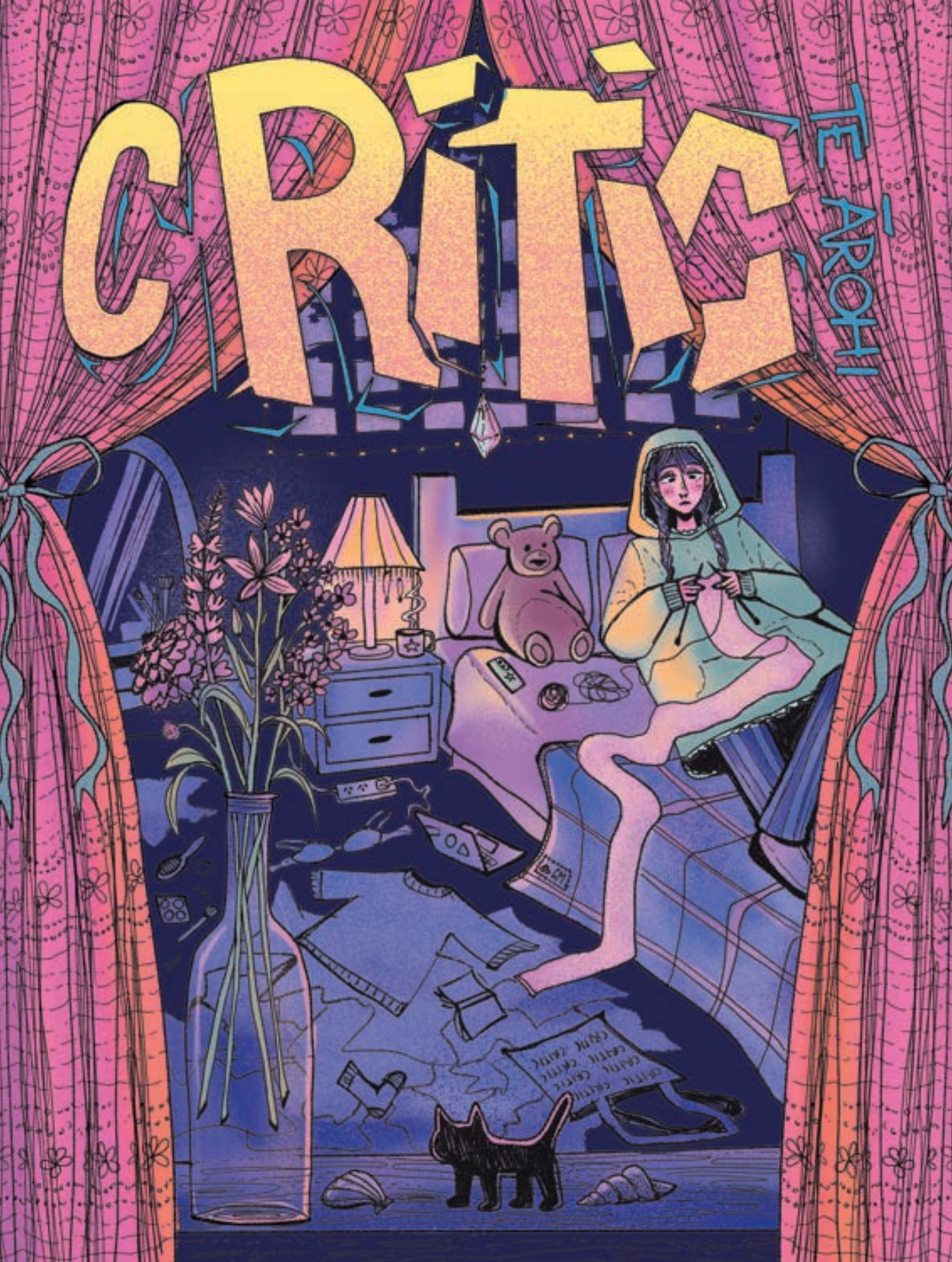


CRITIC

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EDITORIAL: 32 Pages and Hustle Culture

Christmas has come early for you lot, because I'm pleased to announce on behalf of the Critic of Critic team that the mag will shift to printing 32-pages per week, effective semester 2. The decision has been made alongside OUSA. Shifting to 32 pages gives us a net gain of 12 pages per fortnight, compared to the previous 36/16 page structure with Critic Lite*.

The Critic team would once again like to thank the community for the continued support of Critic over the past month. The passion and love many people hold for Critic prompted proactive conversations with OUSA that have resulted in a new print structure. Critic Lite* was something we were trialling in the face of immediate financial pressure, but student feedback has made it clear that Lite* didn't encapsulate what students, alumni, and the wider community wanted from Critic as an OUSA student service.

We believe this new 32-weekly print is the best balance between what everyone has expressed for Critic, and the most cost effective solution quoted to us. Critic Lite* will have just 2 more issues. I think I will miss the little Lite* badge on each cover the most. We'll hopefully have a proper flash-looking statement posted up on the 'gram by the time you're reading this.

Anyways – a bit about my take on hustle culture. Late in office last Wednesday, I was talking to Ash, the designer for this edition of the mag. Now, if there's one thing that Ash is, it's a hustler. He was telling me that he went to the Polytech the other day to give a presentation to a bunch of design students, and they got to talking about burnout.

I think that especially in creative settings, the line between being a hustler versus burning yourself out is pretty thin, or even just straight up transparent. The issue is that in order to achieve and excel in creative spaces, you do need to hustle – especially when you're young and establishing yourself. Personally, I believe that creativity and hustling go hand-in-hand. But on top of that, the entire creative industry survives off of creative people going above and beyond to achieve their ambitions. That holds even if these creatives are not being adequately compensated for the work that they do, or don't physically have enough hours in the day to do it. Despite this, they keep it moving, staying hungry for more. I really admire that about creatives, and the brilliance that comes from the hustle.

I think my hot take is that I strongly believe in hustle culture. While I do not encourage anyone to fully burn themselves out or make themselves purposefully miserable, I do think that this is a period in your life where you can afford to go pretty much all in on the things that make you creatively hungry. There's still a safety net around you while you're young and at uni, so take advantage of it. This is one of the few chances in life you can take risks, put yourself out there and still have a community - now's the best time to froth the hustle.

Get out there and hustle. Join Critic Te Ārohi, for example. Create with us. Pitch your ideas and what makes you hungry. After all, a closed mouth doesn't get fed.

Anna Varrs ✨



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EDITOR
Hanna Varrs

DEPUTY EDITOR
Gryffin Blockley

DESIGNER
Ash McFarlane @ash_designs_

VIDEO EDITOR
Hunter Jolly

NEWS EDITOR
Stella Weston

FEATURES EDITOR
Matilda Rumball-Smith

CULTURE EDITOR
Molly Smith-Soppet

ĒTITA MĀORI
Heeni Koero Te Rerenoa

SENIOR NEWS REPORTER
Bella Bates

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
Maddy Barnes

MUSIC MEDIA INTERN
Ethan Montañer

STAFF WRITERS
Dylan O'Connor, Harry Almey,
Imogen Perry, Jesse Valpy,
Te Avhirāinga Hepert

CONTRIBUTORS
Luke Macleod, Salome Prekopa
Via Hooks

BOOZE REVIEWS
Swig60

HOROSCOPES
Otago Oracle

ILLUSTRATION
Gemma McKinney @worms.ink
Jimmy Tannock @jimmydrawing
Eddie Fenton @boyorfeo
Eleanor Walker @furbur_is_alive

FRONT COVER
Gemma McKinney

CENTREFOLD
Babacar Diallo @bbcrbk

ONLINE
Charlotte Williams

DISTRIBUTION
Pedals Dunedin

ADVERTISING SALES
sales@planetmedia.co.nz
03 479 5361

READ ONLINE
critic.co.nz
issuu.com/critic_te_arohi

GET IN TOUCH
critic@critic.co.nz
[Instagram@criticmag](https://www.instagram.com/criticmag)
[Facebook/CriticTeArohi](https://www.facebook.com/CriticTeArohi)
[TikTok/criticmag](https://www.tiktok.com/@criticmag)
03 479 5335
P.O.Box 1436, Dunedin

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BROUGHT TO YOU BY



hi,
i was reading your latest issue and couldn't help but notice the vice purity test puts "fresher" at 1-25. i scored zero. what does this make me.

thanks,
someone who should probably be studying rn

Editor's Response: O: High Schooler At Otago Open Day.
As a high schooler, you love the concept of Dunedin student life. You're either drawn here due to having a weird relationship with your parents and wanting to move cities, or you're a local and figured you could put off flying the nest for a few more years. The objective degeneracy of Otago students is something you don't mind, but you engage with it on a strictly 'look, but don't touch' basis, kind of like how visiting the Mona Lisa might feel. Like, you don't really get it, but everyone else seems to like it, and it's pretty famous – so why the hell not?

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

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Dear critic,

this week's edition is pretty goated, me and my mates are pinning the vice purity test on our common room fridge so we can work through it throughout the year, also this week's horror scope is spot on. Wish the cover was the poster as well but you can't win them all.

Sincerely,
Someone who forgot to do an assignment worth 30 percent of his grade

Editor's Response: We should've added 'failed an assessment' as one of the boxes lol

To Critic,

Pretty spineless of you guys to label the genocide in Gaza the "Israel-Palestine war". because it's not a war and hasn't been in its 58 year colonial occupation. U are doing the imperialist propaganda even big luxon and friends would be proud of by down playing the genocide by using that language.

thanks and lit article otherwise

Editor's Response: Thanks for pointing that out. You're right – it is genocide, and we've called it genocide in the past. We don't want to downplay the atrocities happening in Gaza right now, and our word choice should have reflected what those atrocities are: genocide. Thanks for your letter.

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 Arohi 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!

Capping show theme announced: Squeal: **A Capping Show Horror**

A DCC Councilor leaked plans to build a hotel at Forsyth Barr Stadium



6th of May - Quiz Night at The Bog at 7pm, fundraising for the Children of Gaza Crisis Appeal. Teams of 3 - 5, \$5 per person entry fee. Great prizes for the winning teams! And the first 50 people with proof of entry fee payment will receive a discount voucher of 10% off at Tart Tin!

Two Otago Polytechnic students have been selected to represent New Zealand at this year's Dulux Colour Awards, through their bold visions for Otago Peninsula and North Dunedin

Man charged with careless driving after hitting pedestrian on Leith St during Hyde, nobody was injured – ODT reports

Radio Hauraki performed live in Emerson's Brewery last week

44 candidates seeking DCC CEO job – ODT reports

From the 28th of April, the North East Valley Crisis Recovery Café will be open at 262 North Road on Tuesdays (6:30 PM-10:00 PM) and Saturdays (5:30 PM-10:00 PM). Come along to receive free, peer-led mental health and wellbeing support.

On Saturday the 2nd of May TiB is holding a 'Back to Black' ball with Hold On To Your Friends. Tickets are available from the HOTYF instagram.

Looking for friends or lovers inside the disabled community? Come along to Enabling Love and Friendships weekly meet ups on Thursday's, 1pm at the Perc Cafe, or join our exciting bingo event on the 7th of May. Find out more on Instagram @enablinglove and come make some friends.

The Semester 1 exam timetable is out! Good luck!

The Earth Day Market will be held on Union Lawn on the 29th of April, from 10am to 2pm

Improsaurus shows start up this Friday 24th at the New Athenaeum Theatre. \$15 student tickets for improvised theatre! Follow us @ [improsaurus_dunedin](https://www.instagram.com/improsaurus_dunedin)

The News

ISSUE 9

KAWEPŪRONGO

27/04/2026

EXECRABLE!

