsyth Barr Stadium to unlock new event possibilities, and announced a ten-year partnership with Ticketek

Polytech students are working on a project that involves turning waste vegetables into fuel, their current system requires about 20kg of fermented cabbage per tank

NASA launched the Artemis II Mission, the first manned lunar expedition in over fifty years!

Four University of Otago subjects have been ranked in the top 50 globally: Otago's sports-related subjects 22nd, anatomy and physiology 36th, dentistry 50th, and hospitality and leisure management 50th

The Dunedin Fringe Awards have topped off a bumper Fringe Festival! Congratulations to Motion Sickness for winning the Best in Fringe award.

The Hyde Street Party is this Saturday! Make sure your flat locks in those costume ideas ASAP before LookSharp gets hectic.

ODA (Otago Dance Association) is hosting a fundraising quiz night! 7pm Wednesday 15th April, at The Bog. Teams can be 4-6 people, \$5 per person. Check their instagram for more details: @otagodanceassociation

Dunedin City Council By-Election voting papers are being sent out! Keep an eye out for your papers, and get informed before you vote.



The News

DRUGS, ISSUE 07

KAWEPURONGO

13/04/2026

EXPLAINER: ALBANY STREET CONNECTION PROJECT

Parking and pedestrian changes coming to a street near you!

By **Hanna Varrs**

Co-Editor // hanna@critic.co.nz



Since 2021, the Dunedin City Council (DCC) has done heaps of advertising, letter drops, media coverage and public consultation about the changes happening to Albany Street and surrounding areas. The \$4.8 million Albany Street Connection Project (ASCP) construction and road reseal will fully take place late 2026, adding a whole bunch of pedestrian and cyclist friendly shit to streets around the Uni.

Some of the changes have already taken place to streets such as Clyde and Leith, leading to a sense of frustration from students who have rocked up this year with little to no knowledge about the ASCP grand plan. However, many have rocked up with a car, and seemingly less places to park it (for free). The ASCP will inevitably have some impact on all residential flats sitting on the streets connecting to Albany, so it's worth bearing in mind when flat hunting for 2027.

What is the ASCP?

According to the DCC, ASCP aims to "improve safety for the thousands of pedestrians moving along and across Albany Street daily", through a fleet of parking, street and cycleway changes. The ASCP is not here to fuck around – a total of five raised pedestrian crossings will be installed, which means playing Crossy Road (Otago Student Edition) will soon be out of fashion.

Despite the ASCP all being for the greater good, change can be painful. 24 restricted and 24 unrestricted parks will be lost to the ASCP, with a further 138 parks changing in restriction type.

Whatever the case, the ASCP changes are extensive, and will have an impact on Uni-adjacent residential streets. Critic Te Ārohi is here to break down some of the major proposed changes, so students know what to expect over the coming year.

Albany Street – Outside the Central Library

Albany Street itself will be getting a bunch of changes, including new mobility car parks, new paid parking, parking restriction changes and a reduction in spaces on the northern side of Albany Street.

A couple of those pesky trees (and thirteen P240 parks, RIP) outside Central Library will be getting knocked out to make way for a new two way cycleway that runs from Cumberland Street to Anzac Ave out to the harbour, requiring the shifting of the bus stop down a bit to be outside the Burns Lecture Theatre. These changes create P5 parking spots outside CenCh. A further three new P5s will be outside Property Services, and five P60s. The three mobility parks along this section of Albany will be removed and shifted to the Uni ends of Ethel Benjamin Place and Leith Street. Clubs and Socs will gain another bus stop and have the mobility park removed.

Most excitingly, a raised pedestrian crossing will be installed that basically connects Clubs and Socs to the Library, meaning you're far less likely to be taken out on your way to \$5 Lunch. There will be another one connecting where the Property Services Building is to Leith Street, making grabbing a box easier than ever.

Clyde Street – The Roundabout Intersection End

Clyde Street is also getting a bit of a revamp. Some changes have already been made to parking, and the eventual plan will be to make this part of Clyde a one-way street exiting onto Frederick Street.

Clyde now has twenty two paid P120 parks on the Albany Street side, with the rest of the street remaining unrestricted. According to a DCC spokesperson, the increased parking on Clyde Street is intended to offset the loss of nearby parking on Albany Street. "The changed parking restrictions aim to better provide for the different needs in the area, encourage greater parking use. It does not represent the 'commercialisation' of Clyde Street, nor does it seek to increase council revenue from parking fees and charges."

If the Council decides to charge \$3.50 an hour for parking (the standard inner city rate) paying for 5 days of parking comes out to \$168. And that's assuming you can outsmart the parking wardens by shifting your car every couple of hours. Something to bear in mind.

Eventually, the unrestricted parking will be redesigned into angled parking, creating more space – though the exact number of parks are to be confirmed based on the DCC plans. A raised pedestrian crossing will be installed at the Albany/Clyde intersection over to the Information Science Annex Building, making walking to and from school just that little bit easier. They're also getting two new trees at the Albany intersection. Just fantastic.

Albany Street – From Clyde Street (University Car Park) to Anzac Avenue (The UniPol Road)

This stretch of Albany is large, and will undergo several changes.

The thirteen unrestricted parks outside of the University parking lot will be removed. Opposite across the road, three unrestricted parks will be removed, with the remaining parks converted into ten paid P240s. All parks outside of the Greggs factory along Albany will be removed.

Outside Te Rangihīroa, the bus stop and P30s will be removed and eleven paid P240 parks will be installed. All the parks that were along Albany Street (Riego Street side) right before the exit on to Anzac Ave will also be removed (a total of five unrestricted parks and one P30). Across the road, four unrestricted parks will be converted to paid P240s, and three unrestricted parks will be removed to allow for improvements related to the installation of a nearby raised pedestrian crossing. This construction is already underway.

Riego Street – The Jurassic Park Flat Street, Near The Polytech and Greggs Factory (RIP)

Riego Street is a bit of a hidden gem, but the DCC knows these roads like the back of their hands. No unrestricted parking space is safe in the name of ASCP! Just kidding – Riego Street keeps sixteen unrestricted spaces, thanks to an the installation of seven additional parks. Don't say the DCC gives you nothing.



Of the remaining parks, two will become P30s, fifteen P120s. And they're all absolutely free! That's good. They'll also get a brand spanking new accessibility park, and a raised pedestrian crossing right outside the start of the street across Albany to the far side of Te Rangihīroa. Riego will also eventually become a one-way, exit only on to Anzac Ave.

Forth Street – Te Rangihīroa Side

Christmas has come early for this section of Forth Street, and what has Santa brought? A no entry from Albany Street! Much better than coal.

This section of Forth will convert three parks into P5s and install a turning circle just before the exit to allow two-way traffic back down Forth toward Frederick Street. A raised pedestrian crossing will be installed (yes – another one) connecting the Te Rangihīroa entrance to the old Greggs factory so freshers can marvel at it in all of its defunct glory.

Residential Parking Permits

While a DCC spokesperson has clarified to Critic that they have "no plans" currently to review existing arrangements for resident parking permits, "there remains a large amount of free and unrestricted parking available in the area." You can find a full map of places to park at <https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/services/parking/regulation>.

Some residents in the residential zone around the University may also already be eligible for a Resident Parking Permit. You can find more information about that at <https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/services/parking/parking-permits/residents-parking>.

You can view the full ASCP plans on the DCC website.

UNIVERSITY DEFENDS PARTNERSHIP WITH PALO ALTO NETWORKS

University undertook "due diligence" prior to decision making

By Stella Weston & Hanna Varrs
News Editor & Co-Editor
news@critic.co.nz // hanna@critic.co.nz



The University of Otago announced its partnership with international cybersecurity firm Palo Alto Networks (PANW) in May of last year to aid in the development of a new Masters in Digital Technology at the budding Queenstown campus. However, the partnership has recently come under scrutiny by Otago Staff for Palestine (OSP). According to an opinion piece published in the Otago Daily Times by OSP, this is due to PANW having "deep links to the Israeli government, which has been accused in international courts of committing genocidal acts."

Critic Te Ārohi understands that PANW recently was named as a technology partner for a contract awarded to Accel Solutions Group by an unnamed major Israeli customer. Accel imports and integrates telecom equipment for the telecom market in Israel. Some analysts speculate that the major customer is the Israeli government, due to the contract being described as supplying cyber and information security services for "critical network infrastructure" in Israel and valued between \$250-500 million. PANW also recently acquired CyberArk, which serves governments globally, with tools designed for high-security environments (including defence systems). With this move, the Jerusalem Post reported that PANW would become the most valuable company listed on the Israeli market.

PANW operates its largest research facility outside of the US in Tel Aviv and was founded by now retired American-Israeli Nir Zuk, a veteran of the Israeli Defence Unit 8200. Unit 8200 is responsible for signal intelligence and cybersecurity. Unit 8200 has been heavily scrutinised for mass surveillance of Palestinians, and utilising AI-driven targeting systems like "Lavender" to identify bomb strikes in Gaza.

Establishment Director of the University of Otago Queenstown and Lakes District Project, Professor Richard Barker, confirmed to Critic Te Ārohi that the partnership was fully finalised. The partnership is "focused solely on educational collaboration" and "supporting the development and delivery of postgraduate programmes in cybersecurity in Queenstown." While the University will retain "full academic control over programme design, assessment and teaching," Richard told Critic that Palo Alto Networks will provide "industry perspectives to help ensure the programme remains relevant to cybersecurity practice."

"For those of us in the Staff for Palestine group, it is particularly disappointing that the university seems to be openly rejecting the guidelines set out by the Boycott Divest and Sanction (BDS) movement," OPS wrote in the ODT article. The BDS movement is an international campaign aimed at pressuring Israel to uphold the basic human rights of the Palestinian people under its control.

Richard emphasised that the University takes ethical considerations seriously, and undertook "due diligence" on PANW prior to the partnership agreement being finalised. According to Richard, this process established that PANW is a US-based company, and while it had an Israeli founder and a research facility in Tel Aviv, the due diligence work did not "indicate any company links to the Israeli military, nor was PANW identified at the time on the [BDS] movement list of tech targets." The due diligence assessment was undertaken to ensure the partnership "aligned with the University's values and posed no conflict with our academic mission [...]"

Richard claims that the University spoke to "several technology companies", landing on PANW due to its global scale, established presence in the cybersecurity industry, and being an "innovative" industry leader. Accordingly, PANW was "a perfect partner in terms of the University providing academic programmes which are tied closely to world-leading industry partners."

According to a factsheet provided to Critic by OPS, cyber defence and tech products are a key export for Israel, making up around 56% of all export earnings. "This makes it very hard for our governments to disentangle themselves from Israeli capital, spies and interests. Tech is a key part of Israel's expansionist project," the factsheet reads.

