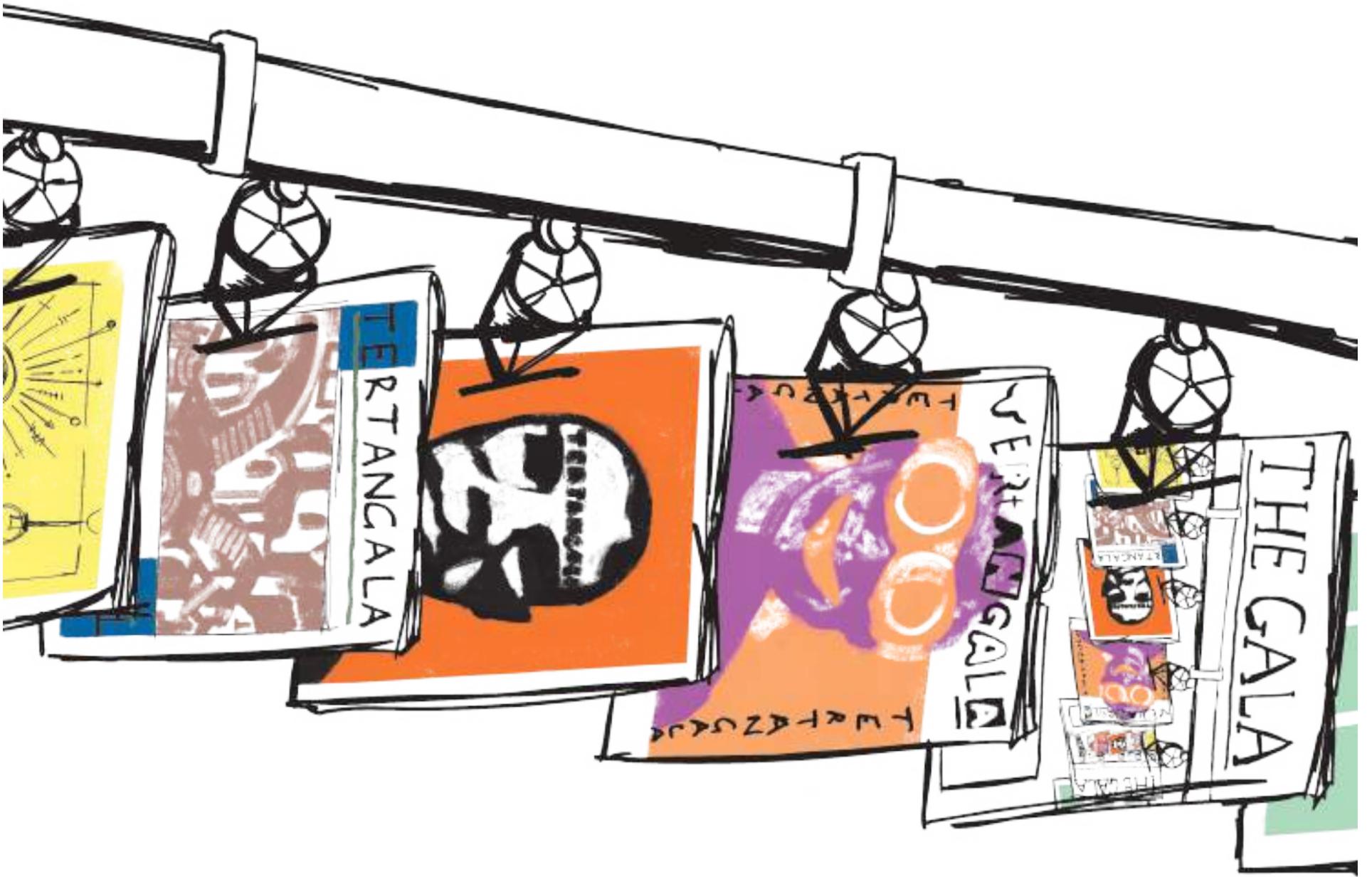


THE GALA

est. 1962

Autumn Session - Week 2

06/03/2026



‘Too many coppas, not enough justice’

By Jess Hewett

My friend and I tried to move out of the pinch caused by the police by walking sideways. As we did this, presumably looking shocked, a police officer says to us;

“Just do what we say and you won’t have anything to worry about.”

p. 5

O-Week recap!