Written Warning, MoU and Political Planning

By **Hanna Varrs & Stella Weston**
Editor & News Editor
critic@critic.co.nz & news@critic.co.nz



Celebrating 4/20 likely in a different way to most students, the OUSA Exec still managed to push their fortnightly meeting up to a marathon two and a half hours on the 20th of April. Who can say they aren't dedicated?

There was a heap on the agenda to get through, and get through it they did (eventually). Firstly, a big congratulations to the Tuvalu Students Association and the Student Innovators Collective for their recent affiliations as OUSA clubs – Critic Te Ārohi can't wait to see you guys out there.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) between OUSA and the Vice-Chancellor was briefly revisited for discussion, having already been signed earlier this year. Through this, OUSA gains the right to send three emails to all of its student members (e.g. pretty much every student at Otago University) which is pretty awesome. Imagine if Critic got to do that. We'd say "The Game".

Finance and Strategy Officer Troy Gibbons was also issued a written warning by the Executive following a breach of the Executive Code of Conduct. The motion passed with a razor-thin 5-4 vote from Executive Members. Jarna and Sami (Tumauki Takirua), Ella (Clubs & Socs Rep), Irfaan (International Rep), Fergus (Postgrad Rep) and Daniel (President) all voted for the warning. Rihana (Welfare and Equity Rep), Zoe (Residential Rep), Flynn (Political Rep) and Troy voted against the warning. Kameesha (Vice-Pres), being chair, was unable to vote, as was Hansini (Academic Rep), who was absent for a midterm test.

"This matter was addressed in accordance with the Executive Code of Conduct and the Executive Discipline Procedure," OUSA President Daniel Leamy told Critic. Daniel remained tight-lipped when asked what the warning was issued for, emphasising that the Exec takes matters of conduct seriously.

Daniel referred to the warning as a "precedent-setting complaint", and not "personal" action against Troy. "Rather, it establishes a clear framework to ensure that all Executive members can be held to the highest standards moving forward." Third year law student, Charlotte, was approached by Critic regarding the warning. She thought that while it's

"disappointing to see someone having violated the code", it was "encouraging that OUSA have responded appropriately and that it won't affect his work".

Despite trouble in paradise, the Executive's focus will remain on "advocating for Otago students and supporting their needs" amidst an "important and challenging" period for ākonga. Daniel made it clear that, consistent with that focus, the warning would have no impact on Troy's goals or duties to serve the student body. "He continues to prioritise his role and work as their representative, advocating for issues that are important to them."

In this spirit of looking forward, the Exec have highlighted four priority political campaigns for the rest of the year: implementing Paid Placements, Fees Free study, Rental Warrants of Fitness, and repealing Voluntary Student Membership (VSM). According to a memo from Troy and Flynn, "OUSA has been, and should remain, an active political advocate." Cheers to that. ★



Photo by Lauri White

POSSUMS? WE DON'T KNOW HER

Otago Peninsula Declared Possum Free

By **Luke MacLeod**
Contributor
news@critic.co.nz



The Otago Peninsula was declared possum free in March, making it one of the first inhabited landscape-scale areas in Aotearoa to successfully eliminate the pest. Critic Te Ārohi reached out to Chris Arnison, Community Coordinator and Operations Director of the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group, to tell us the story.

The Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group (OPBG) was first started in 2008 by locals sick of the possum problem. It began as a completely volunteer-based organisation with almost no funding, but now, after eighteen years, the community's vision is finally a reality. The Department of Conservation's Acting Conservation Director for the Southern South Island, Gabe Davies, emphasised that "[Y]ears of dedicated effort, hard mahi, and use of innovative approaches to predator control have led to this milestone."

When the operation began, volunteers were focused on setting trap lines and checking them regularly to keep them set and baited. The volunteers were also rigorous in keeping watch for signs of possums, whether these be a physical sighting, or just droppings, sounds, or scratch marks on trees. Under the watchful eyes of these volunteers, the peninsula wasn't an easy place for possums – but it was a safer one for our native wildlife. One ecology student recognised this, adding that, "it's so cool to see conservation initiatives get such amazing results in a way that's really going to help our native populations rebuild and flourish."

Becoming a delivery partner for Predator Free Dunedin (PFD) and receiving more funding under Predator Free 2050 was a crucial turning point for the group, allowing them to employ staff, while also maintaining their volunteer base. Joining forces with fellow PFD delivery partners Halo Project and City Sanctuary, they began to use more advanced technology in the field, including self-resetting traps, motion activated trail cameras, and thermal drones to get right into the hard-to-reach nooks and crannies of the peninsula. PFD project leader, Rhys Millar, added that "By sharing tools, people and knowledge, we strengthened each other's efforts and, building upon the monumental effort of the OPBG, got the job over the line."

Towards the end of the operation, one of the project's most valuable team members was the Halo project's dog Scout. This little guy was trained to sniff out possum shit, and any areas he detected it in could be more heavily targeted. The final year of the project was focused on hunting down the last few remaining possums, which they had narrowed down to certain points of the peninsula.

Another student Critic spoke to was thoroughly impressed by the efforts, adding, "Wow... I didn't think it was possible to actually get rid of those sneaky buggers." While a long and complicated process, the OPBG have demonstrated that it can be done, and Chris emphasised that the achievement "would not have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers, the generosity of local landowners, and the commitment of our conservation partners who worked alongside us to deliver this amazing outcome."

The possums are gone, but the group is far from finished. As Gabe put it, "it's vital to recognise that this is only the beginning [...] Continued commitment is essential to ensure that nature and native species can thrive and we all have a role to play!" A new plan targeting multiple high-profile species in areas of high biodiversity is being rolled out. Ferrets, stoats, weasels, rats, hedgehogs, and feral cats are the targets. Chris noted that feline trapping activities will take place far away from residential areas using non-lethal traps, and the cats will always be scanned for microchips before any lethal action is taken.

According to Gabe, "A possum-free Otago Peninsula stands as an incredible testament to what can be accomplished when a community comes together for conservation." From our majestic native birds, to our breathtaking landscapes, to even the humble crate day, Aotearoa is full of wonder, and ridding the Peninsula of possums is just one step closer.

Anyone keen on getting involved can contact Chris at operations@opbg.nz. And if you see a possum, or signs of a possum, on the peninsula, make sure to report it: www.reportapossum.nz ★



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DELIVEREASY STATISTICS REVEAL DUNEDIN'S FOOD DELIVERY DIAGNOSIS

The fall of the late night takeaway mish and the rise of convenience

A fifteen minute walk in the cold versus experiencing the full offerings of Fatty Lane from bed for a \$5 delivery fee – this choice is becoming shamefully easy. Kiwi-owned delivery platform, Delivereasy, has recently shed light upon customer statistics, revealing the tendency for tauria across the country to opt in for convenience and out of in-person interaction.

Delivereasy goes beyond just the convenience of food delivery. As put by cofounder Tim Robinson, the app's delivery options are endless: "The crushed garlic your flatmate finished off, a box of drinks for the spontaneous pres, or the Panadol you meant to buy but didn't – it's exactly what I wish we'd had back in my Otago Uni days."

In the past year, Delivereasy's insights indicate that Dunedin tauria prefer the classic burger-fries-and-shake-combo when it comes to food delivery. In comparison, the rest of Aotearoa's student population has showcased a tad more flare. Statistics suggest the following student-food pairings: Christchurch and Pad Thai, Wellington and deep fried wontons, Palmerston North and butter chicken, Hamilton and garlic naan, and Auckland and Birria tacos. Perhaps the JAFAs are seeking a new and funky form of escapism from the dull reality of Auckland's student life, or maybe Ōtepoti's vanilla tastebuds have just been exposed. Should we be stepping up our game?

Taking their customer statistics as an indication of the importance of food delivery to the student lifestyle, Tim reckons that delivery, "isn't a splurge anymore – it's a part of how [students] get through the week. A lot of the time, we see people picking [side dishes] to level up whatever they've cooked at home, or grabbing a quick bite that won't completely nuke the Studylink budget."

However, not all students are sold on the price tag associated with such convenience, favouring food delivery as an emergency response, rather than a regular method to feed yourself. Rebecca* told Critic Te Ārohi, "I use it when I have a broken heart and also want a broken bank [...] Up the midnight Pad Thai, it fixes everything." For others, it's the sort of wildcard saved for those special kinds of post-town, 2AM antics. Second year student Sam* confessed "It's too easy. The click of a button and the Macca's is at your doorstep, then you wake up in the morning and realise the money's actually left your fucking account." Funny how that works.

Whatever your go to order, who could possibly say no to enlisting the magical fairy (otherwise known as the blessed food delivery driver) to drop off your comfort meal when it's raining, cold, and the only food in the flat is probably a biohazard? Clearly not Ōtepoti students. *Names Changed ★

By Imogen Perry
Staff Writer
news@critic.co.nz



TE POU WHIRINAKI WELLBEING HUB IS (OFFICIALLY) OPEN

Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Mental Health cut the ribbon

By Harry Almey
Staff Writer
news@critic.co.nz



Two years after announcing that Te Pou Whirinaki (the Wellbeing Hub) would take the place of the old Campus South stationary shop, Vice-Chancellor Grant Robertson, and National Party Minister for Mental Health Matt Doocey, gathered on the 15th of April for its official opening. Te Pou Whirinaki works to connect many forms of support for tauria into one building, linking them up with the resources and the people needed to make uni life that little bit easier.

Tauria, when faced with the web of student services, support networks and wellbeing initiatives, might find it overwhelming to even know where to go for support. Now, at the Hub, staff and peer mentors can refer you to the service you need as you need it. At its core, it's a connection service. The AskOtago of wellness, if you will. Conceding that he might be the ultimate unc, Grant Robertson assured that "the people who understand the most about a person who walks in the door, and their needs, are here [at Te Pou Whirinaki]."

Te Pou Whirinaki sports fifteen Peer Supporters, who work casually, as well as four Hauora Connectors, who have speciality areas of responsibility, like rainbow and refugee backgrounds. The manager of the Hub, Geniveive Obbeek, is a mental health clinician.

The Peer Supporters of Te Pou Whirinaki range from second-year to PhD students, enrolled in programmes from med, psychology and social work. These guys have been in the study trenches, according to student Liam. "Having young, like-minded people who can relate is key." So you can come here for a yarn, a chillout, a wellbeing workshop, or for a good cry and bitch about life. Not only is it a warm welcoming space to work on your mental health, you also don't need an appointment if you're in crisis mode.

Liam nodded along in agreement as he listened to the speeches, and helped himself to the provided sammies. He thought the Hub was "fantastic" due to its visible location, being "out in the open and [looking] inviting." Critic Te Ārohi chased after other students who passed by for comment, but we weren't fast enough.

This Hub is Government-funded, and Grant recalled that when he and Matt discussed who should take the political credit, "We agreed it was the Greens." The Vice-Chancellor congratulated the Minister for "delivering" the facility, and lauded his unrivalled commitment to mental health. The Minister subsequently returned the favour, giving credit to the 'Wellbeing Budgets' of the former Finance Minister (2017-2023). Labour Minister of Health David Clark and Green Associate Minister of Health Julie Anne Genter (both tenured 2017-2020) also got their dues. Political love was in the air – a welcome change.

Matt Doocey is the National Party MP for Waimakariri, which meant that until the 2nd of April, he was the only South Island minister inside Cabinet. That job is what he is best known for: being New Zealand's first-ever Minister for Mental Health. In that role, he was keen to stress his responsibility for the \$3 billion Mental Health and Addiction Fund. Wearing the bluest suit ever, Matt was very happy to have a word.

The Hub is part of a wider national project, which includes the opening of a Crisis Recovery Café for North East Valley and South Dunedin, announced by Matt earlier that day.