Antony Loewenstein is an independent journalist, film-maker and author of the global best-selling book, *The Palestine Laboratory*. When approached by Critic, he warned against the University of Otago "getting into bed" with PANW, due to its "extensive connections to the Israeli military and elite intelligence Unit 8200."

"This company has a long record of operating deep inside the Israeli army and intelligence at a time when Israel itself has been credibly accused of committing genocide in Gaza", he said. "I've spent more than a decade investigating the close relations between Israel, its defence sector and the global arms industry and I have grave concerns that the University is either wilfully blind or happily colluding with a corporation with a shady background in surveillance."

With the original partnership being announced May 19th 2025, it followed less than two weeks after the Working Group on Institutional Neutrality was accepted on May 8th, which recommended that the University work to develop ethical investment and procurement policies. The ethical procurement policy was recently released, but according to Richard, it "deals with people who supply goods and services to the University", which "is not quite the same" as the PANW and University partnership. However, the ethical investment policy is "still under development", but that "deals with financial investments made by the University, not partnerships."

With no clear policy guidance for partnerships (although "there is work underway on this"), Barker noted that "[p]rotecting academic freedom and balancing that against the overall reputational issues for the University is one of the things that has to be kept in mind as partnerships are developed."

Overall, the University has made it clear to Critic that the PANW partnership is purely to provide industry insights for an academic programme, and the ethics of the agreement have been vetted through their due diligence process. However, members of the University community, including OSP, have continued to express their discomfort over the alleged direct military links, especially in light of the ongoing Israel-Palestine war. Critic Te Ārohi will stay in the loop for any future developments on the Queenstown campus and Palo Alto partnership.

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S WELCOME EMAIL RETURNS 100% AI PREDICTION

Message "was not written with AI, but rather checked using AI software"

By Hanna Varrs
Co-Editor // hanna@critic.co.nz



Critic Te Ārohi recently received a news tip from an anonymous student that ran Vice-Chancellor Grant Robertson's welcome email through GPTZero (Model 4.2b). The message was sent to all students at the start of the year, and had the subject-line "Student update: 25 February 2026". The model returned a 100% AI-generated prediction on the email. "The Vice-Chancellor maintains personal, human oversight in all his official communications," a University spokesperson told Critic. "The AI Governance Policy expects the same of all University staff."

The student explained to Critic that they took to running the message through AI prediction after noticing it "contained several linguistic structures highly associated with AI use." According to the student, the welcome message contained classic "it's not X, it's Y" structure commonly used by generative AI language models, and em dashes. For example, drawn straight from G Rob's welcome: "The people who live around you aren't just locals — they're your neighbours."

The prediction model, GPTZero, works by analysing text for burstiness (variation in sentence structure) and perplexity (how predictable text is to a language model). Real world, independent testing of GPTZero shows it has about 90% overall accuracy, with lower accuracy on mixed AI/human content, humanised text and short texts. Therefore, AI-use prediction is not necessarily AI-use confirmation.

After getting the 100% AI-generated prediction, the student filed an Official Information Act (OIA) request with the University. As the University of Otago is a Government entity, they are legally obliged to provide (most) information within 20 working days of a request. The ākonga asked whether AI was used in drafting the message, as well as requesting the transcripts of the AI conversation and the University's position on this type of AI use. The OIA was subsequently shown to Critic.

"The Vice-Chancellor's message was drafted by a member of the University's Communications team, and an approved internal AI system was used to suggest improvements, which were then accepted or rejected by the Communications team member," the OIA states. "The message was subsequently amended and approved by the Vice-Chancellor."

According to a University spokesperson, the approved internal AI system in this case was Microsoft Copilot. "It is approved because it operates within the University's existing information security and data governance settings."

In terms of policies which govern AI use within the University, the OIA noted the AI Governance Policy, which states that "AI systems must be used to augment human capability, with human judgment and oversight remaining central." Additionally, the OIA noted the University's Staff Use of AI Systems Policy and Procedures, which will be referenced in the AI Governance Policy and are in the process of being finalised.

This Staff Use Policy is expected to state that "AI System use must be disclosed where it significantly contributes to a work product, or where required by research ethics approvals,

funding bodies or publishers, or where stakeholders would have a reasonable expectation of disclosure [...]" A University spokesperson told Critic that the Staff Use policy would be finalised "[w]ithin weeks".

Students tend to be considered stakeholders of tertiary institutions. At the University of Otago, the University Council is the governing body, which has a membership consisting of elected, appointed and co-opted members representing key stakeholders, including "alumni, students and staff."

When asked if the welcome message's use of AI, addressed to all stakeholder students, would be a future candidate for that "reasonable expectation" of AI use disclosure once the AI Staff Use policy was finalised, the short answer was 'no'. A spokesperson for the University told Critic that "[u]sing AI to refine and improve a personal communication with full personal, human oversight would not give rise to a reasonable expectation of disclosure."

In this case with the welcome email, the email was originally drafted by a Communications staff member with an internal AI tool used "solely to suggest refinements with editorial judgement retained throughout." The email was then reviewed and amended by the Vice-Chancellor.

Despite this, the anonymous student who turned in the tip was not pleased. "It seems like the [Vice-Chancellor] who makes \$700k a year to engage with the university community, outsourcing his once-per-semester message to AI, fits the brief." When approached with this comment, a spokesperson told Critic that this argument "misrepresents the facts".

"The Vice-Chancellor is constantly involved in engagement with students and staff. The message is only one example of this." The spokesperson reiterated that the welcome message "was not written with AI, but rather checked using AI software", with the Vice-Chancellor making subsequent amendments. "For clarity, the Vice-Chancellor's remuneration is set by the Public Service Commission and is not \$700,000."



THURSDAYS IN BLACK: MORE THAN JUST A BLACK T-SHIRT

Combining solidarity with understanding

By **Bella Bates & Stella Weston**
Senior News Reporter & News Editor
// news@critic.co.nz



The concept behind Thursdays in Black (TiB) couldn't be simpler: wear black on Thursdays. Through symbolically wearing black each week on campus, TiB Otago creates weekly visibility and raises awareness of those who have experienced or are experiencing sexual violence.

Despite winning OUSA Society of the Year in 2025, the grind never stops, and with April being Sexual Assault Awareness Month, TiB's work is even more important. Speaking with Co-Directors Elle and Kenchozi, Critic Te Ārohi asked what the group hopes to achieve this year. At its core, their message is about visibility: "It's literally just showing solidarity," says Elle. "[It's] a reminder that things are still going on."

According to TiB, sexual harm occurs across a wide range of student spaces, affecting different clubs, societies, and groups of people. This was reinforced in Critic Te Ārohi's and TiB's co-investigation last year into sexual harm support services. This revealed that TiB was receiving disclosures on a weekly basis, and that the scale of the issue is still widely underestimated across campus. As Kenchozi puts it, "This is happening [...] so much more than people actually think it is."

Importantly, TiB does not want wearing black to become a hollow or performative gesture. The Co-Directors emphasised

the need for students to understand the meaning behind the action. "I don't want this to just become a buzzword," Kenchozi said, "like 'oh, we're just going to chuck on a t-shirt.'" Instead, the group wants to see genuine awareness of what's happening on campus – all-important solidarity also needs to come with understanding and a commitment to make change.

Part of that change is about education. TiB is advocating for increased uptake of Te Whare Tawhārau's HYBRID training (Helping You Help Respond to Disclosures): a bystander intervention programme that equips students to respond safely when they witness or are told about harmful situations. The group believes this training should be standard practice for student execs: "[it's] learning how to look after your members," says Elle, with Kenchozi adding that it's "the bare minimum."

Ultimately, TiB's message is clear: show up, get aware and get educated. And of course – wear black. For those affected by sexual harm, knowing that others recognise what's happening and are standing with you really does matter.

Check out their Instagram @thursdaysinblackotago for upcoming events.

As Otago students return from mid-sem break, speculation from the shitposters of the Castle26 Facebook group has been at an all time high. Critical Tribune is here to put the rumors to bed and confirm the official Hyde Street Party flat themes.

Critical Tribune investigative journalists spoke to students around campus hoping to gauge reactions to the newly unveiled themes. One student, a third year named Richard Cheez, told us that he "can't wait for the compost bin mould theme" and had "stopped washing his junk in anticipation." One second year, David Mark Manchap, already donning a red hunting hat in preparation for the *Catcher in the Rye* theme, told us "I can't wait to kill all the John Lennons."

Critical Tribune reporters spoke to the hosts of the 'Birds' theme hoping to understand what their theme actually meant. Unfortunately, a few of the flatters wouldn't stop cawing and another kept asking if we listened to Geese. Sure dude. Looking like he was dressed for yet another day of St. Paddy's Day partying, Unleaded 91 Petrol host E. N. Greene added "birds should be out for the nude beach theme too." Unfortunately for Greene, if it's anything like a real nude beach, it'll be a bunch of old dudes (post-grads) repping their DnBs (dick and balls) instead of the 'birds' he spoke of.

Don't expect to see anyone dressed for the Kafka theme inside the gates. They'll all be walking in circles a few blocks over pondering their own existence. But what you should expect is a glorious afternoon's worth of pretending it's Halloween again and way too many students doing their best impression of coked out Disney stars. Critical Tribune calls Miley.

HYDE STREET PARTY 2026

FLAT THEMES

1 Hyde - John and Yoko	18 Hyde - The Strait of Horumar	22 Hyde - Ra'Pun'el's Drag Race
2 Hyde - The Military Industrial Complex	19 Hyde - The ex-boyfriends of Taylor Swift	23 Hyde - The British Empire
4 Hyde - My buddy Ben	12 Hyde - Franz Kafka	14A Hyde - Tetanus
4A Hyde - Year of the Horse	14 Hyde - Cuck chair	14B Hyde - Bernie Madoff
5 Hyde - The Catcher in the Rye	15 Hyde - Nude beach	25 Hyde - Long distance relationship
6 Hyde - Intoxicated at petrol	16 Hyde - The power of love and friendship	26 Hyde - IEDs and IEDs
7 Hyde - Coked out Disney star	17 Hyde - Trailer Park Boys	17 Hyde - The 27 Club
8 Hyde - Air fryer tard	18 Hyde - Moon Bunn Ice Cream	18 Hyde - Gay son or that daughter
9 Hyde - Populism	19 Hyde - Blockchain	18A Hyde - The Invisible Hand
10 Hyde - The Twitter account of Kanye West	20 Hyde - Dara the Explorer	20 Hyde - Birds
11A Hyde - Myers Briggs Personality Type	21 Hyde - The mould growing in the compost bin	21 Hyde - The grandparents in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

by Dildó Connor



by Ethan Montañer

BUNCHY'S BIG SCORE



Bunchy's Big Score is an Ōtepoti art/pop/rock band who have become well-loved in the local scene over the past two years. Known for their noisy ear-worm bangers and ridiculously fun live shows, the quartet is preparing for what will be their biggest year yet.