By The Tert Executive

When I wasn’t chasing the free food or getting rained on behind the Tert table, I had a lot of fun seeing all the vibrant clubs and societies on campus, jamming with the UOW Music Club, and pretending to be a first-year student to get as much swag as possible from UOW’s support services.

p. 10 - 11



Acknowledgement of Country



The Tert would like to acknowledge and pay respects to the Dharawal and Wodiwodi peoples. The University of Wollongong is located on the stolen sovereign land of these peoples.

We acknowledge that this land is Indigenous land that was shared and sustained by Indigenous nations for over 60,000 years before invasion.

We express our solidarity and continued effort to address the ongoing effects of colonialism and the deprivation of Indigenous sovereignty.

CONTENTS

President's "Gala" welcome WUSA	4
'Too many coppas, not enough justice' Jess Hewett	5
From the Bisalloy picket line Aleksandar Sekulovski	6
Who the hell is Herzog? Ryan Chapman	8
From Sarah to Renee Good: a repetition of violence Serena Emanuele	9
O-Week recap The Tert Executive	10
The Comedy of Errors review: Shakespeare at his silliest Asher Wood	12
Father Augustus' absolution Catertolic Galatican	14

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E-mail us at:

thegalanewspaper@gmail.com



Letter from the Editor

From Aleksandar Sekulovski

Welcome staff and students to the new year. It is with great pleasure as the Editor in Chief to introduce you to The Gala!

In 1962, ~~Tert~~ ~~gala~~ began as the student newspaper for the Wollongong campus of the New South Wales University of Technology (now known as the University of New South Wales). We were the little sister of ~~Tharunka~~, UNSW's student publication, which went through periods of switching between a tabloid paper and a magazine before dying in 2023. We mourn the loss of our older sister, but we have a surrogate in Noise@UNSW and she couldn't make us prouder. If you're not following along though, that means we used to be a UNSW publication up until the University of Wollongong established its independence in 1975, making us a whole thirteen years older than this institution!

We were a newspaper until 2010, when we finally transitioned into a magazine format aiming to take advantage of smoother and nicer looking paper. Once we hit the 2020s, COVID knocked the wind out of our sails and we really struggled, but thanks to our co-ordinators of years past – River McCrossen, Alec Hall and Will Olteanu –

we managed to stay afloat!

Last year, the idea of returning to a newspaper format began to float around the second floor halls of Building 11. The magazine was reaching pre-COVID levels of engagement, we had just changed our name to The Tert, and we wanted nothing to do with the stress of running a paper. It wasn't until we attended the Student Journalism Conference at the University of Sydney and saw the wide variety of student publications that we felt inspired to take the risk. We have so much love for Honi Soit, Glass, Lot's Wife, Vertigo, Farrago, Noise@UNSW, Woroni and The LaSallian (who are from the Philippines!). With the guidance of Mickie Quick, Honi Soit's publications manager, we began to prepare ourselves for 2026.

I am forever thankful to our co-ordinator Serena Emanuele, who has worked so tirelessly behind the scenes to build this publication into what it is today. Under her leadership, we will now run as both a magazine (The Tert) and a newspaper (The Gala)! I'm also beyond thankful to our entire team, especially my fellow executives – Asher Wood and Jade Grimson – for their support and tireless work behind the scenes. Asher

has picked up my slack many, many times, taking charge of editing a great deal of work last year while I slept on our office beanbag. Jade is responsible for our gorgeous masthead, our beautiful cover showing off past editions of the newspaper (and our own hot off the press!), and the various little sketches and doodles you'll see throughout. Also shoutout my cousin Marcus Stevanoski for teaching me Adobe InDesign.