Minister Doocey described his work on "the rollout of peer support services", which includes both the café and Te Pou Whirinaki. This wider project is a big goal of his during this Parliamentary term. For Matt, this project reflects a generational turn, as mental health was once "highly stigmatised." That stigma meant shame and silence. Now, the Minister is working to centre the journeys of those whom the facility seeks to treat, especially those of young people. He reckons youth mental health issues are stubborn due to a lack of identification. "Quite flippantly, I'm saying [that we should] ask people using services what services they think they should be getting. Who would have thought?"

Grant summed up the importance of this new service perfectly. "Here, every single day, someone's life will be changed for the good. Sometimes someone's life might be saved."

Te Pou Whirinaki | Student Wellbeing Hub is open weekdays from 9 am, closing 5 pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, with 7:30 pm closing times on Mondays and Thursdays. ★

Going through it mentally? Free help is available, 24/7.

- Gumboot Friday provides free counselling for under-25s, with no doctor's referral required. Young people can book directly and access support quickly via gumbootfriday.org.nz
- Text 1737 for free mental wellbeing support, 24/7
- Student Health and OUSA Student Support can both provide in-person care as well

'DUNEDIN HERALD' TAKING SHIT POSTING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Should Critic feel threatened by their rise?

The Dunedin Herald is a new satirical Instagram account, self-described as "our most special city's most trusted news". Despite being only six days old at time of writing, they've gained over 1400 followers. Although the student behind the account wanted to remain anonymous for "a little bit longer", even to Critic Te Ārohi (um, rude), they were more than happy to answer a few questions about their rise in the shitposting community.

The page began as a "commentary on Dunedin and student issues", but has quickly become "an analysis of media literacy as well." Indeed, Critic has had multiple people ask if headlines are real, including the recent 67 post featuring Andrew Geddis, with one law student describing it as "hysterical". There definitely is something to say for how much people "appreciate niche local shitposting and we've got a unique student community [...] It's just fun to have references and memes that are specific to here."

The Dunedin Herald's favourite headline so far was their very first: 'Hyde Street walk-out for Clavicular.' They noted that this headline made fun of "the mentality of the manosphere", and also ended up demonstrating exactly how "people comment on stuff without thinking about it for more than half a second." The Dunedin Herald added that they got "lots of angry comments" on the post, but "it also got a lot of traction so that's a factor." All press is good press.

News can get pretty heavy, especially at the moment, and the Dunedin Herald emphasised that while "obviously people knowing more about what's going on is positive", when people "know too much about everything [it can get] to the point where we feel overwhelmed and helpless."

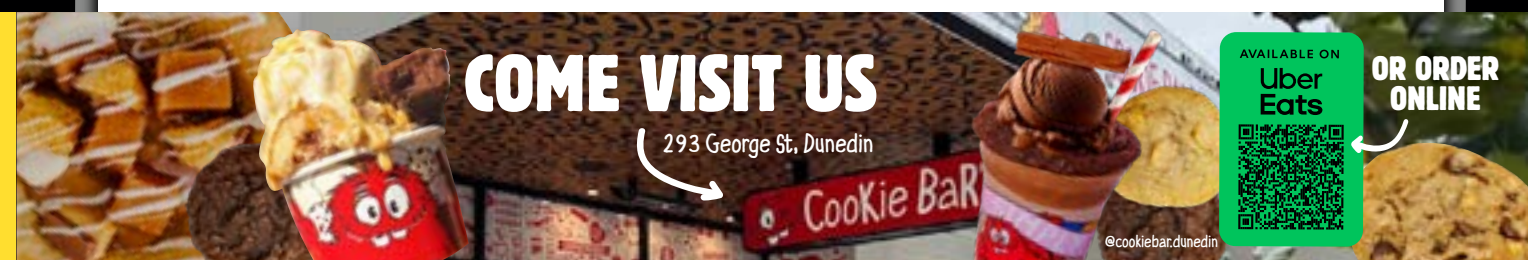
While not directly addressing real issues or current events, satire like this can open a gateway for these conversations to be had between friends and viewers alike, and although the comments are mainly reaction gifs at this stage, a picture tells a thousand words. The Dunedin Herald noted that students being aware of issues that impact them, and being willing to engage in conversations, especially as they are often left out of the discourse, has "gotta be positive." They added that these posts can "definitely be used to bring issues into people's minds so they can look into them later on if they want to". So meta.

The Dunedin Herald emphasised that while they do believe all this, at its core the account is "just a fun thing", so they "won't try to intellectualise it."

Finally, their end goal is "to be Critic's critic and set up our own rival office." Even with the 101-year old headstart, we feel a little intimidated.

Follow @dunedinherald on Instagram to stay informed on the North D shitposting community ★

By Stella Weston and
Te Awhirēinga Heperi
News Editor & Staff Writer
news@critic.co.nz



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STRAIT TALK: WHAT'S ACTUALLY GOING ON IN HORMUZ?

Professor Robert Patman breaks down the global crisis students can't ignore

By Bella Bates
Senior News Reporter
news@critic.co.nz



With TikTok explainers flying around and group chats spiralling, Critic Te Ārohi went straight to Professor Robert Patman to make sense of the escalating situation in the Strait of Hormuz. Patman, a Professor in the University of Otago's Politics Department, specialises in international relations, global security, and US foreign policy. We asked him to explain the crisis in plain terms and what it actually means for students here in Aotearoa.

If you had to explain the ongoing situation with the Strait of Hormuz to a student who has been living under a rock, what would you say?

Patman says the Strait of Hormuz is "the world's most important energy waterway." Lying within Iranian and Omani waters, the Strait has effectively been turned into a tool of conflict as of late. Following what he describes as "illegal attacks by the US and Israel on Iran", Iran has responded by restricting access to commercial shipping through the Strait. In turn, the US has imposed its own blockade targeting vessels heading to Iranian ports. The result has been a rapid escalation with crucial global consequences, including skyrocketing prices of fuel and essential goods such as fertiliser.

That ripple effect is already being felt by taira. "As someone with a diesel car, let's just say that I have been walking a lot more," one student, Sasha*, told Critic. She followed up with that she hopes the "Government does something about road user charges... It's actually unfair now."

Is this a new crisis, or part of a long-standing pattern of geopolitical tension in the region?

"Both," says Patman. Tensions between the US and Iran aren't new. He points to earlier flashpoints in 2011–2012, when Iran threatened to block the waterway over sanctions, and again in 2025 during a brief war involving the US, Israel, and Iran. But this time is different. According to Patman, before February

2026, commercial shipping through the strait was operating normally. The current situation represents a major escalation and "a significant break with the past."

New Zealand feels far removed from this, but are there less obvious ways this could affect us beyond petrol prices?

The short answer is yes, and not in a good way. Patman says New Zealand is likely to face supply chain disruptions, rising costs, and mounting inflation. But beyond economics, he flags something more structural: the weakening of the international "rules-based order" that countries like New Zealand depend on. He also raises concerns about the Government's response, suggesting New Zealand's relative silence on the actions that triggered the crisis "raises awkward questions" about whether Aotearoa is doing enough to protect its national interests.

Many students are already forming their own views on the ever-changing situation. As Lucy* bluntly said to Critic: "We cannot be depending on America right now [...] We need to be very loud in our objections." Others, like fourth-year student Mia*, are finding silver linings: "The only good thing about this is people are finally looking to be more sustainable. I'm actually kind of happy about that."

For now, the Strait of Hormuz might feel geographically distant, but as Patman makes clear, its impact is anything but. Whether it's your weekly petrol bill or the price of groceries creeping up, this is one global crisis that's hitting close to home. ★

*Names changed



Rheumy are a self-described "kosmiche noise group" who materialised into Ōtepoti's music scene in early 2025. The trio create compositions that can be difficult to pin down with descriptions — the music is somehow free-form yet intentional, rhythmic yet droning — but it's always enthralling. Critic Te Ārohi rendezvoused with the group in a dark Dunedin alleyway to talk inspiration, gear, and evolution.

Pulling inspiration from kraut rock, noise/industrial music, and post-punk, Rheumy is in a constant state of evolution/devolution, crafting haunting soundscapes with their arsenal of effects pedals, synths, drum machines and guitars. There is no doubt the band pushes the boundaries of what a three-piece can achieve sonically.

Izzy (she/her) is the group's vocalist, Omnichord (a cyberpunk-esque 'autoharp') player, and percussionist. Izzy's vocalisations range from impassioned screams to abstract spoken word passages: haunting lyrics soaked in reverb or distorted and pitched up into something resembling inhuman squeals. Tomas (he/him) plays guitar and synths. For Rheumy, his guitar operates as a secondary, scratchy layer that exists between melody and feedback.

Izzy describes the beginnings of Rheumy as "high concept". Inspired by the repetitive nature of kraut rock, she attempted to build the band's sound around tape loops, which proved to create a mountain of challenges. She recalls the meticulous process: "If you take a cassette shell, pull the tape out, very intricately wind it around the reels and tape it closed, it will be an infinite loop of a few seconds [of a drum machine sample]."

When Mack (he/she) joined Rheumy, Izzy said it felt like a "puzzle piece fitting in". Mack, having met Izzy during a music class at uni, is now Rheumy's bass player: providing the backbone for many of the group's songs, and contributes his own noisy feedback when the moment calls. Mack's presence added a slight flavour of post-punk that helped Izzy and Tomas break out of the more free-form ambient music they had previously made together.

On stage the band is surrounded by cables, synths and drums. When asked about their gear, they list out a string of names and numbers that would only make sense to the most gear-obsessed musos: an OM-27 Omnichord, a Behringer TD3 Bass Synth, a Telex LOC C1 Tape Machine. The soundscapes they produce can be abstract, but the members seem to understand how it's all meant to progress through telepathy.

The trio explained that all they have are broad, loose structures for each song, with Mack's basslines and the drum machines arguably being the only predetermined elements. "I think a lot of our live sound relies on luck," says Tomas. "A lot of the parts that I'm playing, I really don't know what they're going to be until I play them". Seeing Rheumy perform live is indeed an entirely immersive experience, a different realm entirely from a Pint Night or a sweaty show at the Crown.

While the improv remains a key element of the Rheumy equation, their process of constructing a song is painstaking and arduous. "I feel like a Rheumy song being written is like something crawling out of primordial sludge and taking form into something... It's finding order in chaos," Tomas explains. Many of the group's early writing sessions began with a drum beat programmed by Izzy, and the group "would listen to them until music started to happen [...] a couple of those songs we played for hours on end before they would become anything..." she says.

Similarly, Izzy's lyrical process is born out of repetition. Often, she just starts with a central theme and begins improvising lyrics until something calcifies into a more solid idea. A big part of what makes a Rheumy set so haunting is the content of the lyrics themselves. "Every song Rheumy plays is about the way humans have power over each other," says Izzy. "I think that's pretty much what every song will be about as long as the band [exists]." This continuously proves to be a deep well of inspiration, with their songs topics ranging from environmental destruction, to exploitation of labour, and cannibalism.

Rheumy are working towards a five-track album, which Izzy says was actually the original goal for the band: "Once that mythical album's done, that might be the band. Probably not, but that one album is the point of the band." And while the band has evolved a great deal in just the last year, Rheumy seems happy to exist in a constant state of change and metamorphosis, adding that after this album they "will probably change heaps more... I can totally see a fully electronic Rheumy!"

Ultimately, Rheumy provides a live sonic experience unlike any other in Ōtepoti's musical landscape, one which only gets better with every set they play.