The band's current lineup consists of Max (vocals/keys, he/him), Jack (guitar, he/him), Niki (bass/vocals, she/her), and Reef (drums, he/him). You may recognise these names and faces from an endless list of other local bands such as U-No Juno, Out of Luck!, Give Up, and Vagina Dry. It's like the 'Avengers: Endgame' of the Ōtepoti music scene. To unearth the Bunchy's lore, Critic Te Ārohi caught up with the quartet at Niki's living room, with Reef joining via phone call.

The music of Bunchy's Big Score began to materialise around 2022, initially just as an idea of Max's for a 'lo-fi recording project'. "I laboured a lot over the band name," reflects Max. "Like, it's just gotta roll off the tongue. Familiar but bizarre at the same time". Commenting on the band's musical style, Reef reckons they're "like the band Hi-5 [Aussie children's music group], but if they were an art rock band." An oddly appropriate descriptor for the group, Critic reckons.

Max recruited the help of Hamish Waddell, who was the band's guitarist until last year. Max's songwriting, combined with Hamish's DIY recording and production/songwriting assistance resulted in the first Bunchy's Big Score album "Happy Birthday, Daniel Johnston!!! Don't Be Afraid...<3" which was released in February last year.

That first record features hits that range from the noisy and infectious "Scrapbook", to the gentle vulnerability of closing track "WN". Of course, Max was inspired by lo-fi artists like Daniel Johnston (see: the album title). Looking back, he's happy they put it out but "probably just wouldn't have done it that way now [...] We wanted to sound like the Velvet Underground, but I don't think it really sounds like that after the end product." Max explains the album's lo-fi sound as being the perfect audio representation for his sensitive writing style. He adds, "I also like bands that can have songs that are really dirty and nasty and loud and disgusting, and the next song is like, a soft love song or something that's really vulnerable."

Since the release of "Happy Birthday, Daniel Johnston!!!!!!" the band has seen a significant lineup change, going from a trio to a quartet with the addition of Jack and Niki, which has thickened the band's live presence and sound (no beef with Hamish, more on him soon) "I think that the musical chemistry is different", Reef muses. "I never realised how much we needed a bass player until we got one. I never realised how much room we had for it, you know?"

The current members of Bunchy's were all in the same circles for years, playing shows with their various musical projects. Both Max and Jack also had a stint playing in Reef's band Out of Luck! (one of Reef's many, many bands).

With this reinvigorated lineup, the Bunchy's crew are gearing up for their second full-length album, "Wanda's Bicycle", which will release in June. To support this monumental release, the band will embark on a five-date nationwide tour from June to July. Max remarked that they're all set to go ahead, "as long as our flights don't get cancelled".

A handful of tracks on "Wanda's Bicycle" have been in the works for "probably a year and a half", Reef estimates, with many of the unreleased tunes becoming staples in their live set. "I think there's the whole spectrum of emotions in the album", says Max. "There's a lot of songs that are really, really quite sad, and then some that are really happy and rambunctious and joyous as well. Lots of happy, aggressive noise in the music."

"Wanda's Bicycle" was recorded by Nick Roughan at Southlink Studios, a departure from the DIY flat recording of the first album. Mixing and mastering duties were handled by now-ex guitarist Hamish Waddell, who also features as the lead vocalist in "Oscar Says", the album's first single. They just can't get rid of him!

Explaining the lyrical inspiration behind "Oscar Says", Max explains, "I think it's about miscommunication basically. The frustration of trying to say something to someone and the wrong words come out [...] The way Hamish delivers the verses communicates that, and the chorus just sounds like a big argument to me."

On "Oscar Says", Bunchy's Big Score is sounding better than ever, with irresistibly catchy hooks and a noisy but deliberate production style. We can't wait to hear what else they've been cooking up for us.

"Oscar Says", from the upcoming album "Wanda's Bicycle" is out now!

Follow @bunchysbigscore on Instagram to keep up to date with their album release and upcoming Aotearoa tour!



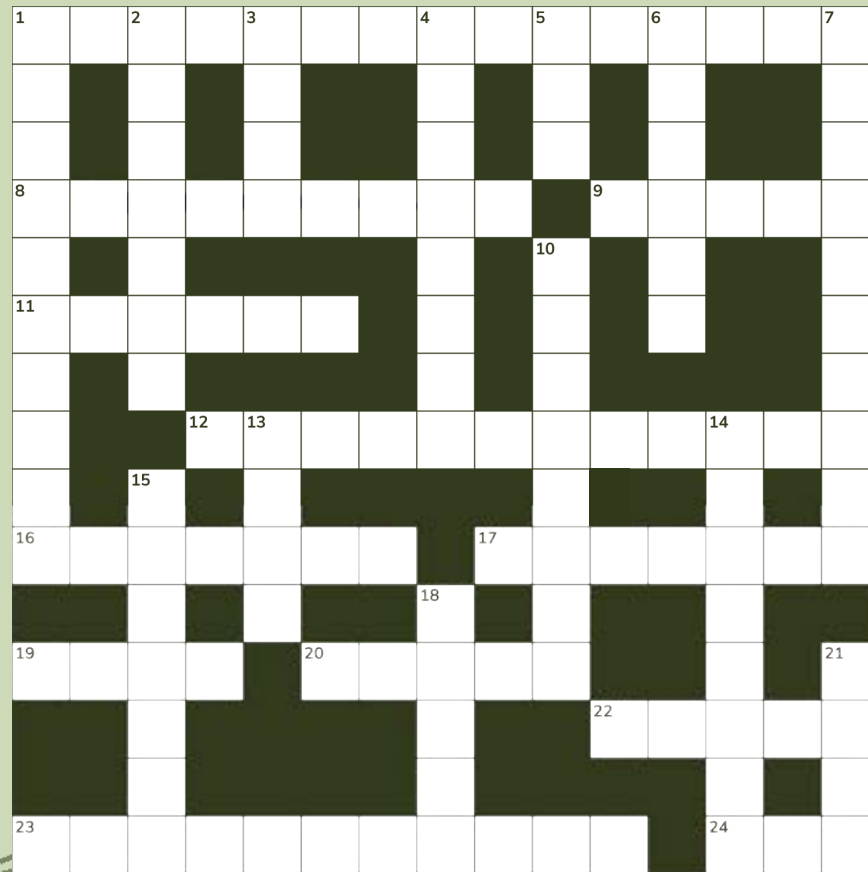
ACROSS

- 1 Studentsville street connected to Burger Fuel
- 8 Device that triggers an explosion
- 9 An elephant's proboscis
- 11 Soak up
- 12 Actor from 'Gladiator' and 'Robin Hood' (2)
- 16 Performance-enhancing drug
- 17 Little treats containing weed
- 19 Drug first synthesized in 1912 (abbrv.)
- 20 State of a lawn with short grass
- 22 French goodbye
- 23 A supportive approval of someone or something
- 24 Oceanic rugby competition (acr.)

DOWN

- 1 Arena combatants
- 2 MDMA's tablet form
- 3 Not thick
- 4 Drug found in vapes
- 5 A word used a lot in the prime days of 'Among Us'
- 6 What you do after doing a poor job of wrapping gifts
- 7 Las Vegas band famous for 'Somebody Told Me'
- 10 Hidden away
- 13 Alien spaceships
- 14 The state of being unconscious of one's surroundings
- 15 Famous sea-dwelling folklore creature
- 18 A bunch of wasps
- 21 Vape brand

Crossword St



FIND ANSWERS ON CRITIC.CO.NZ

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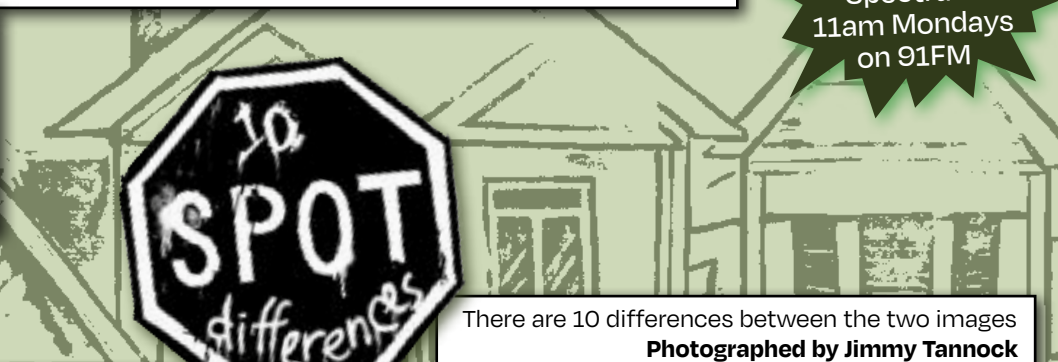
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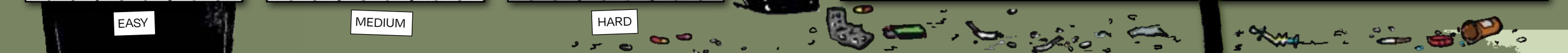
- COOKED
- PARKING
- DECARBED
- CANNABIS
- LINES
- CROSSFADED
- DEALER
- EDIBLES
- STONER
- SOBRIETY
- ACID
- HOSTING
- ARTIFICIAL
- GENERATOR
- MEASURING
- OWL
- TRAINSPOTTING

Tune into
Critic Morning
Spectrum
11am Mondays
on 91FM

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ESPRESSO BAR
36 MORAY PLACE, DUNEDIN



There are 10 differences between the two images
Photographed by Jimmy Tannock



Illustrated by Gemma McKinney

You Cannot Be What You Cannot See

Wahine Māori Making Moves in Med (again!)

Nā Heeni Koero Te Rereoa

Ngāti Hine, Te Karawa, Te Waiariki

When you think of drugs, your mind probably goes straight to the obvious – weed, party culture, the spectacle of harm. But the substances most deeply embedded in Aotearoa's everyday life rarely attract the same scrutiny. Sugar, alcohol, and caffeine have been normalised to the point of invisibility. Their impact is not immediate, but cumulative, shaped as much by environment and access as by what we are told is "individual choice."

That idea of choice, however, is far less straightforward than it is often made out to be. Health behaviours are frequently framed as personal decisions, yet they are deeply influenced by what people have access to, what they are exposed to, and what they are able to understand. When health information is unclear or inaccessible, the ability to make informed decisions becomes limited. In that sense, gaps in health literacy do not just shape outcomes; they shape what feels possible in the first place. It is within that landscape that Māia Lockyer's story sits.