This first issue consists of articles that have been published on our website during the break, simply to give you an idea of what the look and feel of the paper will be. I urge you to get involved and write for us in any capacity that you can. We need reporters, artists, photographers, and comedians. Most importantly though – we need you! This is a student newspaper so it is meant to represent the voice of the students, which you are a part of.

With the kindest regards,

Aleksandar Sekulovski
Editor in Chief of The Gala



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NATIONWIDE STUDENT STRIKE FOR PALESTINE



END THE GAZA
GENOCIDE

DEFEND OUR RIGHT
TO PROTEST

KICK WEAPONS
COMPANIES OFF CAMPUS

STUDENTS
for
PALESTINE

Rally 2.30pm
Outside UOW Library

Wednesday
March 11th

President's "Gala" welcome

From Caitlin Veigel

Welcome to the University of Wollongong. The campus is beautiful, the bureaucracy is extensive, and the ducks are almost as unfriendly as university management.

To our new students, congratulations on navigating SOLS and participating in the biannual Hunger Games of picking your timetable. To our returning students: welcome back to another day in paradise. I'm sure discovering which subjects were still running was a deeply calming experience.

It's Semester One, where everything is possible, nothing is organised, and we all collectively believe this will be the semester we "get on top of things."

My name is Caitlin Veigel, your 2026 WUSA President.



If you haven't heard of WUSA yet, or more formally known as the Wollongong Undergraduate Student Association, that's not on you. That's on decades of universities quietly hoping students won't realise they are allowed to organise collectively.

WUSA is your student union. We are the only democratically elected representative body for undergraduate students at UOW. That means we are elected by you, accountable to you, and very much not appointed by the university. We do not exist to "support strategic priorities" nor to protect management's feelings. We exist solely to represent student interests.

Our job is to make sure students are heard, protected, and taken seriously. That means delivering real support services, advocating for students, and stepping into decision-making spaces to challenge policies that affect your education and wellbeing. It also means building collective power, organising, campaigning, and pushing for structural change. We fight for a university that prioritises people over profit.

Last year was big, in every sense of the word.

We launched our Free Period Product Program because, somehow, menstrual products are still treated like optional extras instead of basic necessities. We continued free printing because paying for a degree should include the ability to print the materials for it. We stood alongside staff and the NTEU against job and course cuts, because universities cannot claim to value "excellence" while gutting the very people and programs that make that possible. Because staff working conditions are student learning conditions. When tutors are overworked, underpaid, or made redundant, it is students who feel the impact in crowded tutorials, delayed feedback, and disappearing subjects.

We organised to demand that UOW divest from weapons manufacturers and companies connected to Israel. If a university claims to stand for human rights, global citizenship, and ethical leadership, those principles must be reflected not only in mission statements, but in the financial decisions the institution makes. Investment and partnership decisions are political choices, they signal what an institution is willing to materially support. When universities profit from industries linked to violence, oppression and genocide, it directly contradicts the social responsibility they publicly champion. Accountability is not an unreasonable demand. It is the minimum standard



for any institution that seeks to educate, lead, and act in the public interest.

And then there was SAVE SARC.

For those who don't know, Safe and Respectful Communities (SARC) is the only dedicated space on campus where students can report and access support for sexual assault, domestic and family violence, bullying, harassment and discrimination. It is not decorative. It is not optional. It is essential. When the university proposed disestablishing SARC, the justification was wrapped in the usual language of "streamlining" and "integration." Students translated that correctly: cuts. So we organised. We protested. We spoke to the media. We made it very clear that dismantling the only specialist support service for survivors was not going to happen quietly. SARC remains because students made it politically impossible for it not to. That victory was a reminder: when students move collectively, management listens.

But our work didn't stop on campus. At the end 2025, WUSA appeared at the NSW Inquiry into Higher Education. We spoke about the mismanagement of SSAF funding, the lack of transparency around executive decision-making, and the real impact of staff and course cuts on students. We heard evidence about spending priorities at the highest levels of the university that, let's say, sit uncomfortably next to claims of financial hardship when it comes to student services.