Follow Rheumy on Instagram @rheumy_dn to stay up to date with their upcoming gigs and musical outings. ★

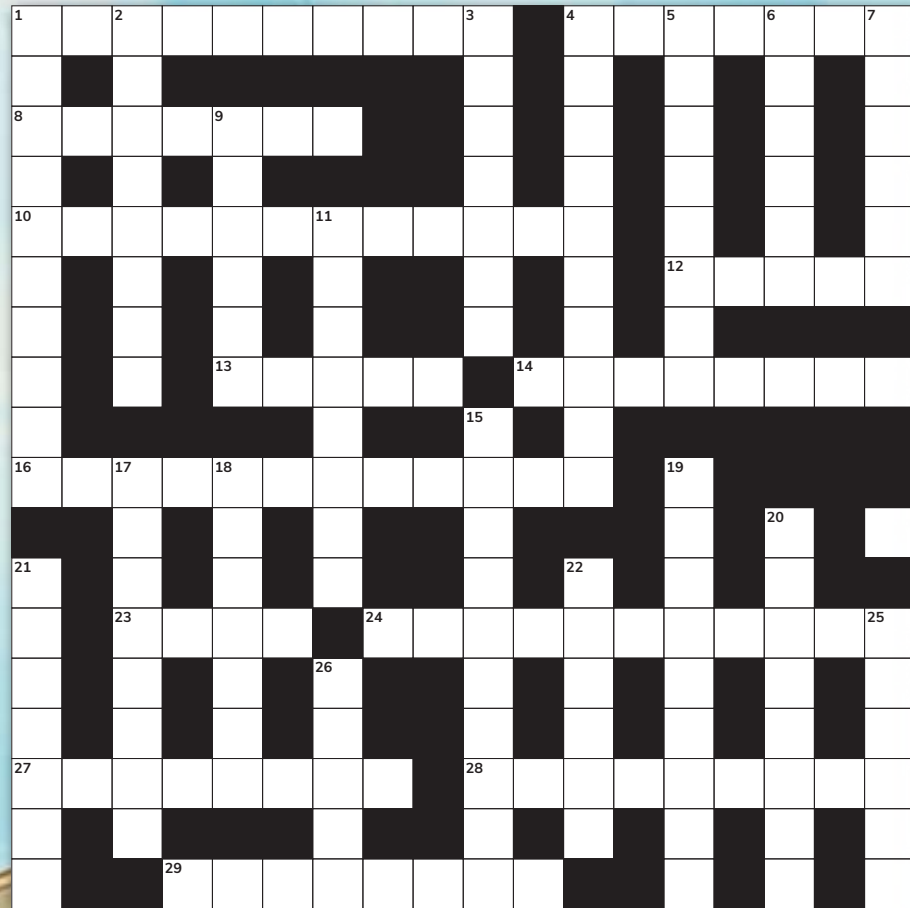
ACROSS

- 1 Upcoming Christopher Nolan film (2)
- 4 Rummage through, causing damage
- 8 Lord of the Rings character, sometimes called 'Strider'
- 10 Destroying beyond repair
- 12 A form of fast, pitch-shifting singing
- 13 Sound made by a horse
- 14 2024 Sabrina Carpenter song
- 16 Given up, waived
- 23 A person's atmosphere, common word amongst the youngsters
- 24 Cruelly, without pity
- 27 Military water containers
- 28 Equipped with solid defenses
- 29 Someone who enjoys fire too much

DOWN

- 1 The spikes on a stegosaurus' tail
- 2 Allowing
- 3 Talking annoyingly
- 4 Identified by someone
- 5 A doubtful and/or objecting person
- 6 Thor's homeland
- 7 A dog's house
- 9 Choice
- 11 Mock
- 15 Found on skifields
- 17 2016 musical film starring Emma Stone (3)
- 18 Speak over and/or tell a story
- 19 2010 film featuring a spinning top
- 20 Cheeky behavior
- 21 Very short hairstyle (2)
- 22 Venomous snakes
- 25 Long glass, typically used at 21st parties
- 26 Australian canine

Crossword St



FIND ANSWERS ON CRITIC.CO.NZ



5	4	6	2	9		
1	8			7	3	
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HARD



- SOUP
- VIKINGS
- CHAV
- DALMATIAN
- HIPPIE
- THAGOMIZER
- SURVEILLANCE
- HYDE
- DELIVEREASY
- DILDO
- BINOCULARS
- PEOPLE
- WALLY
- TROLLS
- SMURFS
- GLORIAVALE
- HASHBROWN

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There are 10 differences between the two images
Illustrated by Eddie Fenton



PEOPLE

Hyde Street Party is the best day of the year for any self respecting Otago student. Sorry St Paddy's, you've been dethroned – if you were even up there anyways.

Hyde Street Party has become a sacred tradition of the student body. The thrill of putting your flatmates names in the lottery, hoping to receive that blessed email saying "YOU'RE GOING TO THE HYDE STREET PARTY!" It's the kind of email that gets screenshotted and sent to the groupchat faster than you can say "Save Critic" and is usually followed by a week and a half of agonising over what you're going to dress as, exacerbated by randoms posting fake theme lists in Castle26. In terms of costumes, Hyde Street has seen it all. Whether you are dressed as a human-size Kego minifigure, a Smurf or a cop, you're sure to have a day filled with drinking, music and the most shit chat possible.

Critic Te Ārohi was there, and wandered through the masses to get involved with some of that shit chat. Our feet smushed hash browns further into the pavement while bass blared, the ever-present smell of liquor hung in the air, and some important questions were put to students. Here is what Hyde 2026 had to say.



THE SMURFS

Critic: "How many apples tall are you?"
Smurfs: "One apple" (Editors Note: Real smurfs are three)
Critic: "What is the best costume at Hyde?"
Smurfs: "Us."



GIRL SCOUTS

Critic: "What is your favourite badge you have earned?"
Girl Scouts: "The Hyde Badge."
Critic: "If you were a dumpling, what flavour would you be?"
Girl Scouts: "Pork and cabbage"

OF HYDE

Interviewing by Molly Smith-Soppet
Photography by Babacar Diallo



THE NINJA TURTLES

Critic: "What are your names?"
Ninja Turtles: "Rachel. Wait, no – Micheal. Michelangelo."
Critic: "What is the Turtle's biggest tip for a night out?"
Ninja Turtles: "More beers."



FANCY NANCY

Critic: "What was your favourite childhood tv show?"
Fancy Nancy: "Paw Patrol and Franklin"
Critic: "If you were an alcoholic drink, what drink would you be?"
Fancy Nancy: "Nitro!"



THREE CARROTS AND A (TOUCHY) PRIEST

Critic: "Which Dunedin street is the best to live on?"
Carrot: "Leith. You get the benefits of Castle, but it's not Castle."
Critic: "Is Castle Street dead?"
Carrot: "I wouldn't say it's dead, but it is a bit hectic."



SEX POSITIONS: SPOONING, 69, MISSIONARY, AND COWGIRL

Critic: "What do you guys study?"
Sex Positions: "Finance, hence the early arrival."
(Editors Note: It was 12:05pm)
Critic: "Best song to hear on a night out?"
SP: "Hurricane by Bridget Mendler, and Afterglow by Wilkinson."



THE TROLLS

Critic: "What side of the bed do you sleep on?"
Troll 1: "Depends if I have someone in my bed."
Troll 2: "Whatever side the charger is on."
Critic: "Is drinking water while you are on a night out worth it?"
Troll 1: "We are actually med students [...] Scientifically it's proven to be..." **(Editor's Note: She did not finish her sentence, so I guess we will never know.)**



GLORIAVALE GIRLS

Critic: "Where the fuck did you get the Gloriavale outfits?"
Gloriavale Girl 4: "My Nana made them for us!"
Critic: "Shit ok. That's dedication to Hyde!"
Critic: "What is your favourite bible verse?"
Gloriavale Girl 2: "John 3:16!" **(Editors Note: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life)**



CAVE-WOMEN

Critic: "How would you rate the Hyde hashbrowns?"
Cave-Women: "10."
Critic: "What is the best music they play in clubs?"
Cave-Women: "Not DnB [...] The best is, like, sing-alongs."



VECTOR

Vector: "Oh yeaaahhh!"
Critic: "Vector, what is your most devious lick?"
Vector: "My girlfriend's heart."
Critic: "Damn! Vector smooth as fuck." ★





I set out to answer the question plaguing the minds of touch-starved homosexuals everywhere: what is the ideal soup to make for a Grindr hook-up?

You may ask: why Grindr specifically? And after you ask that, you may then ask: why are you finding out soup popularities from Grindr users?

Well, preliminary testing (with 'Soup-Hinge' and 'Soup-Tinder') revealed some key advantages to Soup Grindr. Grindr doesn't require a face picture – which is perfect so as not to accidentally catfish anyone. Its user base also leans towards casual encounters, which lowers the barrier to weird niche conversations. And crucially, you don't even need to match – anyone can message you. The main draw is, of course, that Grindr is full of gay people, and gay people fucking love soup!

Over several months, I was – allegedly – more successful than those using the app for its intended purpose. I received nearly 300 responses, 32 unsolicited dick pictures and got involved in at least one debilitating lesbian situation. Consider this a warning – the gays really love soup.

Methodology

My method was simple: download Grindr, create an account, and optimise for soup.

The goal was to maximise the chances of soup-based interactions whilst minimising the amount of people who actually wanted to hook up with me. Grindr lets you tag identities and preferences (bear, twink, dl, poly, T4T, etc).

I listed the one that felt most appropriate ('cooking') and made a bio that would be sure to attract Grindr's most soup-opinionated gays. I said that I was a lesbian, but happy to chat soup with anyone (soup love knows no boundaries). I encouraged everyone to tell me their soup opinions, and that I was genuinely interested in only that, not hook ups or dates. DNI only if you don't like soup.

While gathering data, I recorded responses verbatim, then sorted them into broader categories based on similarity and frequency. In cases where people listed more than one favourite soup, I asked them to narrow it to two options – and both soups would score one half mark from myself.

I treated "soup" as a broad umbrella category, including stews and such. My results were gathered from across the country, thanks to Grindr's absurd 900+ km matching radius, though it skews South Island-heavy as I was in Dunedin for a large chunk of this time period.

My Findings

Demographics

Most respondents were older men (30-50 years old), which tracks with Grindr's general userbase. There were also younger users, and a small handful of women (largely transgender). Most identified as gay or bisexual, but there was a surprisingly large contingent of professed heterosexuals. These were either chasers or, in a few cases, genuinely lost.

More concerning were the few individuals who claimed not to like soup enough to have a preference. Deeply troubling. One user with the display name 'I h8 soup', is now my

arch-nemesis. I sent him a recipe for a delicious lentil, kūmara and kale soup. No response. Fuckwit.

Anyways, on to the soup popularity tier lists.

Tier 1 Soups - Classic Staples

Pumpkin dominated (21.8%), emerging as the gay's clear favourite – comforting, sweet, and aggressively inoffensive. Taken collectively, "Chicken soups" do end up coming close (18.8%), but fail, even collectively, to get ahead.

Tomato (10.4%) came in next – notably seasonal, with a spike as summer rolled in. This was followed by plain Chicken soup (9.2%), Chicken Noodle (7.4%) and finally Miscellaneous Vegetable (6.6%).

These are what I'd call "base soups" – the kind you could find in packets, tins, or Andy Warhol paintings (though of course, best made from whole ingredients). That's not meant to be disparaging. These soups, when done well, are the best of crowd-pleasers and have lots of room for you to iterate on and develop into your own home soups.

If you're trying to impress a Grindr hook-up without scaring them off, this is your lane. Roast your veggies, sprinkle chilli flakes, and add some secondary ingredients (kūmara, roast capsicum, onion and garlic). You'll be sure to make a soup to please anyone.