Raised Between Worlds

24-year old Māia (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga, Ngāti Porou, Rongomaiwahine) is a fifth-year medical student at the University of Otago, but her pathway into medicine – and into Aotearoa itself – has not followed a conventional route. Born in Tāmaki Makaurau and raised largely in the Middle East, she spent most of her childhood between Dubai and Saudi Arabia before moving to Ōtepoti at eighteen. "That was my first time really living in New Zealand," she shared. Her sense of home, like her pathway into medicine, has never been confined to a singular place.

Māia's upbringing gave her an unusually broad vantage point early on. She did not grow up assuming that one system, one culture, or one way of living was the norm. Being immersed in different religious, cultural, and social environments meant she learned early that the way a country structures care, community, and daily life is always shaped by values. Nothing simply appears that way by accident. That perspective would become especially significant once she began comparing the healthcare she experienced overseas with what she saw members of her own whānau navigating here.

As a teenager in Saudi Arabia, Māia required orthopaedic surgery and was able to access specialist care almost immediately. "I was seen by a surgeon the same day, and within a week, I had my surgery done," she shared. Back home, her whānau were dealing with a reality that looked very different: delays, scarcity, pressure, and the quiet indignity of trying to secure care in a system that always seems stretched too thin. What that contrast revealed to her was not just the difference between two countries, but between what systems make possible for some, and what they deny others. That gap would stay with her. So would the knowledge that in Aotearoa, many of the things hurting people most are neither hidden nor rare – they are sold, promoted, and normalised every day.

Taking the Scenic Route

Māia's path into medicine did not arrive wrapped in prestige, but the decision to pursue it emerged gradually. As the eldest daughter and granddaughter in her whānau, care had always been expected of her. Over time, that expectation became something she chose to carry. But care is not only something we give; it is also something we owe ourselves. For Māia, that meant leaving high school before completing her final year, stepping away from an environment so relentlessly competitive that it had begun to erode her mental health.

While that decision disrupted the conventional route into university, it did not end the journey. She finished her entrance requirements through alternative measures, arriving in Aotearoa bursting with ambition and an awareness of how much she would have to figure out as she went. It seems that responsibility, once something expected of Māia, had begun to shift – no longer just something to carry, but something that carried her forward as well. Though initially enrolled to attend the University of Auckland, it was a trip south to support an uncle at his Māori graduation ceremony that shifted things. "The energy was so beautiful. [It felt really] unique to Otago, and that's what made me want to come here." Settling into Ōtepoti, however, brought its own kind of adjustment. Moving to the other side of the world and stepping straight into flattening independently meant that much of the transition happened all at once – new city, new rhythms, and, of course, new expectations. But her first year unfolded during the outbreak of COVID-19 and the rise of public debate that made the space feel less like somewhere you belong, and more like somewhere you had to justify your place.

"I was seen by a surgeon the same day. And within a week, I had my surgery done."

Earning Your Place Twice

Medicine doesn't leave much room for anything outside of itself, it seems. The workload is constant, the expectations are high, and the pace rarely lets up. For many students, that's already enough. But for taurira Māori, Māia says "there tends to be this underlying expectation that I've got to prove why I have a place here." It shows up in how people talk about pathways, in the assumptions that sit just beneath conversations, and in the way you become aware of how you are being read in the room. You keep up with the content, sit the exams, do the mahi – you meet the standard, and then are expected to keep proving that you belong.

By her third year, that pressure had shifted into something larger. In 2023, while serving as Tumuaki of Te Oranga ki Ōtākou, much of her time sat alongside student advocacy – responding to concerns around structural racism, unsafe learning environments, and the conditions students were being asked to move through. It was, in Māia's words, "hard for so many students to be able to navigate medical school on top of being away from home and all of those normal experiences that you have as a young university student," a year that stretched well beyond coursework alone.

But not everything holds. Amongst the chaos of being Tumuaki while navigating her third year, Māia describes it as one of the hardest periods she's experienced. It's something she speaks about directly and with intention, however. "I would love to be able to help normalise failure – because in the end failure will never truly be failure unless it stops you from picking yourself up and trying again." It leaves the direction unchanged, even as the route readjusts, drawing her toward emergency medicine.

At the Point of Entry

Emergency departments are often where unmet needs surface most urgently, and where impressions of care are formed early. That is what first drew her in: the pace, the intensity, the expectation that you act. "That moment in the emergency department can either make or break your experience with secondary health care," Māia said. For Māori and Pacific patients, who are overrepresented in acute presentations yet severely underrepresented within the workforce, those encounters carry weight the system has yet to learn how to hold.

These encounters don't sit in isolation. They track directly into the broader conditions that continue to shape health outcomes in Aotearoa, where responsibility is often watered down to individual behaviour – what people eat, drink, or consume – while the environments those choices are made within are left largely unexamined. In clinical settings, she says there is a pattern: "The instruction is there, but the explanation as to why our health behaviours matter is not." Without that context, patients are expected to change without being given the means to understand what change

I ♥ DRUGS

requires, or why it matters. Health literacy, then, is not just the transfer of information. Instead, it is about whether people are equipped to interpret, question, and act within systems that have not always made that possible.

Substances such as sugar, alcohol, and caffeine sit at the centre of this conflict. In Dunedin, that normalisation is easy to recognise. Caffeine runs through the veins of student life, fuelled by deadlines, late nights, and a culture that rewards constant productivity. It is rarely questioned, even as dependence becomes routine. These substances are not inherently harmful, yet their constant availability and saturation within everyday environments make them difficult to avoid and easy to normalise. In many communities – particularly those shaped by economic constraint – these are not just options, but some of the most accessible forms of consumption. Their use, then, cannot be reduced to individual choice. "Targeted marketing has a lot to answer for here," Māia said, pointing to how access is not only uneven, but actively shaped. She notes the concentration of liquor and tobacco outlets in Māori and Pacific communities, and more broadly in areas experiencing deprivation. What is available, what is affordable, and what is repeatedly placed in front of people cannot be separated from what is consumed. Alcohol follows the same pattern. Its normalisation obscures its harm, while its distribution reflects the same logic – profit prioritised over people, and consumption sustained by design.

What Brings People Here

What Māia speaks to is not just what shows up in emergency departments, but what leads people there in the first place. The substances, environments, and patterns of harm she describes do not sit outside care – they arrive with it. When access is shaped, exposure is uneven, and explanation is absent, outcomes follow. What is often framed as individual choice is, in reality, determined well before a patient walks through the door. Māia moves toward that space not just to meet what arrives, but to change what is carried there – carrying that weight, and still insisting on the possibility of something better.



"I would love to be able to help normalise failure - because in the end failure will never truly be failure unless it stops you from picking yourself up and trying AGAIN!!!"

U DA PPL

U DA PPL

Critic Te Ārohi's Vice Purity Test

Have you ever...

The Critic Te Ārohi Vice Purity Test serves as a segue from O-week to what a couple of Critic writers think encapsulates University life.

It's a voluntary opportunity for O-week groups to bond, and for students to track the maturation of their experiences throughout University.

Caution: This is not a bucket list. Completion of all items on this test will likely result in death.

Tick every item you have done:

1. Gotten drunk
2. Pretended you had done a reading
3. Played King's Cup
4. Had eggs thrown at you
5. Been to a Maharajas BYO
6. Gotten high
7. Been blackout drunk
8. Been blackout drunk and woken up with a charge at Night'N'Day
9. Won beer pong
10. Snuck drinks into the stadium
11. Played Thunderstruck (drink every time it says thunder)
12. Driven others on your restricted
13. Spewed on a Sunday
14. Had noise control called on you
15. Called noise control on someone else
16. Spent less than \$20 on a night out
17. Lived in a flat that was objectively unlivable
18. Gone out 3 nights/days in a row
19. Taken a picture with a cop on a night out
20. Eaten nothing but noodles or packet pasta equivalents 3 nights in a row
21. Gone down the hydroslide at Moana Pool
22. Been to a New Years festival
23. Lost in Rage Cage
24. Been to Pint Night
25. Walk of shame from Castle Street
26. Successfully done 6 before 6 on St Paddy's
27. Brought alcohol into class
28. Gone to a lecture still intoxicated
29. Been under the influence in the supermarket
30. Injured yourself in a dumb way
31. Been proud of surviving a night out
32. Missed every class for a week
33. Smoked weed out of something that wasn't meant to be used for smoking
34. Had a conversation about how "this is probably bad for us" mid-use
35. Cheated or been cheated on
36. Committed flatcast
37. Stolen money from the flat account
38. Snorted a mystery bag
39. Greened out
40. Eating another edible before letting the first hit
41. Gotten high in the Botans
42. Given yourself a haircut mid breakdown
43. Kissed your best friend in a way that wasn't just platonic
44. Fallen off an E-Scooter
45. Thrown up on someone
46. Eaten something mouldy
47. Peed with others in the room
48. Mixed alcohol with energy drinks
49. Smoked a cigarette from another country
50. Threw up in your own mouth and swallowed it back down
51. Hit another car while parallel parking
52. Been caught watching porn
53. Driven under the influence
54. Sub 2 yardie
55. Done a beer bong
56. Brought more than 6 drinks at Pint Night
57. Tripped down the Carousel stairs
58. Lost something worth of \$100 while intoxicated
59. Been kicked out of The Zoo
60. Transferred money from your savings for a vape

1-25: Fresher

You're new to Dunedin, and probably adulthood too. As a Fresher, you haven't experienced all that Otepoti has to offer, but that's not a bad thing. Your world view is probably a lot less warped and negative than those around you. Make sure you have fun and take all the Dunedin has to offer, but stay safe too.

26-50: Undergraduate

By this time in your degree you know the lay of the land. Dunedin doesn't feel like a big scary mythical beast in need of slaying anymore. You have friends, a purpose here, maybe you've started calling this little slice of heaven your home. As an Undergrad, you no longer deserve eggs and abuse on the streets but keep it in the front of your mind that you aren't in charge here.

51-75: Post-Graduate

As your knees start to ache on the climb up the hill back home, remember, don't be sad that your journey is nearly over. Be happy that it happened. All of those questionable powders that have gone up your left nostril are starting to catch up. Might be time to get on your LinkedIn grind so you can get the fuck out of this city.

76-100: Professor

UNC status unlocked here, or maybe you are just a fresher who went to St Kents and had access to coke far too young. Either way, you know your way around the block by now. You've obviously got plenty of lore, and some pretty crazy yarns (and a couple of questionable ones). If you're not retired from the dusty life yet, this is your sign to give your liver a break.