Now, 2026.

This year, we are expanding what we started. We will grow the Free Period Product Program across campus. We will continue and strengthen free printing. We will continue our free food initiatives, because the cost-of-living crisis is not theoretical when you're choosing between groceries and textbooks. We will fight for SSAF funding to go directly into student hands, where students' money belongs. Alongside the National Union of Stu-

dents, we will continue campaigning for free university education, First Nations justice and treaty, and transparency from our institution.

Because here's the thing.

Universities love to present themselves as immovable institutions. But strip away the branding and the corporate language, and what is a university without students?

Empty lecture theatres. Silent campuses. No fees. No rankings. No prestige. This institution runs because of students and the academic and professional staff who sustain it. We are not guests here. We are not customers. We are the university. And when students organise collectively, things change. WUSA belongs to you. Whether you want support, services, a campaign to join, this union is your space. We will celebrate wins. We will challenge decisions that undermine students. And above all, we will stand with students, consistently, unapologetically, and without compromise.

If you'd like to share feedback, raise an issue you're dealing with, or just ask a question, you can reach us anytime at wusa-uow@uow.edu.au. Make sure to follow us on social media as well to stay up to date with campaigns, events, services and all the work happening behind the scenes. You can also find us in person on Level 2 of Building 11, where our office sits alongside our AllSorts Queer Collective, Women's Collective and Disability Collective.

In Solidarity,
Caitlin Veigel
WUSA President

'Too many coppas, not enough justice'

By Jess Hewett

On Monday, I caught the train up to Sydney to protest war criminal and president of Israel Isaac Herzog's arrival in Australia. I did so because he is a genocidal freak who has directly caused the murder of tens of thousands of Palestinians, and his arrival to Australia reaffirms our government's complicity in Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza. I also attended knowing that our state's premier, Chris Minns, is actively suppressing our ability to protest against Israel's atrocities by shutting down Sydney's CBD and enacting special police powers against peaceful protesters in an attempt to promote 'social cohesion'.

As I entered the protest, a cop stood in front of me looking exactly like Sean Penn's military officer character, Steven J. Lockjaw, in *One Battle After Another* (2025). He even did the weird pursed lip movements Sean Penn does in the movie. I think about PTA and Penn's portrayal of Lockjaw. In the movie, every inch of Penn's characterisation: his gait, his mouth, the tension and swift aggression that motivated his every movement, seemed so entirely repulsive that it was hilarious. But at the protest, the same physicality felt surreal, like every police officer was Lockjaw adorned with a Thomas Sewell type of moustache. I found myself re-evaluating *One Battle After Another*. Penn's performance wasn't great because it exaggerated the mannerisms of the police and military, but it made clear the violence and aggression present in every one of the police and military's gestures.

I messaged my friend who I was supposed to meet at the protest that I was in the crowd to the right of where the speakers were. It's 5:40pm. The protest started only ten minutes ago. She told me she was a little late because she just finished work and she was being told by the police that she cannot enter Town Hall for the rally. The reason the police gave? The protest is at capacity. They directed her to Hyde park, feeding her misinformation on where the protest will move to. I looked beside and around me to see plenty of room for other protesters, I had been to rallies far more cramped. I messaged her that it's total bullshit. Eventually, they let her in, but I could not find her amongst the crowd of thousands of people. I put my phone in my bag and listened to the speakers. One of the speakers spoke on seeing the massacre of her family unfold online. How she had to call hospitals in Gaza to check if her family was still alive. She speaks of seeing the mutilated bodies of loved ones on social media. Crying, I put my sunglasses on, out of habit. I am disgusted with Israel, with Herzog, and with my government's complicity.