Tier 2 Soups - #Notlikeothersoups

Tier 2 soups are more specific, but still very popular in their own right: Leek and Potato (4.8%), French Onion (4.0%), Minestrone/Pasta soups (3.5%) and Mushroom (3.2%).

These are "classy soups." If they're your favourite soup, you are certifiably "not basic", and statistically more likely to know how to caramelize onions without Googling it.

They're also more divisive. Mushroom, in particular, produced strong reactions – people either loved it or absolutely did not want a bar of it. French onion carries risk: done well, it's life changing. Done badly, it's just wet onions and wasted time.

These soups suggest dedication, intention, and a willingness to put more effort in than Jamie Oliver did with those school lunches. Proceed carefully if making them for a first date, these soups are more 3rd date material.

Tier 3 Soups - Underrated Icons

Tier 3 soups are more niche still, but popular enough to have at least a handful (4-8) people mention them specifically. I like to call these cult favourites. We have Pork/Ham/Bacon (2.6%), Chicken and Corn (2.2%), Laksa (2.0%), and Mulligatawny (1.7%), which was seemingly exclusively popular among 40+ year olds. Finally, we have Lentil (1.7%) which, in my opinion, is criminally low.

These soups aren't dominant in the soup-sphere by any means, but they're pretty memorable. They tend to be richer, more flavour-forward, and often tied to specific cultural or personal preferences. These are the kind of soups that you bring out once the relationship has settled a little, potentially post meeting-the-parents.

Tier 4 Soups - Bottom of the Bowl

Here we get to the deeply underrated, the highly specific and the downright bizarre. I won't list all of them here, but I do have some I'd like to highlight.

We start with Broccoli (1.2%), followed by Beef (1.1%), both of which are about where I would expect them to be. Broccoli and Cheese and Borscht (both 1.0%) deserve much more aroha, whereas Leek (1.0%), and Leek and Bacon (1.0%), were victims of my categorisation system. I couldn't quite justify merging these two since they're still kind of distinct.

Miso was a standout for being much, much lower than I would have expected it to be (0.7%). Pear and Walnut (0.3%), Orange and Cumin (0.3%) and Wild Nettle and Garlic (0.2%) were all such fascinating combinations that I have made it a goal to make them all by the end of this year. Even a seasoned soup expert like myself can expand their horizons.

Incredibly low were any fish soups. For example, Seafood Noodle (0.3%) and Chowder (0.7%). This wasn't necessarily surprising, but I imagined there would be at least a few more people into them. Fair enough – seafood prices are out the gate. I'm quite disappointed in the lack of kūmara soup (0%) as it's one of my personal favourites. I did also have one guy respond with "one day blinding soup" (0.3%) and then refused to elaborate beyond telling me that it's soup that makes you go blind for one day, which was great.

Soup Lessons & Closing Thoughts

This experiment changed me. I would like to acknowledge the following participants:

To the beautiful Wellingtonian woman who suggested adding miso paste to my soups: thank you. It worked really well in a tomato soup I made recently. To the people who recommended mixing coconut cream into my soups: genuinely transformative. To the man who blended an entire Big Mac combo (soda included) into soup: what the fuck. To those who sent me recipes and soup pics: appreciate it. To the five people who diagnosed me with autism because of this study: unsure what to say to that.

My next steps are to actually go and make all of the soups I haven't yet tried so I can definitively determine my favourite.

As my findings have shown, there is a huge variety of soups out there – meat soups, veggie soups, noodle soups, and many more. This is one of my favourite things about soups. Although the form is generally similar, the ingredients, spices, flavour and texture profiles are incredibly diverse, and even the most obscure soups have their own ardent supporters.

So get out there. Experiment. Do something strange.

And most importantly, go forth and make soups! ★



WHERE DOES ALL MY DATA GO?

The Connection Between Your Personal Information and Education

By Matilda Rumball-Smith & Hanna Varrs
Illustrated by Eleanor Walker



Whether you care where your data goes or not, it's safe to say our world has become increasingly digitalised. When Critic Te Ārohi asked 623 students if they felt they had a good understanding of how their data is used online, 52% admitted that they had "no idea". Only 11% felt that they thought they knew, with a further 37% reckoning they had "some understanding". Out of 513 students, only 27% felt that how their data was used online was something that interested or concerned them, with another 27% saying that they "really didn't care" about how their data was used.

Despite it all, the majority of students do seem to care about where their data goes, given that 46% indicated that they'd like to know more. Given the increasingly digital environment we operate in, the short answer to where your data goes is "everywhere". However, what we can do is think about the institutions and agencies we interact consistently with, and evaluate how our data is used by them. After that, we can begin to question why our data is used in that way.

Generation Z are commonly referred to as "digital natives". It is widely regarded that we are the first cohort of students to grow up with widespread, accessible technology. For many, our digital interactions first began in primary school, where getting your pen license was swapped for typing games on the classroom Chromebooks. We were issued school emails for the likes of Google Classroom, passwords for learning platforms, and portals to submit our assignments. Schoolyard friendships forged groupchats instead of playdates, trading boardgames for onlinelobbies. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated a shift toward online education, with digitally driven and distance learning becoming increasingly mainstream. Academic qualifications, programmes and degrees are easier to earn without ever setting foot in a physical classroom. The digitalisation of learning was fueled by its own successes, introducing a plethora of benefits that greatly increased access to education. The University of Otago is one of many educational institutions that embraced this acceleration to the digital.

The use of technology within educational settings has now graduated beyond a mere enhancement to learning, and rather places itself as a prerequisite to progression throughout education. It's a far cry from the paper and pen exams our parents sat, or the days of begging your classmate to please send through the notes for a lecture you needed to skip – but it all seems so normal now. Perhaps part of being a "digital native" is a lack of critical evaluation of the digital world around us, given it's all we've ever been a part of. The large institutions around us end up knowing a hell of a lot about us, all through the constant interaction and use of online platforms owned and operated by those institutions. The price for use of online tools generally is your own personal data, which doesn't just disappear. Your data persists, but you don't own it – the institutions that collect it do. But it's still information about you – information that could be used to influence the way that you think and behave. It's worthwhile trying to keep up with where it all ends up, given tech is so embedded in nearly every aspect of our lives.

WHAT THE UNIVERSITY COLLECTS AND WHY

The University of Otago is one example of an institution that knows our personal data as students. Like any other institution that gathers personal data, the University has

a privacy statement. A privacy statement sets out what personal information an agency will collect and what they will use it for. The statement basically communicates this information to individuals to ensure that they're aware of the ways in which their personal information is being used.

The Privacy Commissioner defines personal information as "information about an identifiable individual". That's any information that tells us something specific about an identifiable person. So, for example, your student ID number. That's information about you because it's a number linked to you. Even though your student ID number doesn't name you, it can still be used to identify you.

If you Google through the hoops to find the University's privacy statement, they outline three broad ways they collect your personal information. The first way is when you give it to them yourself. For instance, when you do your enrolment and application process to become a student at Otago. They may also collect information from third parties, such as your high school marks. The third source is personal information that is generated using University services, such as use of Aoroa, or use of their wifi.

For every instance of collection of personal data, there's a corresponding purpose of collection. Generally, personal information is collected for the purposes of carrying out the University's "operations, functions and activities".

Some of the purposes for collection are obvious, such as considering applications for study, or enabling academic progression. The University has to collect some information out of contractual and legal necessity too, like to comply with health and safety requirements, provide services requested of the University or to meet obligations under the Education and Training Act.

The Privacy Statement specifically outlines our rights (drawn from the Privacy Act) in relation to our personal information. You can ask the University for a copy of the personal information they have processed, and to correct any information that you think is wrong. You can also request for your personal information to be erased if it is no longer needed, or you have withdrawn your consent. Erasure will depend on whether the University accepts your objection to the processing of your information, and if they have no other lawful basis for retaining it. You can't really force them to give it up, but you can ask nicely.

AOROA – OTAGO'S LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

We all know about our new learning management system (LMS). Aoroa, powered by Brightspace, replaced LMS Blackboard. Alongside Evision (soon to be Aonui), Aoroa is critical in ensuring students can oversee, manage and interact with their degrees. It's where we submit our assignments, find the lecture readings and engage in discussions.

Using an LMS is nothing new. As previously mentioned, we've been learning within a digitalised educational framework for a while now – all throughout primary, up until tertiary, and then beyond. Given that we interact with this LMS on the day to day, it might be worth having a think about how much it knows about you.

To learn some more about how our LMS operates with regards to our personal info, Critic Te Ārohi consulted Professor Tim Cooper, the Dean of Learning and Teaching at Otago University. Compared to Blackboard, Tim told us that Aoroa has “increased learner-analytics” functionality that was not previously available. These analytics are commonly known as “learner insights”. Brightspace, through your interactions with Aoroa, keeps track of a whole bunch of learner insights and activity information. Insights include log-ins and course access times, time spent in course areas, access to content such as lecture notes and readings, quiz and test activity, whether students have viewed feedback on assignments or quizzes. If you’re a little on the backfoot with readings, Aoroa would know that too. Reading lists show how many times an item was accessed and the approximate time spent viewing a reading.

Tim assured that the data collected were “simple indicators of digital activity”, which help the University understand patterns of engagement. As we discovered accidentally, students can actually view a snapshot of the data that is being collected about them under the ‘My Progress’ tab in Aoroa. Look on the right side of your Aoroa Home Page for the progress tab. It contains sections for Content Visited, Course Access, System Access, Discussions (posts read, replied to and authored), to name a few. According to Tim, we were a bit behind the information gathering curve, as “every other university in New Zealand already uses these tools.”

Some features are specific to online lecture recordings. Echo360, Otago’s video management platform, derives learner insights in the form of number of views and total viewing time of lectures, whether recordings were watched live or later, participation in video polls (if used), whether slide decks appended to recordings were viewed and whether students placed ‘confusion flags’. You might have also noticed that watching lectures on Aoroa via Echo360 requires students to allow cookies and/or cross site tracking, as it interferes with Echo360’s functionality. Additionally, various forms of ad-blockers or “wide-spectrum blocking programs” can interfere with Echo’s ability to collect accurate viewing data for media. “This can result in you not receiving proper credit for watching videos on our platform,” Echo360’s site explains. “We certainly want our users to be able to block unwanted ads or user tracking on their browsers. But we strongly suggest you disable these blocks for the EchoVideo domain.” It’s another example of how complex tech requires our personal info to function, and a side effect of an increasingly digitalised education.

Tim explained that the primary purpose of Aoroa’s data collection is to support students. It helps the lecturers to plan teaching, as well as giving the University a heads up to reach out to those that are struggling. “International evidence shows that early, supportive outreach to students who may be disengaging, for reasons such as illness, anxiety, financial difficulty, or housing instability, can significantly improve wellbeing and academic success,” Tim explained. “Our aim is to be able to identify these patterns early and offer help, not to surveil students.”

The ability to access all of these insights are strictly monitored and governed by the University’s data-security and privacy policies. To break it down, course lecturers are given access to a limited view of data for the papers they teach and administer. The Student Experience team is granted access to a subset of information to support individual students that may be struggling. Digital Services, who manages Aoroa, has access to everything, but cannot access student activity without strict authorisation. The data is not used for “surveillance purposes” or to “disadvantage students in any way”, including judging students, enforcing discipline or penalising people for the way they study.

When asked if the University would ever consider the insights about lectures watched or readings complemented in an application for an extension or special considerations, the short answer was “no”. “Information from the LMS would not be used when considering an application for an assessment extension or for special consideration,” Tim continued. Those kinds of decisions are based solely on “documented personal circumstances and their impact on the student”, and not on “digital engagement patterns.” A small caveat here would be circumstances in which IT data logs could be used to verify issues where students reportedly have had IT and access issues to digital systems, “in support of applications.”