61. Had a fake/borrowed ID confiscated
62. Lied to get an extension
63. Faced with the decision between a box and dinner, picked the box
64. Been kicked out of Subs
65. Genuinely considered going sober after a terrible night out
66. Won something from Leith Liquor
67. Been trespassed
68. Been to the Dunedin Hospital (as a patient)
69. ?
70. Homewrecked
71. Caught a ride with Campus Watch
72. Gotten another Red Card from drinking a box without anyone noticing
73. Admitted feelings while under the influence
74. Gotten high/drunk without cell reception
75. Had a female drug dealer
76. Bought drugs
77. Sold drugs
78. Watched Trainspotting
79. Taken drugs while alone
80. Rolled with something other than rolling paper
81. Smoked a baccy bong
82. Smoked chop or hash
83. Been crossfaded
84. Candy flipped
85. Lied about k-holing
86. Drunk a bottle cap
87. Set off fireworks
88. Urinated in public
89. Vandalised public property
90. Had sex on campus
91. Gotten high on campus
92. Hooked up with a uni staff member
93. Done coke
94. Done psychedelics
95. Gone to the Planetarium on acid
96. Line before 9 for Paddy's
97. Buttchugged
98. Masturbated on campus (not halls)
99. Been for a meeting with the Proctor
100. Shat in an airfryer



WEED, THE GATEWAY DRUG

Illustrated by
Eleanor Walker

Cannabis has spent decades carrying the label of a “gateway drug.” For most young people, the phrase feels outdated and inaccurate: a relic left over from Harold's discussions and stern talks with our parents that convinced us one joint would inevitably lead to heroin. But by the time we reach university, if any of us still believed whatever Harold was waffling on about, that assumption about weed being some gateway to trouble is turned on its head.

Student culture runs on challenging the negative assumptions many of us were raised to hold about weed. Marijuana “isn't dangerous”, “isn't addictive”, and “definitely isn't a gateway” to anything. We joke that you “can't be addicts while at uni,” and that it's all temporary – just a few messy years before everyone sorts themselves out, gets a job and a family. But if we were honest about how much we drink, smoke or rely on something else to get through the week, that confidence starts to look a little shaky. What feels normal in your Dundas St flat might sound very different in a doctor's office.

In past research, weed was popularly thought to be only psychologically habit-forming. Nowadays, we know that frequent, long-term use of weed can lead to physiological dependence, a distinct withdrawal syndrome, and addiction. Weed can increase the risk of schizophrenia, depression, anxiety and chronic psychosis. It can limit brain development, and while it may help you fall asleep faster in the short term, regular or long-term use often leads to lower sleep efficiency, frequent awakenings, and less restorative sleep. 16% of users aged 18–25 may meet the criteria for Cannabis Use Disorder (hint: that's us). But still, so many people smoke weed regularly. It's a fun drug, and I truly believe it causes less harm than other much more normalised drugs, such as alcohol.

The problem isn't that students are spiralling into hard drug use. Most aren't. The reality we find ourselves in is so much less dramatic, and in some ways so much more uncomfortable and hard to identify as problematic. For many, drugs don't feel like an escape from the mundane – it's that life feels improved on them.

That's what makes this idea of a “gateway drug” so interesting. Not because weed inevitably leads to something stronger, but because it introduces us to the idea that everyday experiences can be enhanced. Music sounds exceptional, conversations stretch longer, food (even shitty flat meals) taste better than ever, and even doing nothing can feel like a fun way to spend your evenings. And when you wake up in the morning, there's no hangover. It's the perfect thing to enhance your night (or day), with little fear of fucking up your academic commitments the next day.

Once this realisation happens, returning to baseline can feel strange. It's not painful or unbearable, it's just ... flat. Sobriety isn't necessarily difficult because something is wrong, but because nothing is particularly right either. Life without some kind of enhancement can start to feel like a lesser version of life itself. It feels hard to make it through a dull day when you know the exact way to fix it – especially when your social calendar revolves around it.

And that's what makes cutting back so difficult. Every time you try to take a break from smoking, the free time you're left with feels underutilised at best, and like watching paint dry at worst. The last time I took an extensive tolerance break, the first week was agonising. I spent hours tossing and turning in bed trying to fall asleep. Meals were a chore, forcing calories down my throat despite the nausea that came with not having a pre-meal cone.

That's the biggest trick about weed. Despite it not being “addictive”, once getting stoned every night becomes your new normal, cutting back becomes onerous. Like me, it could be struggling to eat as much, or sleep. Maybe you feel a bit more anxious, or nights out aren't as fun when you don't have a joint at pres. You might feel constant FOMO from your flatmates sparking up around you, and fail completely in trying to cut back. I realise these could all be considered symptoms of withdrawal.

Eventually, things got easier, but I found the hardest thing to overcome was neither sleeping nor eating: it was boredom. That's the one thing that nobody wants to admit about weed. Once you've gotten yourself into a committed relationship with smoking, life becomes boring when you're not high. Even doing nothing feels significant and stimulating after you've had a toke. And if that's not representative of a gateway into drug dependence, I don't know what is.

The thing that sucks, despite recognising the sneaky way that weed disguises itself as “not being a gateway drug”, is that I don't want to give it up altogether – that seems too hard and honestly no fun. But I do want to fix my relationship with weed so that it is something that I can enjoy socially on the weekends, not something I rely on just to get through a Tuesday night. Maybe there's a middle ground. If I've learned anything about the university experience, it's that young adults are really good at being degenerates a few days a week and then locking back into real life at the last possible moment.

But facing this reality is harder than it sounds. No one wants to admit they have an issue. It's a lot easier to joke about being “a bit of a stoner” than it is to admit that being sober sometimes feels ... dull. When you're used to everything being slightly enhanced – music, food, even doing nothing – normal life can feel like a downgrade. And when your flatmates are lighting up, Trailer Park Boys is on, and you've got nothing else planned, it's not exactly a fair fight.

While talking to a clinician in the drug and alcohol space, one thing that stood out to me was how much addiction is tied to the environment you're in rather than just the substance itself. When everything around you (your friends, your flat, your routine) is built around smoking, cutting back isn't just about willpower. It's about trying to do something different from the people you spend the most time and identify with. And fuck – that is way harder than just saying “I'll smoke less.”

There is also the whole justification thing. You can tell yourself you're doing fine because you're not as bad as someone else. Or because it's “just weed”, and at least you're not doing hard drugs. But deep down, most people kind of know when it's become more than just a social thing. Using it to sleep, to eat kai, to relax, to feel ‘normal’ – at some point, that starts to look a lot like dependence, even if it doesn't feel like it fits the stereotype of addiction. Addiction doesn't just look like being sent to rehab, losing everyone around you, or ending up passed out on the street, especially in an environment like North D.

One thing the clinician mentioned that stuck with me is how they don't want to wait for people to hit rock bottom. Instead, counsellors use screening tools like the Substance and Choice Scale (SACS), which basically looks at how much your substance abuse is starting to impact your life, rather than just about how often you're using. Things like sleep, hauora, routine and relationships are often the first to take a toll when drug use gets out of hand, so using this metric can help people realise how big of an ‘issue’ substances are, relative to their life. It's not about labelling someone an “addict,” it's more about catching the issue before it derails your life any further.

In the end, not everyone's “gateway” looks the same. For some people it does lead further. I think about a friend from back home who started going in and out of rehab, first for weed and psychedelics, later for meth and crack. That's the version of the story we are taught to fear. But it's not the most common one.

The common version is quieter – at least amongst taura, that is. It's staying in the same place, doing the same thing, night after night, because sobriety feels like a worse option. It might not be rock bottom, but it still sucks.

Maybe that is what the “gateway” really is. Not necessarily a path to harder drugs, but a space you get stuck in. A constant back-and-forth between wanting to cut back and not wanting to give up something that makes life feel better. If that really is the case, the question isn't whether weed is a gateway drug, it's whether you are ok with where it's taken you.

If any of this hits close to home, it might be worth talking to someone about it. You don't have to be at rock bottom or spiralling for it to count – sometimes just feeling a bit out of control is enough. In Aotearoa you can call or text 1737 to talk to a trained counsellor for free. For something specific to substance use, Alcohol and Drug Line (0800 787 797) is there for advice, support, or even just a chat. Student Health also has so many great resources. It's all low pressure, and a lot easier than trying to figure it out on your own.

CRITIC TE AROHI PRESENTS:

THE COOK^{ed} BOOK

Welcome to The Cook(ed) Book. This is a collection of recipes built for student kitchens, questionable decision-making, and getting really baked. We have assumed you don't have the perfect equipment, that much time, or even the patience. As such, there is something for every stoner in this book, whether you have an interest in chemistry (try the gummies) or have no clue about cooking (box brownies are for you). There's even a full Sunday roast to try out if you're looking to do some flat bonding.

A quick reality check before you start: cooking while high is a terrible idea. You will forget things. You will get distracted. You will absolutely leave something in the oven too long and waste \$20 worth of ingredients and your time. So do yourself (and your flat) a favour - make your edibles first, then get cooked.

These recipes are designed to be flexible. You can put less weed in your butter, or even swap in normal butter if you want to tone anything down. There are no rules here, but there are consequences. Edibles hit differently: they take longer, last longer, and have a habit of humbling people who get too cocky. So please start small, go slow, and wait at least an hour before taking another one. You are not immune just because you "smoke up heaps".

GETTING STARTED:

Before you start your culinary inventions, a couple of preliminary things need to happen first: decarb and infusion.

The first stage for any edible is making something called decarb. This is where you 'activate' the weed. Essentially, making decarb is the same process as when you light a bong. The heat changes the THCA in raw weed (a non-psychoactive) into THC (a psychoactive). THC is the thing that actually gets you high.

The second stage of edible making is infusion. THC needs to bind with something fatty if you're going to try to get high from eating it, so we've outlined how to make either CannaButter or CannaOil (using coconut oil).

- Decarb -

Note: This recipe requires an oven. It could work in an airfryer, but it's not recommended as the weed won't decarbonate as evenly. It's more likely to burn in there as temperatures in air fryers vary. Plus, the weed can go fucking flying around inside the air fryer.

What You Need:

- 3-7g of weed (this is around a fid to a hundy)
- Baking tray
- Baking paper

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 110-120°C. Don't use fan forced, or else your weed will go flying off the tray.
2. Break up your weed into small pieces, but don't grind it, as it becomes far too easy to burn.
3. Spread across the tray evenly.
4. Bake for 35-40 minutes, giving it a mix up every 20 min. The key is to watch it like a hawk. Once it's decarbed, the weed should be slightly browned and dry. If it's ash, you've fucked it.

- Infusion - (INFUSION)

Congrats! Your weed is now decarbonated into THC, and activated for the purposes of edible making.

We have two options here: CannaOil and CannaButter. Infusing with a high-fat liquid like coconut oil works great for gummies or drinks. Butter is a staple for baking.

As a general note, the longer you can infuse, the better. 2 hours is an absolute minimum. 4-5 is when you really start Walter White'ing this joint.