Eventually, my friend and I play the game you do at protests where you send each other photos of where you are located in the crowd, and you try to find one another using the prominent signs. I managed to find her right as the crowd was finally starting to march. Movement is slow, and due to the police surrounding the crowd at all sides, we don't quite know what direction we are going in. In the crowd, I saw lawyers who have just finished their day of work. Tradies still in their high-vis gear. School kids. Inner-West Sydney wine mums. Families with children. Three different people wearing Bladee and Yung Lean's merch from their gig at Laneway (I was consid-

ering wearing my T-Shirt, as I had slept in it the night before). Lovers and couples, young and old. Muslims, Christians, Atheists, and Jews. I saw a crowd of thousands of ordinary people organised despite the fear the Minns' government has attempted to instill. At one point, an Uber Eats delivery person gets caught in the crowd with his bike. We tried to help him get out, but he told us the police will not allow him to leave to do his delivery. Jokingly, we asked what food he has in his bag and if we can have it. He laughed along, even as many more protesters repeated the same joke.

The crowd moved slowly. We start trying to move in the direction of the Queen Victoria Building. The collective becomes compact, we cannot move further forward. People started holding up hand-written signs which said 'march to Central', so slowly the crowd began to move around. At this point, I saw a lot of people behind my friend and myself. In fact, I think we were towards the front of the crowd. We creep forward, occasionally taking squat breaks due to our feet being tired. Suddenly, we hear shouting from behind.

"Move forward! Please!"

The voices are desperate. I saw a group of girls younger than me run past, crying, holding keffiyehs, and shirts, up to their eyes. The crowd was stagnant further in front, unable to move further due to the police blocking us, and protesters were running forward from behind us. We were packed tight. Protesters grabbed onto their friends as we moved forward in the increasingly pinched crowd. A woman came up to us, an organiser, or just as likely one of the many protesters trying to keep the collective safe. She told us not to turn around as the police are deploying pepper spray. Like an idiot, I glanced over my shoulder and saw that the police are now less than a metre behind us. Many on horses. I saw two protesters facing the police with arms around each other. The police officer in front of them lunged forward without provocation, another police officer holding him back. A family is confused, trying to get towards the train station to avoid the police violence. We guided them away from the police towards one of the staircases down to Town Hall station. The threat of pepper spray was still imminent, so we tried to ensure they didn't walk across the police line for their safety.

My friend and I tried to move out of the pinch caused by the police by walking sideways. As we did this, presumably looking shocked, a police officer says to us;

"Just do what we say and you won't have anything to worry about."

I turned my head so he wouldn't see the indignant expression on my face. How could we trust you to keep us safe when we have literally just witnessed you be violent towards peaceful protesters? How could I trust you to help us move when you contained thousands of people to an increasingly compact space, with no room to disperse? I kept my head down and walked with my friend along the back police line, trying to keep as much distance as I could. Probably because I might see another Sean Penn look



alike and laugh. I saw a makeshift medic station on our right, five protesters laid on the floor, presumably getting their eyes flushed from being pepper sprayed. Due to the police blocks, my friend and I had to walk through and jump off a metre high garden bed to get onto the street and out of the crush.

Scattered protesters looked at each other in confusion. My friend and I continuously repeated in mumbles "what the fuck?" We all walked towards Central station, although we had been pushed into the side streets of the CBD. I saw two police officers block the entrance of a convenience store, a place protesters could go to get water due to the three hours spent in close confinement, or to clean themselves from pepper spray. We finally made it to the main street near Central station and the crowd reconvened. The crowd cheered and chanted. A group of men at a boxing gym on the second story of a building hung out the window, still and watching. A different Uber Eats delivery worker stood next to his bike cheering, and yelling, "free Palestine." We watched from the small park next to Central station as thousands of protesters marched onwards.

Eventually, we walked into Central station. A few police officers hung around the entrance, one of them said "See? Not so violent are we?" It made me sick to my stomach after the violence I had witnessed. My friend and I bought water from the EzyMart, behind us in a line was a man with wet wipes rubbing his face. He was laughing, maybe from shock or to stop the pain. He said he has been sprayed but even after the wipes, it still burns.