Additionally, Aoroa does not record data relating to in-person learning, a student’s notes, tutorials and labs. According to Tim, the insights reflect “only one small part of student learning”, and are “one indicator among many”. In fact, Critic talked to one student who was emailed by their paper staff due to analytics showing that they hadn’t looked at any course material for two weeks. So, if you’re a crammer, or went into the exam without watching a single lecture, you won’t get in trouble. However, that data is still collected, and it’s not exactly like Aoroa is shouting its collection capabilities from the metaphorical Richardson rooftop to students.

UNIVERSITY WEBSITES AND APPLICATIONS

When you visit University public facing websites and applications (anything ending with an otago.ac.nz), you may volunteer your IP address, domain name, address of your server, the type of browser and operating system you’re using, the date and time you’re visiting, the pages you access and documents you download. Furthermore, you may show the sites you visited before accessing University sites, access details for restricted websites and any other information you provide via online forms, surveys, and so on. Bit of a mouthful.

This data is primarily collected through cookies – a small text file that is sent to your browser from the University’s web server. While the University uses some of their own cookies, they also use third-party cookies, such as the Google Analytics cookie. According to the privacy statement, third party cookies are used to “improve our services, enhance your online experience with us, maintain the secure connection between your browser and our servers while you are using our websites, and for marketing purposes”.

According to Tim, the University undertakes digital advertising activity aimed at raising awareness of the study options, degrees, majors, pathways, events, and key information relevant to prospective and current students. By using data related to page visits or engagement with content, the data is primarily used for “aggregated reporting” and, in some cases, to “retarget audiences who have previously engaged with University content in order to provide them with relevant information.”

Policies regarding profiling, advertising and marketing are sprayed all over the Privacy Statement. The statement explicitly says that the University may share personal information with marketing service providers, such as Facebook, Google (the University’s chosen data processor) and The Trade Desk so they can “deliver personalised ads to you on various platforms and devices... To help you see ads about things we think you will be interested in.”

Additionally, “with your consent” upon enrolling, the University uses your school email to create a Unified Identifier. A Unified Identifier is a special identifier assigned to an individual user which allows the University to track their behaviour across connected devices, like a codename. The fascinating thing about a Unified Identifier is that it can be used by advertisers to recognise us across all of our devices: laptop, tablet, phone, desktop, connected TVs – you name it. This means targeted advertising can be delivered across our whole network of devices, so long as you are signed in using your email and disguised with that Unified Identifier. “This allows advertisers

to create a more complete picture of a user’s interests and preferences, which can be used to deliver more relevant and personalised ads,” the privacy statement reads. Unified Identifiers also allow the University to generate aggregated insights about their audiences, including in relation to their location and demographics, “but these will not identify individuals.”

This means the University can send us advertising online, via social media, mail, email or text message, to provide us with ads that are “more relevant” based on our interactions with University sites. Tim explained that this ‘retargeting’ of audiences that had previously engaged with University content is meant to make us aware of study options, programmes and pathways that we may never have found on our own. He said that the intent of this advertising is not to “profile or influence individual student’s personal education records or academic activity”, but rather to “support awareness and discovery.”

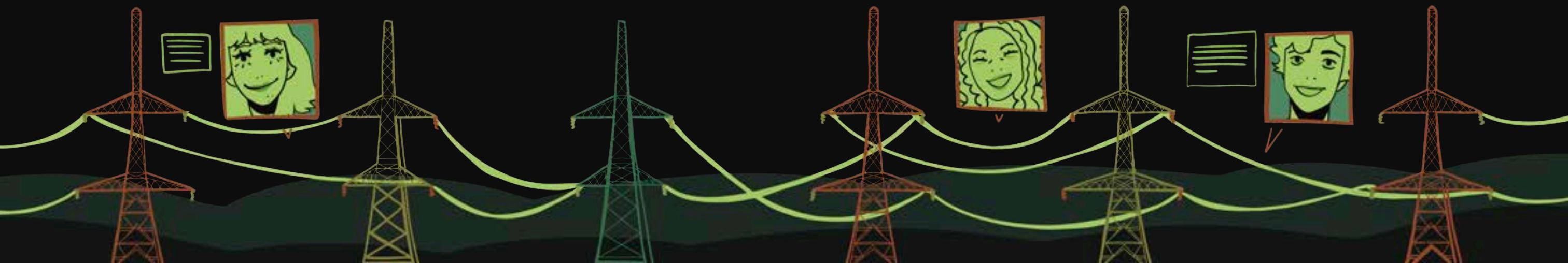
Tim also confirmed that although the University uses Google as their data processor, they do not provide any personal student data to third parties. This includes any student data from Aoroa/Brightspace, which is not used for any advertising purposes. It also does not make any profit from providing data to marketing service providers. Basically, the University is not selling our data. It’s just giving our data to these companies to produce advertising relevant to us.

Maybe you don’t think this sounds too bad at all. Data collection appears to basically be confined to the use of the University’s websites and applications. Maybe it’s a good thing to have personalised ads, interacting with an internet curated just for you. It can be really helpful to be in the know about what the University has on offer for you, delivered right in front of your face. Ignorance can be bliss – but not in the rat race.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

No matter how you feel about the amount of data education systems and services like Aoroa or otago.ac.nz collect on you, you may still wonder if you could opt out of it all. The advertising and the constant collection, for better or for worse, may seem extensive.

In theory, the University gives you an out: just install the “Google Analytics Opt-out Browser Add-on”. However, if you do so, it may restrict your ability to access some web pages, and the statement isn’t super clear on what this means. You also have to download a file onto your computer. If nothing else, the collection of your data appears to be the default.



Furthermore, even if you just let it happen, the data you give over will still stick around. While the Privacy Act encourages agencies not keep information for longer than is reasonably necessary, the length of time the University stores this collected information depends on the type of personal information collection. For example, the Public Records Act requires the University to retain our degree certificates and academic transcript forever, which makes sense given that we rely on universities to validate certifications, especially if we head overseas. Scholarship awards and programme enrolment typically needs to be held for a minimum of 7-10 years. Additionally, some pieces of legislation such as the Education and Training Act 2020 makes some personal information mandatory to supply to the University, so you wouldn't be able to get out of that one.

In terms of everything else, the Privacy Act requires that the University retain "other personal information" only for as long as necessary for a legitimate purpose. Tim told us that would include personal information in the LMS. But if we think back to the University's purposes for collecting information in the first place, such as "[managing] recruitment, marketing and fundraising activities", maintaining an "engaged community of students, alumni, and donors" and "[monitoring], [evaluating] and [improving] our performance and effectiveness, and the quality of our services", things kind of get muddy again.

Maybe the real gag of this all is that you can't really escape or opt out of this all if you want a tertiary education, at least in Aotearoa. And that's just some data collection, from one place that you voluntarily signed up to be a part of. Forget about education – think about other agencies, such as supermarkets, which you need to visit. Consider loyalty programmes, and memberships. All of your data ends up somewhere, and it can be a little hard to decode all of it based on a Privacy Statement that goes on for pages. Even though you might consent to that collection by ticking some box somewhere, actually understanding what you were giving over and whether saying 'no' was a practical option for you is a separate matter.

Living without tech is pretty hard unless you smash all your devices and live on a mountain cursing technology for the rest of your days with zero friends. But there was once a time of paper tests, unrecorded lectures, 'brick' phones and computers, and when "cookie" referred to a sweet treat, not a data collection tool. At some point, something changed. And now, the reason why we are in an age where personal information has become so critical to the use and continued survival of technology is more important than ever to examine.

THE RISE AND USE OF ONLINE PERSONAL INFORMATION

Let's take a short break to consider some tech history. For starters, computer use only became normal and widespread in households during the mid-to-late 1990s. While personal computers (PCs) first started gaining momentum in the late 1970s, growing into the 1980s, the explosion of the internet, the launch of Windows 95, and lower costs for PCs made them a near-necessity for home and schoolwork by the end of the 90s. With the PC boom, other companies began wanting to hitch a ride off of what was looking to be the best invention since toast.

Created in 1998, one such company was a budding search engine, called Google. According to Shoshana Zuboff, the author of *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, Google started off quite humbly, collecting data on their users' searches. This information wasn't stored, but was used to continuously improve its services for the sake of its users. It was like a loop: Google kept track of what you Googled, so you could Google better next time.

However, what comes up pretty much always comes down. In 2001, people realised all the hype about the rising use of the Internet was kind of just that – hype. Stocks invested in the newfound internet peeled away like a landlord special in a mouldy bathroom, revealing overvalued companies lacking profits or viable business models. There wasn't much real capital (money) behind any of it, leading to a massive market crash. For tech startups like Google, it was time to sink or swim – and more capital was their life jacket.

Google made a gamble and decided to try to increase advertisement revenue by leveraging its analytical abilities and repurposing the information they held about users' searches to match with keywords. While the information collected from searches had been pretty much a waste beforehand (only used to improve their users' experience), Google had just created something that would change how personal data is used forever. Google repurposed the data to deliver personally tailored targeted advertising, and that small gamble made them a lot of fucking money. Advertising suddenly got a whole lot smarter. Through Google, advertisers could reach their target audience directly. The capital came from the user information.

Changing what was previously thought to be data 'waste' into revenue was fucking genius, and nowadays targeted advertising is pretty much the norm. You'll see it everywhere – one search online about shoes will miraculously cause a Platypus ad to play before you watch a YouTube video. Or, in a University setting, a visit to a Master's in Zoology page for example, means it pops up on the side of the website you visit next. That surveillance of your activity and collection of information meant Google's revenue went from \$86 million in 2001, to \$3.2 billion in 2004. And that's where the continued survival of technology became so dependent on personal information.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

For any Politics students reading this, you may notice a few familiar features to the Google story. Karl Marx noticed that nothing good seems to stick around for free if a profit can be made off of it, like labour. Just like how most of the Western world survives off of the surplus profit that can be made through labour, the tech world figured out that it could survive from the surplus profit that could be made through personal data. This is called surveillance capitalism. The mining, storing, and analysing of private user data which is packaged into commercial products is bought and sold, often occurring without our explicit consent – or even our knowledge. And just like how it's pretty damn hard to get out of capitalism generally, it's hard to get out of globalised surveillance capitalism.

There are three main practices surveillance capitalism employs to remain purposefully hard to understand

and hard to get out of. Firstly, surveillance capitalism uses free-to-use services, such as social media. In doing so, the surveillance capitalist gains access to loads of behavioural data that you consent to giving over by using the platform (when you likely blindly agree to the terms and conditions). Secondly, the surveillance capitalist encourages the shifting of physical, in person socialisation to digital socialisation, which means giving over your behavioural data becomes a prerequisite to engage with society. Thirdly, surveillance capitalism entrenches and rewards early adopters of surveillance. Surveillance capitalists get bigger and better through the virtuous cycle of data collection.

Circling back to the fact that 52% of students said that they had no idea about what their data is used for, we don't actually blame you. Again, given how challenging it was to unpack the University's privacy statement, imagine how hard it would be to unpack every privacy statement that impacts you. It's exhausting. And that's a good thing for anyone who's in the business of data – perhaps surveillance capitalism wouldn't be doing so hot if everyone realised what it actually meant. The opaqueness pays off.

However, the University of Otago is not an outright surveillance capitalist. They lack the direct information-to-profit pipeline surveillance capitalists employ. While they use your information to target advertising, our data is not provided or sold to third parties for a profit. While it could be argued that the advertising leads to people enrolling and spending money on degrees at Otago, that's just advertising. As Tim said, "the intent of this advertising is not to profile or influence individual students' personal education records, or academic activity." Learning insights are not used to surveil you.