THE general starting point for infusion is a 1:1 ratio of oil/butter to weed. For every cup of fat, there can be up to a cup of weed (about 7g or a hundy). This ratio is very potent, so you can definitely do less and take a trip to space without forking out the money for a hundy.

You can use a double boiler method or a saucepan for either of these recipes. We recommend the double boiler method as it ensures your infusion won't boil, meaning you don't need to stand by the stove for multiple hours watching it. A double boiler method involves taking a pot, filling it with water and then putting a heatsafe bowl/measuring cup in the pot, floating in the water. You put your infusion ingredients inside of the heatsafe bowl/cup and then have the water in the pot simmer/lightly boil around it. This method is great for longer infusions.

Note:

You need a cheesecloth to strain your infusion through to get rid of the pieces of weed when it's done. If you don't have a cheesecloth, we don't blame you - who does other than the Amish? Use a clean Chux cloth, tea towel or pantyhose instead.



What You Need:

- 1 cup coconut oil
- 3-7g of decarbed weed (anywhere from a fid to a hundy. Use more for a higher concentration)
- 1 cup of water
- Cheese cloth

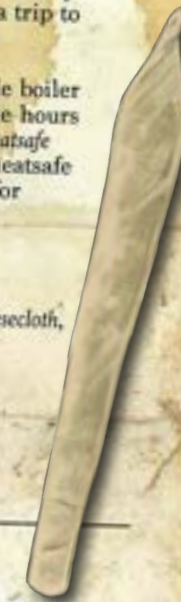
Method

1. Add coconut oil and water to a double boiler or saucepan on a low heat
2. Add decarbed weed
3. Simmer on low heat for 2-3 hours. There should be small but steady rolls of bubbles in the water or infusion if you have it in the saucepan. Stir occasionally.
4. Strain through a cheese cloth into a container.
5. Seal the container and store in the fridge.

CannaButter

Method:

1. Melt butter and water in a saucepan or double boiler on a very low heat. Very low means the lowest setting your stovetop can go.
2. Add your decarbed weed.
3. Simmer for 2-3 hours. Do not boil it! Make sure to stir often.
4. Strain through a cheese cloth into a container.
5. Refrigerate until solid. Some water will separate from the butter - just blot that with a paper towel.



RECIPES

Now you've done all the set up, we can actually crack into the recipes. We have included some optional Edible Ups, which take your edibles to the next level but can be easily opted out of if you want to reduce the potency.



Best Box Brownies in Town

This recipe is designed to serve 9 stoners.

What You Need:

For the brownies:

- Edmonds Choc Fudge Brownie mix
- 2 eggs
- 2 Tbsp water
- ½ cup melted CannaButter

For the frosting:

- Frosting mix included in the box mix
- 2 Tbsp milk
- Edible Up: 75g (about 5 Tbsp) of melted CannaButter. You can use normal butter if you're not looking for insane potency, but this is a good opportunity to add more weed if you are looking for stronger edibles

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Add brownie mix, eggs, water and melted Cannabutter to a bowl and mix thoroughly to combine.
3. Spread brownie mix into a greased tin and bake for 30 minutes.
4. Once fully cooked, take out and cool for half an hour.
5. Optional Edible Up: Mix 75g of melted CannaButter, splash of milk and frosting mix from the box in a bowl. Use normal butter to reduce potency here.
6. While still hot, poke lots of holes in the brownie, and spread icing on top so that it sinks into the brownie.
7. Let brownies cool, then enjoy!

Note: the icing definitely makes this one crazy and a little bit scary if you eat too many. For sure limit yourself to one.

PLEASE READ THIS ↑

Gingerbread Latte Cookies

This recipe is designed to bake anywhere from 10-20 cookies for your stoner friends, depending on how big you make them.

What You Need:

For the cookies:

- ¼ cup CannaButter (softened)
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- 1-2 Tbsp freeze dried coffee
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- ½ cup molasses
- 2 ¼ cups flour
- 1 ¼ tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp ginger power
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch of salt
- 3 Tbsp white sugar (for rolling the cookies in)
- Hand mixer or cooking mixer

For the icing:

- Edible Up: ½ cup softened CannaButter, or normal butter to reduce potency
- 1 ½ cup icing sugar
- 3 Tbsp milk
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- Optional: 1 tsp freeze dried coffee

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Beat softened butter, sugar, coffee and vanilla until light and fluffy.
3. Add egg and molasses. Stir to combine.
4. Mix in flour, baking soda, spices and pinch of salt. Place white sugar in a separate bowl to the side.
5. Roll dough into balls (anywhere from 10-20). Roll dough balls in the white sugar bowl to coat.
6. Place dough on a lined tray and bake for 12-15 minutes. Cookies should be golden on edge and slightly cracking on the surface, but soft in the centre.
7. Add softened CannaButter (or normal butter) with icing sugar, milk, vanilla extract and coffee if using. Beat with a hand mixer until pale and fluffy.
8. Ice cookies when cool by transferring icing into a snap-lock bag and cutting a hole on a bottom edge for piping. Alternatively, use a spoon to spread icing evenly over cookies. Be sure to be careful if using Edible Up icing, as it can make a cookie quite potent.

Enjoy! !!!

Air Fryer Friendly Cheese Rolls

This recipe is designed to serve 12 Southern stoners.

What You Need:

- 1 loaf of super thick sliced white bread (Southlanders may judge you if you use that grainy shit)
- 1 cup (250ml) evaporated milk
- 1 cup of grated cheese (a sharper flavour like tasty or cheddar is ideal to mask the CannaButter taste)
- 1 packet of onion soup mix
- ½ cup melted CannaButter. If you're after a lower dose, you can sub ½ a cup of CannaButter for normal butter.

Optional:

1 small diced onion, 1 tsp minced garlic and 1 tsp mixed herbs to mask CannaButter taste and make rolls boujee

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C if using it instead of the air fryer.
2. Finely dice onion and garlic if using. Add onions, garlic and mixed herbs with a bit of CannaButter to a pot over medium heat. Stir for a few minutes to soften.
3. Add the onion soup mix, can of evaporated milk, and grated cheese to a pot over medium heat to form a thick paste.
4. Remove the pot from heat, and fold in half of the melted CannaButter to the paste. Set it aside to cool down for a few minutes, forming a spreadable paste.
5. Take a slice of bread, and spread over a generous amount of the cheese paste. Roll it up. Use extra paste as glue if your bread won't stay rolled.
6. Brush the rolls with the other half cup of CannaButter. You want to drench these rolls much more than your average cheese roll. This will get them nice and golden, and ensure they have that special kick.
7. Place rolls on baking paper in the airfryer or on a lined tray if using an oven. Bake at 180°C for 8 minutes, until golden brown. Don't let them burn!
8. Allow to cool slightly and enjoy!

Sweet and Sour Weed Gummies

This recipe is designed to serve around 10-12 stoners.

What You Need: 10-12 Method:

For the gummies:

→ 2-4 Tbsp of gelatine. The amount depends on how firm you want the end gummies to be. If you are using vegan gelatine and jelly, you must use sunflower lecithin as a binder

→ 2x 85g jelly packets (we recommend strong/ sour flavours such as sour apple or raspberry)

- 1 cup CannaOil
- 1/2 cup water
- Whisk

Optional: 1 tsp sunflower lecithin (helps the oil to bind a bit better)

Optional: Gummy moulds. An ice cube tray works for this, otherwise you can pour it into a container and cut the gummy into pieces.

For the rolling sugar:

- 2 Tbsp white sugar
- Optional: 1 tsp citric acid to make sour gummies
- Optional Edible Up: 1 Tbsp melted CannaOil

1. Warm water on a medium heat in a sauce pan - don't boil. While waiting for water to heat, melt your CannaOil into a liquid either in the microwave or on the stove in another saucepan.
2. If using, add sunflower lecithin to warm water, and mix until dissolved. If you don't have the lecithin, skip this step.
3. Pour in melted CannaOil and whisk vigorously until everything looks blended.
4. Turn heat to low. Add both jelly packets. Stir until everything is fully incorporated.
5. Slowly sprinkle gelatin over the mixture, stirring as you go. Do not boil, as this will break the emulsion between the oil and water mixture.
6. Give the mixture a final good strong whisk before pouring into moulds or containers.
7. Place gummies in the fridge for 2 hours to set.
8. Once set, free gummies from moulds or container and cut evenly into 2x2 cm squares. If some separation of oil has formed, just pick it off and put to the side for future use.
9. For rolling the gummies, combine sugar, citric acid and CannaOil in a sealable container. Add gummies to the container with the sugar mix, seal the container and lightly shake to toss the gummies in the mixture.
10. Enjoy!



Sunday Roast

This recipe is for those who want a feast and are utterly devoted to being a stoner. The lamb leg requires a slow cooker. It's a lot of admin, but the result is well worth it. Take caution when consuming this as a full meal, as all components are infused. You can take parts of this recipe to spice up your flat dinners instead of making the full roast, and save the full thing for a Holy Day, such as 4/20.

This recipe is designed to serve 6 stoners, and requires a total of 140 grams (just under 1/2 of a cup) of CannaButter.

What You Need:

- For the lamb:**
 - 1kg of lamb leg, bone in
 - 30g CannaButter (about two Tbsp)
 - Olive oil
 - 2 Tbsp dried thyme
 - 2 Tbsp garlic powder
 - 1 Tbsp onion powder
 - 2 Tbsp Italian seasoning
 - 1 Tbsp chilli flakes
 - Pinch of salt
- For the roast veggies:**
 - 1/2 pumpkin (cut into 4cm pieces, peel or unpeeled based on your preference)
 - 1kg potatoes (cut into quarters)
 - 6 crushed cloves garlic
 - 60g melted CannaButter (about 4 Tbsp)
- For the gravy:**
 - 1 packet of roast meat gravy mix (vegetarian options work well too)
 - 30g melted CannaButter (about 2 Tbsp)

Method:

- Slow Cooked CannaLamb -

1. Generously cover your leg of lamb with seasonings (thyme, garlic powder, onion powder, italian seasoning and chilli flakes) and 30g of CannaButter. Edible Up: Marinate your lamb leg overnight in the CannaButter and seasonings for a stronger infusion.
2. Add your lamb leg and stock to a slow cooker, and cook for

- Garlic Cannabutter Roast Pumpkin and Potatoes -

1. Preheat the oven or an airfryer to 210° fanbake. Bring a medium sized pot of water to boil.
2. Add chopped potatoes to a boiling pot of water, and cook until just tender (about 10 minutes). Drain potatoes well.
3. While the potatoes are cooking, combine 60g of CannaButter and the crushed garlic in a small bowl.
4. Place the boiled potatoes and uncooked pumpkin on a large, lined baking tray. Pour the butter and garlic mixture over them. Toss the vegetables to spread the seasoning evenly.
5. Bake for 35-45 minutes, or until crispy and golden brown.
6. Garnish with salt and pepper to taste.