But more broadly, it's worth noting that the price we pay for having the entire internet at our fingertips is that every single search, page we view, time we spend on a certain webpage is data which can be collected and sold to advertisers. Surveillance capitalism has done pretty well at tricking users into thinking that use of social media platforms is a free product, the best way to engage with society. It turns out that us, the users, were actually the product all along.

As put by Shoshana Zuboff, the most major author of surveillance capitalism literature (we did our research), technology (smart phones, watches, rings, laptops, social media, Alexa's, ChatGPT) were all a Trojan horse. And once that Trojan horse made it beyond the walls of our society, something was waiting within – disguised and ready to embed itself. Within the shiny technological horse was surveillance capitalism.

The defining feature, the reason why surveillance capitalism is incapable of destruction, is that it flows through the same channels that we rely on to exist in society. Remember that a key feature of surveillance capitalism is that it posits itself as a prerequisite to engage with society by shifting everything to the digital. And yeah – that's what it's become. You have to use technology, and technology uses you right back.

The University of Otago is a place of learning, a pathway to get your degree, and also a part of a twenty-first century world that has embraced surveillance capitalism with open arms. The point is not whether it's a good or bad thing. Rather, we have to understand that surveillance capitalism and the use of our data exists all around us, and opting out isn't really an option. The key to mitigating these effects is being able to see how it affects you. By knowing where our data goes, and how it's collected, we have some authority over the process. We can challenge the opacity of the system that's become embedded in our lives. ★



radio one

may

is

NZ

Music
Month

by Lily Jane

Every May, the national music industry celebrates *Te Marama Puoro o Aotearoa*. This year's theme is 'Our Sounds, Our Spaces' – highlighting the important mahi our local venues, community startups, libraries, stations, marae, and beyond.

For us down here in chilly Ōtepoti, we'd be nothing and nobody without the work of our music spaces - the uptick in koha entry gigs over the past couple years has meant seeing live music can be one of the cheapest recreational activities you can do in this city (I know this because I haven't found a single free tennis court in this damn city. Why the f**k do I have to pay so much to access a slab of concrete?)

To kick off the celebrations, our first stop on the Radio One NZMM Activities tour will be a Live To Air featuring *Monkey Do* on Friday 1st during *Drive* (4pm). Across the month, there'll be several more Live To Airs to feed your earholes, and Friday 29th is NZ Music T-Shirt Day! This is self-explanatory. I wanna see your shitty, DIY Pearly* tee that'll be a Jackson-Pollock of vivid ink the first time you wash it, just as much as the AS Colour one your mate paid \$45 for.

You might think, why a whole month? Let me answer that with two more questions: How many Aotearoa artists can you name, and can you count them on two hands? Our national artists are rarely in the position to get as much financial or promotional support as international acts – By drawing recognition to the pretty decent shit we've got going on down here, we can break the myth that overseas talent is somehow better simply because they happened to be born in California or London.

And as always, the month will end with a bang. In a bunker one evening, the Student Radio Network station freaks gathered and decided, with their holy powers, that the last week of May would be deemed NZ Music Week, where we play 100% Aotearoa-made tunes for 7 days strong. If you've ever thought about "getting into more local music" (In a Hinge-prompt way or genuine), this will be the week to tune in for you.

So raise a glass (and your wallet) to NZMM! Buy releases on Bandcamp. Attend a show. Tune into a Live To Air. Go to Relics and purchase material goods from your favourite artists. If you don't have any money, go inside and give the staff a big kiss instead (DoNotDoThis). If you're especially lazy, post a song on your instagram story to pretend like you give a shit.

TOP 11



Bunchy's Big Score (Dn) Oscar Says 1

Office Dog (NZ) Front Row Seat 2

dORKWIND (NZ) Humunculous 3

Logan Edwards (NZ) Worry 4

Hamish Waddell (Dn) Follow U Down 5

Loa Loa (Dn) Give Me A Place 6

coldplushtoy (NZ) selfhelp 7

Sogg (Dn) Point That Thing Somewhere Else 8

Dropzone (NZ) Lake Monster (Stef Animal Remix) 9

Vera Ellen (NZ) thaw 10

Big Sims & Boomtown (NZ) Rent Free 11

STUFF HAPPENING

LIVE TO AIR
May 4th 4:30pm
The Beatniks are going out live on-air & youtube from Te Kōkoro o te Tūi

MARKET DAY
May 6th 10am - 3pm
Join us in The Link for cheap finds, crafty creations, and live music from Jacob Stevenson (Achtung!)

\$5 LUNCH MUSIC
May 13th / 20th 12pm
Come to the Evison Lounge to catch an hour of tunes. Featuring acoustic duos from Cleos & Doctor Wazoo

NZ MUSIC T-SHIRT DAY
May 29th

mazagran hit picks
Samantha Jazschine (NZ) How to be in love
SANGUINE (NZ) Lalo o le Maunga (e malu a)

STREAM RADIO ONE



OUASA EXEC KAMESHA JONES



Kia ora,
I spend far too much time on Instagram reels. It's true – though I wish it wasn't. And while I've now cut myself off from the addictive political whirlpool run by an 'unbiased algorithm', it is truly hard to escape from politics online. Even true before-bedtime brainrot now is vaguely political.

I would wager that the same rings true for many students here at Otago. Your knowledge of political change is highly rooted in our online presence. While it is overwhelming, hard to hear and sometimes just plain exhausting, we as students should not let the black hole of online politics swallow us whole. There are endless topics that students care about, but we tend to get lost in the highly polarised, overly woke, overly racist and misinformed takes that draw in clicks and algorithmic prioritisation.

The time I'm spending holed up in the Exec bullpen, tied up in bureaucracy, has had me wondering where our power as students really rests, especially in such an extreme and globalised political landscape. I've come to realise that politics is not just Wellington suits far away, nor is it half minute clips to scroll through and double tap. Politics is and always will be what we choose it to be, what we demand from the powerful and how we look after our communities.

Fuel prices making getting to work or classes difficult? Make noise about it. Unpaid placement meaning that bills are even harder to meet? Yell from the rooftops. Landlord fucked you over and don't know what to do? Pop into OUSA and we can help you make a fuss. If I can make any of this easier as your OUSA rep – please hit me up! Think freely, and act accordingly – or forever wish you had.

P.S Enrol to Vote!
Kamesha Jones ★



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FROM THE PĀTAKA

BITE-SIZED UPDATES FROM TE RITO

Brady Simeon – Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine (Communications Officer for Te Rito)
Heeni Koero Te Rerenoa – Ngāti Hine, Te Rarawa, Te Waiariki

The semester has properly settled into its pace now. Calendars are filling, deadlines are approaching, and the whare is rarely quiet. Before things tighten up even more, we are back in the pātaka, clearing the shelves and checking what has been happening and what is coming up.

SOMETHING SPICY

Across Aotearoa, the conversation is circling back to Te Tiriti in a way that feels both familiar and consequential.

The current New Zealand National Party-led government has signalled an intention to revisit and potentially narrow the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi, reframing how its principles are understood and applied. While this is being presented as clarification, it raises real questions about whose interpretations are being centred and how those interpretations will shape the direction of decision-making moving forward.

Shifts like this rarely stay at the level of language. They tend to carry through into how institutions define responsibility, how commitments are upheld, and how consistently those commitments are reflected in practice. Over time, what is reframed at the top becomes embedded across the systems people interact with every day.

The temperature is rising, and the direction being set now will shape what follows.

SOMETHING SWEET

And at the same time, the whare has been doing what it does best.

The Hangover Hākari delivered exactly what was needed. Post-Hyde Street, people arrived a little fragile and a bit dusty, but the whare was full and the kai rejuvenating. There was a full spread on offer, from brunch-style kai to the whare favourite raw fish, and it did the job of bringing everyone back to life. More than anything, it was the atmosphere that stood out, with people sitting together, debriefing, laughing, and easing back into themselves.

A huge thank you to Samuel Mokomoko for organising the day, and to everyone who supported it. Gold coin donations were collected for breast cancer support, so it was also a chance to give back.

Safe to say the kitchen's busy. That's what we've pulled from the pātaka this week. Kia pai te kai.

STILL COOKIN'

That same feeling has not gone anywhere. It is carrying straight through everything that is coming up next.

The Post-it note wall is up in the whare, opening a space for whakaaro, pātai, and ideas about where Te Rito is heading. Strategic planning does not always feel immediate, but this is one of those moments where it is, where what gets said now has somewhere to land.

This week also marks the start of Te Huinga Tauira season, with the first muster on 1 May, followed closely by Relay for Life on 2 May. Sitting back-to-back, they bring people together again in different ways, whether that is to connect, to reflect, or to show up for something bigger.

On the same day as this issue, ngā rōpū will also be on the court for the volleyball shield, another piece in what is already a full run of things.

BOOZE REVIEWS

By Swig60

THE 5 DESSERT-ISH BEERS

Sup pissers and shitters! This isn't your typical review. We couldn't remember what we thought of the drinks from Hyde, so we dragged our dusty rears through New World's health and wellness section and picked out 5 of the weirdest beers we could find. If your flatmate cooked a criminal dinner and you're in dire need of a dessert to emotionally recover, you're in luck – this week we have five dessert-ish beers for ya.

THE REVIEW

Brendan McSkullem – As cookies and cream ice cream is the second greatest thing to leave a white stain across my sheets, Urbanaut Brewing's Cookies & Cream Hazy IPA certainly caught my eye. The taste lived up to all my dreams. Initially, you get that classic hazy taste that we all know and some love. It then transforms into a ripper aftertaste of cookies and fuckin cream. This shit fuckin slaps. However, I felt quite ill afterwards, and there was some wack gritty shit at the bottom which did detract from the experience. Overall, this is quite pleasant if you can handle it. After all, it ain't no learner cone.

Israel Chugasanya – The Three Sisters Banana Smoothie Sour made my tummy hurt. It has the consistency of baby vomit and the taste isn't exactly far off either. The initial flavour is a pretty respectable banana smoothie, but it quickly gives way to lime juice and cat piss, which is great if you're into that – no judgement here. This 'beer' is perfect for our constipated lactose-intolerant readers, which is surely a thriving demographic. You can take it or leave it, but I am certainly leaving it. All over the toilet bowl.

Waisnorkel Naholo – Garage Project brings you a cereal milk stout. Now let's not get carried away – just because it tastes like breakfast doesn't mean you should be cracking one before work, although a tiger wood. Notes of milky stouts are very present, however the cornflake aspect feels like a marketing tactic. Smooth for a stout, sure. But if you're trying to forget your night, you'd pass out from being too full long before you get anywhere near blasted. You're not blacking out – you're just going to be crop-dusting your mates all evening and praying to a higher power that the toilet survives. Fun to try, but wouldn't buy again (much to the relief of the flatties who share a bathroom with me).

Speight Shepard – Urbanaut's Jam Doughnut beer sounds like something you'd find in a bakery, New World, or the centre console of a dodgy cop car. Somehow, they've pulled it off – it actually tastes somewhat like a jam doughnut. That said, like the rest of these, it's not something you'd drink 12 of and feel good about. I highly recommend this one for a one-off treat instead of your usual McFlurry.

Grog Robertson – Mount Brewing Co's Dark N' Stormy Cider. I thought it was a ginger beer, but it's actually a cider. I know its in the name, but I was dusty as fuck from Hyde. Give me a break. 6/10. With a mix up like that, you could end up in all sorts of situations you didn't sign up for.