- Minted CannaButter Peas -

1. Fill a medium pot with water and bring to a boil.
2. Add your frozen peas, and boil for 2-3 minutes until tender.
3. Drain the water from the pot, and return the peas to the element, turning it down to low heat.
4. Add 20g of CannaButter and mint sauce. Toss until evenly coated and melted.
5. Remove from heat to serve.

- CannaGravy -

1. Cook gravy seasoning according to the packet's instructions.
2. Once done, turn heat to low and add 30g of melted CannaButter stirring until combined.
3. Optional Edible Up: Add some of the slow cooker liquid from the lamb for a flavour and infusion boost.



Sunday Roast

ALL DONE

All done! Enjoy, stoners

radio one

RADIO ONE 91FM

WE HAVE A SUBSTACK FYI

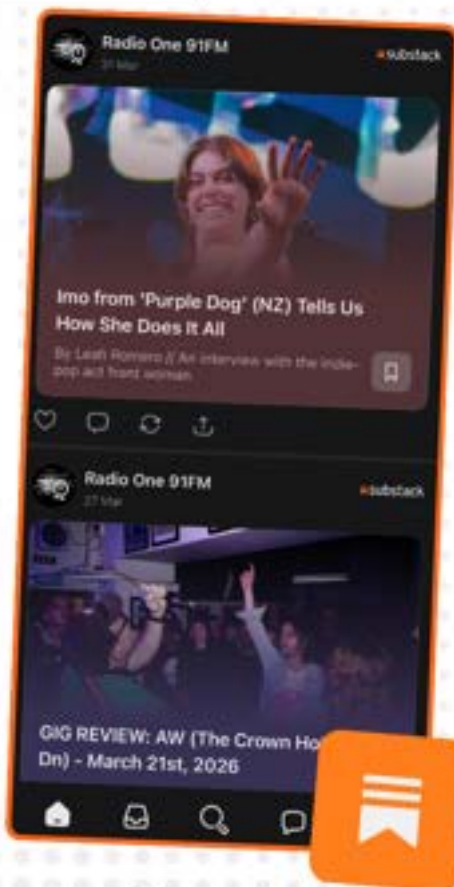
The Radio One team has gained a number of new music journalism volunteers who have been doing incredible work since the start of semester. So we decided to make a Substack!

For those unaware, Substack is a newsletter/blogging platform for writers and creators. You can subscribe to our Substack (for free!) to read our latest posts ASAP. (if you're old school, our blog page is still up on r1.co.nz)

We've already had some great write-ups, including an interview with Imo from Purple Dog, a review of AW's epic gig at the Crown, and reviews of the best new music from across Aotearoa.

Expect to see a lot more great reads from our team as the year goes on. Think-pieces, reviews of the latest music & gigs, and other cool stuff we wanna write about!

Again, you can subscribe to the Substack for free! Who knows, maybe you'll discover your next favourite band.



by Ethan Montañer.....find us on radioone91fm.substack.com

EP REVIEW

SLUR
Slur (EP)



Review by Ethan Montañer

WELCOME TO RIFF CITY

Waihōpai Invercargill's SLUR have finally blessed us with their post-metal mastery in the form of this self-titled three-track EP.

I first saw SLUR at Dankfest 2025, and again when they supported NZ sludge metal veterans Beastwars. I've been waiting patiently for music since, and they sure as hell did not disappoint.

The four-piece displays incredible dynamics and tension, going from slow, atmospheric passages with brooding vocals, which erupt into gargantuan riffs that could destroy mountains.

This EP is a perfect display of SLUR's incredible live power. This is an experience that will crush you, and leave you wanting more. (Don't miss them at the Crown on Saturday the 18th!)

Fav Track: Salt the Earth

STREAM
RADIO ONE



GIG GUIDE

RĀMERE FRI 17TH

Living Clipboards w/ Phaedra Love, Serial Crush
@ Pearl Diver, 8pm

RĀHOROI SAT 18TH

sloer + hidden ocean
@ Pearl Diver, 8:30pm

Libbianski, SLUR, S.S.M., Strap
@ The Crown, 8pm

Mōta Unplugged
@ Moons, 7pm

add your own gig guide listing or find tickets at RLCO.NZ

- TOP 11**
- Logan Edwards (NZ) Worry
 - Loa Loa (Dn) Give Me a Place
 - Crook (NZ) Shoving
 - Monkey Do (Dn) Pisstake
 - Sogg (Dn) Point That Thing Somewhere Else
 - Office Dog (NZ) Front Row Seat
 - Havening (NZ) r1.co
 - The Shenatics (Dn) All Hail Me
 - Dropzone (NZ) Lake Monster (Stef Animal Remix)
 - Ripship (NZ) Bon Voyage (Alphabethead Remix)
 - Hun Lynch (NZ) Conan

- mazagran hit picks**
- dORKWIND (NZ) Humuncuous
 - BA Charmian (NZ) Kia Puawai

USA EXEC

RIHANA WARSAME



Inclusion On Campus

Within my short time as Welfare and Equity Representative, and throughout my studies in general, there is one topic that has come up consistently: students who identify as being in one or more equity groups often feel "othered". This can come from not feeling included in conversations around campus, facing microaggressions, or even outright name-calling. This is something that I, and many other students, have experienced. It is not just a personal issue, nor just a campus one. It's a nationwide struggle.

The feeling of being isolated, alone, and "othered" is something a significant amount of students encounter, especially during their first years at university and entering a completely new environment. At seventeen or eighteen, you move away from everything familiar and step into a place where you may know no one. You come into class expecting a sense of unity, but instead feel disconnected. Everyone seems similar, yet different from you. That feeling can grow into a pressure to change yourself just to "fit in".

First-year students are more likely to feel this pressure to assimilate – shaping themselves into versions that may no longer feel authentic, just to match a mould that should not exist. These feelings do not come from nowhere. They reflect fears that marginalised communities often carry long before arriving on campus. And at university, away from home and the community that grew and grounded you, these experiences can be intensified.

Students face verbal attacks, whether through whispers, small remarks, or direct discriminatory comments. These moments stick and stack, and that pressure on your identity mounts. You start to question yourself – am I overthinking? Is it really a big deal? Do I change? And too often, nothing is done to address it. You get very offended the first time, but as more years of your studies pass, it becomes something you laugh at. But the pressure and hurt that comes with the "othering" of your identity isn't funny.

The culture on campus is something that needs to change. You might not see it, you might not hear it, and it might not affect you – but that does not mean it is not happening.

Students should come to University to grow their knowledge, both academically and personally. It should be a place to learn who you are, not a place where you feel forced to change who you are.

The path forward is to put aside the "othering". Be welcoming to new faces. Be willing to learn about things that are unfamiliar to you. Be open to having uncomfortable conversations. Allow yourself to understand that there is so much you may not know about people who are different from you.

I will leave you with this. If everyone in your friend group looks the same, talks the same, and comes from the same socio-economic background as you, then that is something worth reflecting on. Be better, and help create a campus culture that does not "other".

Ngā mihi,
Rihana



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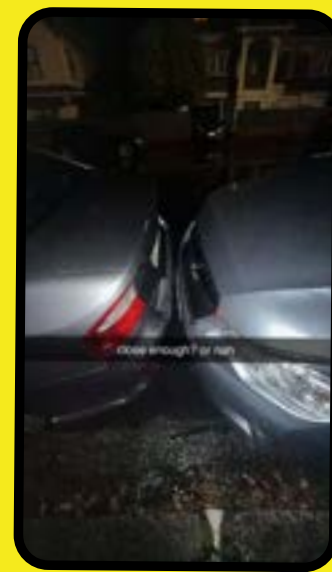
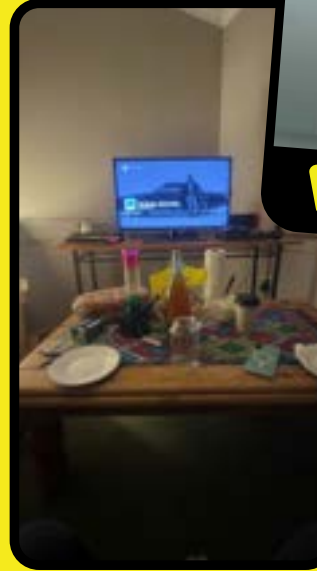
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SNAP OF THE WEEK



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CONTACT CRITIC ON INSTAGRAM TO CLAIM YOUR PRIZE



by **Jonathan McCabe**

Fresh out of first year halls, it's finally your turn to host the party of the century. Last year, the tenants threw a rager, same with the 15 years prior. No pressure! Whether you're chasing Lakehouse-level chaos or just trying to avoid a flop, the expectation is the same: go big or go home.

Whether you're just keen to host a one off flat gig, or attempting to try and recreate Project X, Critic Te Arohi has got you covered. We enlisted third year BCom student, part time DJ and former tenant of Lakehouse, Atto Still (aka. Huxley) for advice.

If you're open hosting, you need security – ideally one secy per entrance to your flat. Atto learnt this the hard way after only hiring one for St Paddy's, which caused "huge issues." Even with makeshift fencing, people will find their way in (and they did).

For music, smaller gigs are more forgiving. A DJ might lend out decks if you ask them nicely, but you will still need a PA and subwoofer. For an open host, you'll need to supply the decks yourself – usually CDJ 2000's or 3000's, since they're the industry standard. Sadly, this will cost you extra pennies if you are hiring them out.

Booking bands is all fun and games until they ask about backline. That means a drum kit, amps, a PA, two subwoofers, a mixing console, some microphones plus stands, a rug to put underneath the drumkit, a shit tonne of leads and cables, and some form of lighting. Most students don't have this, but a lot can be borrowed or hired.

Muso's are often keen to help – just don't wreck their stuff. Atto's number one rule: "dont fuck it up." Do whatever you think is necessary to prevent a drunk from using the drum kit like it's a game of whac-a-mole, because at the end of the day, if there is any damage, it's your wallet on the line. Also make sure that everyone's happy sharing gear, and remember drummers bring their own breakables – cymbals, snare kick pedal, all that jazz.

At the end of the day, if you feel completely out of your league, there is no shame in falling back on event companies like Southern Events, Strawberry or Gravity, especially when tackling one of Ōtepoti's great open hosts.

Atto reckon hosting a sick party is the best feeling in the world: "If there's a scene you wish Dunedin had then don't wait for someone else to make it." Don't wait to be brought flowers, plant your own garden.

Smell ya later.

BOOZE REVIEWS

By Swig60

CODY'S BOURBON & COLA 7%

Sup pissers and shitters. This week we set out with one goal: to tackle a tried-and-true Kiwi classic. It's a drink with a reputation that walks the line between nostalgia and being a straight up punishment in a can. It's Cody's week – so get in the backseat of a Nissan Skyline driven by someone with a pink licence, sit back, and enjoy.