If getting pissed isn't your primary goal and you just want something weird to entertain the flat (that isn't butt stuff), these are all decent one-off bevies. But at \$7-\$11 a can, let's just say these optimal for getting shit-faced off your student loan. ★



PROCTOLOGY

By Hanna Varrs

The Proctor's office managed to find the elves, who were promptly delegated to the Naughty List and asked to pay the Botanical Gardens for the loss of the Ginkgo/Christmas tree, which was valued at \$800. However, they weren't out of that giving Christmas spirit yet. They decided to set up a GiveALittle page, purported to be two passionate students wanting to give back to their community by buying the Gardens a Ginkgo tree.

Eventually, the Proctor got wind of it ("believe it or not, I didn't come down in the last shower"). News moves fast in the North Pole! Sorry – in North Dunedin. At this point, the fund had over \$800, which was a real Christmas miracle. The Proctor got the elves back in his office and suggested that their actions were fraudulent, which is a pretty scary word, and against the "spirit" of what was trying to be achieved by having them replace the tree.

In the end, the Botanic Gardens got two Ginkgo trees back for their mid-year Christmas: one from the GiveALittle, and one from the residents actually paying for the consequences of their actions. The University regained two nice elves after they'd properly remedied a well-intentioned, but inconsiderate, action. Everyone wins!

To be perfectly clear, the Proctor is all for mid-year Christmas scenes to "raise the spirit of the college". However, he recommends taking a trip out to the town Green Belt to look for fallen trees or branches instead of stealing from award-winning and meticulously cultivated gardens.

Proctor's Prescription

Other than taking a trip out to the Green Belt, the Proctor wants to recommend staying aware of how we're beginning to head into the cooler months, with daylight savings having ended over Easter. There will be longer nights, and we begin to enter into a season of study for many students with mid-terms.

Campus Watch has a free, 24/7 walk home service that can assist students getting back to a place of safety – whether that be your car, a more well-lit area or a flat. The Proctor promises that walking home with Campus Watch doesn't need to involve "holding hands or singing Kumbaya." They can walk 20 metres behind, and make it look like "we're not even with the student."

Campus Watch also have their Safety Patrol cars running from Wednesday to Saturday nights, 11pm to about 3am. Safety Patrol cars are usually staffed by both a male and a female Campus Watch member and offer rides to any student that is walking alone. They can also come in handy if your flatmate is too fucked up to stand, let alone do the 20 minute walk home. Ring Campus Watch to book it in – they'll try to get there ASAP to help, but can sometimes have a short delay.

Bear in mind that Safety Patrol is not a taxi. They're "not gonna take you into town to get on the raspberries," the Proctor says sternly, or drive out to Green Island. But they can make sure you're getting home safe in the student quarter. ★

Critic Te Ārohi was a little uncertain about whether the Proctor would be keen to meet once again, given our artistic interpretation of him. However, despite him thinking that the Proctology column would have "no readership interest" and be "dropped like a hot pie", we organised a time to catch up.

Upon arrival at his office, the Campus Watch crew greeted Critic by saying they were on strict instructions to "be nice" and let us straight up to the Proctor's Office. Feeling a bit like an official magazine for once, and not like a group of errant students constantly pestering the University, we bounded up the stairs.

If you're new here, Proctology is the branch of medicine concerned with the anus and rectum. And, apparently, student life.

This Month in the Clinic

So what's been happening in the student quarter as of late?

The Proctor reported an eventful, but relatively unproblematic, Saint Patrick's Day – all thanks to the help and planning from many community members. Looking at the big picture, the Proctor reckons he might be "lucky" for the next couple of Saint Patrick's Day celebrations, given they'll land on a Wednesday and a Thursday. But the year after that will be a Friday. If the Proctor had a crystal ball, it would show people from Christchurch and elsewhere heading to Dunedin for a very raucous long weekend. But he's got three years to think about that. "Maybe I won't be here!". He cackles at this for a good few moments.

Other than that, he hasn't got a whole lot more to share in terms of recent student shenanigans. But he seems to like Critic enough to not let us walk out with nothing, so he tells us a story from the recent past. The tale is as follows.

Two residents of one of the University residential halls had decided they would create a Christmas scene, mid-year, in the foyer of their college. Armed with a spade and saw, the pair went down to the Botanic Gardens, cut a few branches and dug up a couple of trees, and dragged it all back to their college. Unfortunately for Santa's little helpers, one of the trees that they had dug up was a ginkgo tree. Ginkgo trees are described as rare "living fossils", often surviving over 1,000 to 3,000 years. They have a lineage dating back to 350 million years, exhibiting fascinating longevity due to high resistance to disease, insects, and environmental stress. They only have one known weakness: Otago freshers.

Horoscopes



PISCES

While on the search for your next method of procrastination (doom scrolling), you'll remember the two hundred Instagram reels your Mum has sent you. Time to react to each one with a unique emoji, and explain to her that the video of a dog doing backflips is AI.

Your Monster energy flavour:
Ultra Gold



ARIES

You're gonna go to a pub quiz this week, and feel like an absolute genius when you get the most random question right. Watch out though, cause at the rate you're drinking, you're going to wake up with the fattest hangover in history on a Wednesday or something.

Your Monster energy flavour:
White Monster



VIRGO

You've recently had a dry spell. It's time to clean out the cobwebs and finally let someone into your *Chamber of Secrets!* Remember there are free condoms at Student Health and Tinder isn't that hard to install. Get your freak on!

Your Monster energy flavour:
Ultra Paradise



GEMINI

A small spider is going to set up camp in the corner of your room. You can A) befriend it and give it a name like Bob, B) scream your head off and use half a can of bug repellent, or C) move flats and never look back. May fortune forever be in your favour.

Your Monster energy flavour:
Ultra Rosa



AQUARIUS

This week, try to maximise your whimsy. Fall deeply in love with someone you see in the library, and Google love potions as an attempt to win their heart. Okay – it might be a little hard to get a lock of a stranger's hair, but the thought was cute.

Your Monster energy flavour:
Papillon



SCORPIO

The skies are grey, and the leaves are falling. Even if it doesn't feel like there is a light at the end of the tunnel, keep yearning for the summer sun so you don't go insane. In the meantime, hunker down, keep your friends close, and start planning summer festival outfits.

Your Monster energy flavour:
Aussie Lemonade



TAURUS

When you hit the clubs this week, your friends will look to you as a responsible adult. Time to roll up your sleeves and reassuringly pat them on the back as they cry out their deepest sorrows to you. After all, you are the flat mum for a reason.

Your Monster energy flavour:
Ultra Violet



CAPRICORN

Growing up, you thought uni was going to be just like *Gilmore Girls*. The hustle-and-bustle from this week is going to prove that you thought wrong. Your soul is yearning for an Irish goodbye from all your responsibilities. And a sesh with your mates.

Your Monster energy flavour:
Mango Loco



LEO

Your cravings and hormones are running wild this week. Don't be surprised if you end up walking through the aisles of the New World like a junkie going through withdrawals. Midterms are done, so curl up in bed, get snacking and binge watch your comfort movie.

Your Monster energy flavour:
Pineapple Punch



CANCER

Someone close to you will get on your last fucking nerve this week. Maybe it's the way they talk over you, or how they "borrow" your stuff. With the amount of times you've ranted to your mum this week, surely it's a sign to cut them off.

Your Monster energy flavour:
Fiesta Mango



LIBRA

You're going to wake up with a burst of energy you haven't had since primary school. With all this newly found will to live, what will you choose to make of the day? As all the possibilities circulate in your mind, don't forget that fat to-do list you've been meaning to tackle.

Your Monster energy flavour:
Peachy Keen



SAGITTARIUS

Those TikToks promoting Feet Finder are starting to look like a reasonable form of income. So grab your nail polish and try your hardest to make your dogs look appealing. Maybe you'll be able to afford more than 2 minute noodles soon.

Your Monster energy flavour:
Original Green



TRUCK STOP TINDER

By Lady Pain Grey

At the end of the academic year, one must take stock. Papers passed: 7. Extra-curriculars: doing them. Friends made: heaps. Huzz: 0. A big, fat, embarrassing zero. After the last few students trickled out of Duffers for the summer, I sat through my first few sexless weeks doing the maths. If I didn't get on the apps soon, my chances of a Dunner Summer love story were next to none.

Tinder at that time in the year was a game of sifting through the dregs. Exes, opps, highschool acquaintances, Polytech students. How do you break free from the onslaught of identical bogans? Easy. Hook up with an out-of-town bogan.

I matched with a profile that showed no dead animals, which was already a massive win. Conventionally attractive, jacked, slightly freaky Christchurch man. He's my age, and drives his truck through Ōtepoti weekly. Gainfully employed – we love to see it. After a couple weeks of talking, we made a plan for me to stay over while he's in town.

Picture this: I'm in a 10pm Uber direct to the train station. Usually I love a chatty Uber driver, but when you are wearing your most scandalous underwear and your pockets are full of OUSA condoms, it really dampens the story about his granddaughter's nativity play. The station is devoid of people, cars and light. A lone transport truck sits in the parking lot. My driver asks who I'm meeting. "Just a friend," I lied, as alarm bells started going off in my head.

I step out of the Uber and my phone lights up: I see you. The truck's headlights flash. My chatty Uber driver is still watching, probably noting details for the police report. I open the door of the truck, and hoist myself into the passenger's seat. He says "hey" before pulling back a curtain to reveal a built-in padded leather bed with a sleeping bag on it. The alarm bells have turned into sirens. This is how I die.

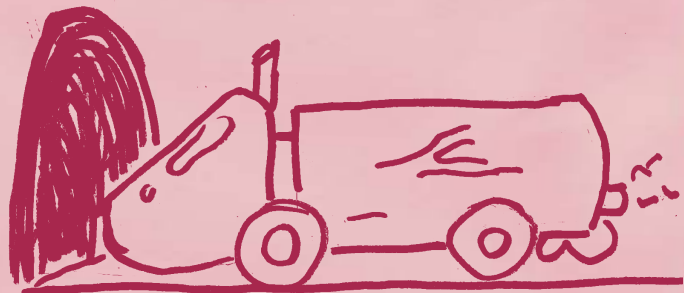
We try to get it on. Kissing, touching – the leather's moaning more than I am – but something's off. I look down. Nothing's happening. I ask if he's okay. "It just gets a bit shy, with new people," he says. After putting in the hard yards,

we manage to get the shy little guy up. At this point I'm not even offended, just resigned to the absurdity of it all. We have the most anticlimactic, tepid, five minutes of sex anyone has ever had, before he asked, "Uhh – where can I cum?" The shame sets in and I realise what a loser this guy actually is. But just when I thought I'd hit rock-bottom, I hit the Earth's core. "Umm... Kinda have an early morning tomorrow. Uh, so, yeah!"

You don't have to tell me twice. I quickly get dressed and we exchange an awkward farewell. I watch him disappear back behind the curtain as I climb down from the truck. I decide the risk of getting the previous Uber driver is too high, and begin my walk home. An early morning walk of shame seems much more favourable than the Uber driver of suspicion.

A month later, I'm sitting in Student Health, staring at a text. Please make an appointment for your results. Despite all precautions (slipped, slopped, slapped, wrapped), I like to think I got it from him. The chlamydia of the situation was so powerful that the condom didn't stand a chance.

My power of attorney has officially been transferred to my flatmates. All future decisions will be made by committee. Please direct any sexual propositions accordingly. Cheers. ★



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RALPH HOTERE and BILL CULBERT P.R.O.P. 1991 (detail). Corrugated iron and neon tube lights. Collection Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Reproduced by permission of the Hotere Foundation Trust and the Bill & Pip Culbert Trust

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