We thought about writing some clever lines to carry this review, but the reality is you don't need them. Cody's does the heavy lifting on its own. Whether that's a good or bad thing depends entirely on how many you've had.

TASTING NOTES

Taste-wise, you're immediately hit with that signature RTD flavour – a bit sweet, a bit harsh, and sitting somewhere between vanilla and straight ethanol. There is also a noticeable, artificial edge to it – with a finish that makes you wanna chug a bottle of mouthwash.

On the first sip, it's manageable. By drink three, you wish you bought something else. By drink six, you've stopped caring and also lost your t-shirt on the journey.

The carbonation is pretty standard – enough fizz to hide the yuckiness, but not enough to make us want to drink them more than once a blue moon. The alcohol in this one is very present, loud, and in your face. Some could say that this is also how you describe people who drink these on the reg.

RATINGS

Let's be clear: these are tough to get down, snorkel or not. Waisnorkel gives them a 7/10 – the fact they are in slim, smaller cans is doing a lot of the heavy lifting on this one.

Grog Robertson doesn't remember anything past 8:30, which tells its own story. Israel Chugasania gives them a 10/10 for fight ability, calling them a "court case in a can." Brendan McSkullem's less impressed, giving a measly 5/10 for drinkability. First of the night or last before the drunk tank, they go down the same: not easily.

Speights Shepherd reckons these are a "great leveller" for any social occasion. No matter who you are or where you come from, downing a box of these will get you equally as cooked as everyone else.

SWIG60'S VERDICT

Cody's gets a worse rep than it probably deserves. It's not gonna be your first pick, but you can absolutely have a decent night on them—provided you're willing to accept notes of asphalt and a brutal case of hangxiety the next morning.

Also, if you want to tell us what to drink next, tipping is mandatory. Shout us a box of your choosing by sending a donation to: 12-3161-0526840-0.

P.S fuck you to whoever complained about us not doing Grog yet. Fuck your Twitch streamer drink, the hentai in your search history and the crusty sock next to your bed.

Drink responsibly. Or at least strategically.



By Lady Pain Gray

Moaningful Critiques

SUMMER SCHOOL GETS STEAMY

To set the scene, it was Summer School. Already a pretty cursed time of year. Half the campus was deserted, and the people left milling around campus were a little strange. I mean, who does Uni during the holidays? To add to the isolation, none of my flatmates had moved in yet. I was bored out of my brain. So naturally, I downloaded Tinder.

I match with this guy – normal enough, not the hottest. Good chat, a bit flirty and definitely possessed some confidence. The kind of conversation we were having was the one that skips very quickly past small talk and lands somewhere much more... Direct. We ended up meeting up one night, and I'll say it was not a "grab a coffee and politely discuss our majors" kind of situation. But it's summer, right? No rules, no consequences, all that shit. So after our magical night of pleasure, I go about my life, sending sporadic messages for the next couple of weeks. Pretty crucially, it had never occurred to me that my path might cross again with this man. Oh boy – how wrong I was about to be.

The paper I was enrolled in over summer was fairly easy, and I was honestly just doing it so I could claim student loan over the summer. When combined with the fact I had decided to take a very lax approach to my studies (strictly online, camera off, mic muted), I don't think I visited campus for the whole holiday until I was dragging myself into a much too small, much too warm room to give my stupid final presentation for the course. But things were about to get a whole lot worse, and even hotter (due to feeling violently ill and embarrassed). I saw him.

It was immediate, gut-dropping recognition. I mean, after all, he was the man I had made some... deeply extracurricular memories with. Ōtepoti is too small on a good day, but this little summer situation made me realise nobody is safe from awkward eye contact with an ex hook-up.

For a split second, I thought that maybe (hopefully) he was just another student. But alas, he walks straight past me, to the front of the room. Puts his bag down, and starts to plug in his laptop. Because guess what? He is the fucking tutor of this paper.

I have truly never experienced more of a complete internal collapse. Looking back, I can genuinely say it was one of the worst days of my life. I am stuck sitting there, clutching my notes, while my brain is replaying every horny message we have sent, every questionable decision I had made, and that entire albeit pleasure-filled night, in vivid detail. The worst part was that we had been talking for weeks. Not super consistently, but enough that there surely could be no chance he hadn't made the connection.

The seminar began, and we were both acting like we hadn't shared a night of mutual satisfaction just a mere month before. Then, of course, it gets worse. Because I have to present my stupid fucking presentation. So now I'm standing at the front of the room, speaking nonsense about some [REDACTED] topic, while the man who had seen me in a completely different context is sitting there, grinding me. Sorry, I meant grading me.

I don't remember a single word I said. But I do remember thinking that it was the most humbling experience of my life. And it was. Luckily I got out of the room unscathed, and also somehow passed the paper. Woohoo.



HAVE SOMETHING JUICY TO TELL US? SEND YOUR SALACIOUS STORIES TO MOANINGFUL@CRITIC.CO.NZ SUBMISSIONS REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

Illustrated by Eleanor Walker

Horoscopes



PISCES

This week will be hard, but something good is going to come from it. You may not see the silver lining at the moment, but trust me – the clouds are clearing up, and the lucky sun is going to shine down on you.

Your controversial opinion: The Meg is still out there.



ARIES

There are so many NPCs on campus. It's your job to distinguish between the real ones and those who will cancel the plans you've had for 2 months the night before. Time to do a re-assessment of your relationships this week.

Your controversial opinion: Selena Gomez is a clone.



VIRGO

With exams on your mind, fresh off the back of mid-sem break, it's important to take a breather before going back into full study mode. Barreling towards your goals may be good short term, but 10 hour shifts in the fishbowl are not sustainable for your long-term sanity.

Your controversial opinion: Rich people do freaky cult shit in area 51.



GEMINI

This week you will come to know what true patience is. Your smart-ass friend is going to mansplain a topic you know heaps about. Just let them – it's way more fun to correct them afterwards.

Your controversial opinion: Cancer has been cured already, they are just hiding it.



AQUARIUS

It's time to party like you are in Katy Perry's 'Last Friday Night' music video. When the cops pull up because the DJ is too loud, don't make the mistake of believing that your friends ordered you a stripper. Real life isn't like Magic Mike, unfortunately.

Your controversial opinion: There are no birds on campus, only speakers in the trees.



SCORPIO

You have had a rocky time with love in the past, but new love might be heading in your direction. This time around, it pays to not sit back and let this one keep on walking by. Be bold and get their Instagram.

Your controversial opinion: Life is a simulation and you're the only REAL human.



TAURUS

Your current employer is making you wanna quiet quit, or even just straight-up ghost them. Even though the job market is fucked, it can't be worse than your current job. The next desk your resume lands on will be the right one. You deserve higher than minimum wage anyway.

Your controversial opinion: The Earth is flat.



CAPRICORN

Feeling down? Break out your nail polish, put on Barbie: Princess Charm School, and whip out Tinder. Have friends assist you in picking the cuttiest pic in your camera roll. You'll have a Super Like by the end of the night.

Your controversial opinion: Macca's uses human meat.



LEO

Got your results back from the midterm yet? Don't take it too hard if you didn't get the mark you were aiming for – it was all rigged anyways. Keep your head up and lock in, because the exams are just a second chance to let your genius shine.

Your controversial opinion: The moon landing was fake.



CANCER

Your lecture slides are blurry and you're getting migraines – time to pay a visit to SpecSavers. Don't cry when you get the bill, just try to remember that health is wealth.

Your controversial opinion: Tin foil hats keep you safe from mind readers.



LIBRA

I sense that you have recently crossed paths with something or someone who will become an important part of your life soon. You haven't realised it, but in a week or two you're going to be face palming so hard that you missed it at the time.

Your controversial opinion: Pigeons are robots and charge via power lines.



SAGITTARIUS

We both know you're guilty of holding people at arms length. It's time to lower that guard and fully let someone in. Try taking it slowly and remembering that not everyone is out to get you. Some people love you for just being you.

Your controversial opinion: Phone updates are rigged to kill your phone.



Who are we?

KnowYourStuffNZ is a peer-led drug checking and harm reduction service that has been operating since 2015. We address the lack of factual, proven information available to drug users about the substances they intend to take by providing drug checking and drug-related information at festivals, events, and clinics.

Why come see us?

When you get a drug from the pharmacy, you can be assured that it actually is what you think it is. It'll also come with a health and safety sheet informing you on safe dosage, potential risks, other drugs with dangerous interactions, etc. For drugs purchased on the black market, these key safety nets are not present. That's where we come in.

So how does it work?

Drug checking is carried out primarily using a machine called an infrared spectrometer. Essentially, we shoot your sample with a laser and measure the resulting response. We compare the response from your sample against a database containing tens of thousands of chemicals, allowing the accurate detection of drugs, adulterants, and mixtures. We also use colour-changing reagent tests for things like LSD, and can detect synthetic opioids with strip tests (similar to tests for pregnancy or COVID, but for fentanyl). We only take a tiny amount to do the check, about ~10 mg, or roughly a tenth of a typical dose of MDMA.

We offer a comprehensive harm-reduction service.

This means that we sit down with you and have a kōrero about your drugs and how to minimise risk. This covers things like recommended dose, route of administration (i.e., swallowing, snorting, etc.), risky interactions with other substances, and any other important info that we think you should be aware of. Our goal is to inform you with peer-reviewed information to empower you to make the best choices.

Our clinics are completely free, legal, and confidential.

We understand that drug use is still stigmatised and, for the most part, criminalised, but you'll find no stigma or judgment from us. Plus, our service operates under the Drug and Substance Checking Legislation Act of 2021, meaning that police cannot use knowledge of your usage of our service as evidence.

Some stats.

Over the past few years, ~10% of the samples we've tested have not been the substance they were presumed to be. That means that 1 in 10 people consuming drugs could be taking something completely different to what they're thinking. That's a lot. This other substance could be more potent, risky, or poorly understood. This is why drug checking is so important.

Ōtepoti uses drugs.

Hyde Street Party and other big events are all soon approaching. We know that some of you guys will be consuming drugs on these days. Why not come see us? Check it before you neck it. There's no harm in finding out what you are actually taking.

Want to know more?

Find out first when we host our clinics by following our social media pages; we're on Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok. For excellent info on drugs, harm-reduction, and a full calendar of drug-checking services, visit TheLevel.Org.NZ. Check out High Alert to be alerted anytime we detect a red flag substance circulating in the community. You can also find the lovely folks at *DISC/DIVO* in South Dunedin, offering drug-checking several days a week.

Do you know what's in your stuff?

- NO? We can help you with that.
- MAYBE? We can help you with that.
- YES? We can help you make sure.



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Prayers & Declarations
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