From where I waited at Central station to catch my train home, to the very next morning, I was glued to my phone watching scenes from the protest. I saw a video of a group of muslim men praying, being thrown and assaulted by the police. I saw a video of police punching a protester with a bike in the body and head. I saw a police officer throw two protester's keffiyehs in the bin. I saw police punch a restrained protester who was laying face down on the concrete, at least 18 times. I saw the police charge forward at protesters, whilst mounted on horses. I then saw Minns defend the actions of the police, describing the police violence as "proportionate" to the situation. I eventually saw overhead footage of how we were kettled at town hall. I am shocked to see just how many of us were compacted in an increasingly small space. I read on social media how a Dunghutti man, Paul

Silva, was arrested at this protest, by the same system who killed his uncle, David Dungay Jr. I think about how these same violent tactics have been, and continue to be used, to control and kill First Nations people in this settler-colonial state. The NSW police force was established in 1825 as the NSW mounted police. They were established specifically to police the Wiradjuri people following their resistance to the colonial occupation in the 1824 Bathurst wars, where hundreds of Wiradjuri people were murdered by settler-colonisers. The NSW mounted police, and thus the NSW police force we know today, was formed specifically to enact state violence against Aboriginal peoples and protect state colonial interests. Police mounted on horses have been used for this purpose for over 200 years, including at Monday night's rally.

Early in the protest, just moments before marching, I turned to my friend to talk about the Harbour Bridge protest a few months prior. I talked about how the police sent text messages to our phones when we were on the bridge, telling us to turn around, causing confusion and two separate foot traffic flows within a contained space. We discussed how the policing strategies put protesters in danger. A protester turned around and said to my friend and I;

"That's why they do it. To make us confused, so they can make us look bad. So they can get away with attacking us."



Photos by Jess Hewett

From the Bisalloy picket line

By Aleksandar Sekulovski

When does a weapon become a weapon? Is it when steel begins to take the shape of a blade, a gun, a tank, or a jet? Is it when a bullet is filled with gunpowder, or when the primer is set, or when the bullets are loaded into a magazine? Is a weapon a weapon if it has no ammunition?

Bisalloy Steels, a steel manufacturer in Unanderra, states they're "Australia's only manufacturer of high-tensile and abrasion-resistant quenched and tempered steel plate[s]." They love to flaunt their partnership with Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, whom they've been supplying to for 20 years. They also claim that the quantities of steel plates that they produce can not possibly be enough to make the weapons that Rafael produces, so I guess they're proud of failing to meet the demands of their war-mongering contractors.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong would have us believe that "Australia" supplies only "non-lethal" parts for Israel's maintenance of their F-35 fighter jets. These "non-lethal" parts include flight control systems and engine components, which makes one wonder, if these pieces were truly "non-lethal", then perhaps these fighter jets can fly just fine without our business. It seems our parts are essential enough for their ability to taxi, fly over, and bomb Palestinian homes, so maybe we can cut our complicity in the genocide by breaking the supply chain.

Wollongong Friends of Palestine have drawn the line of what they consider a weapon, and that line is at Bisalloy Steels in Unanderra. From the 8th of February to the 10th, they set up camp and held a picket line, preventing workers from entering the steel manufacturer continuing to supply the genocide in Palestine.



The first night of the picket was a quick and easy success. Activists managed to cancel the first overnight shift with little resistance. Workers did not show up and security personnel were rotated in and out. Cops stood off to the side watching with their hands on their holsters and their eyes trained on each and every new picketer settling in. Their holsters held a weapon, a Glock .40 semi-automatic pistol.

A picket line is not a weapon. A picket line is made up of people and obstacles whose sole purpose is to stop the production of weapons. The people of Wollongong Friends of Palestine expressed a single sentiment, that locals would have no part in exporting the means of war to foreign powers.

It is the same sentiment that Lee Rhiannon shared with the 1983 Pine Gap Women's Peace Camp, opposing our government's complicity in supporting fascist foreign powers. A US base on "Australian" soil, aimed at spying on our East Asian and Middle Eastern neighbours. A base full of soldiers with diplomatic immunity to do whatever they please. 111 women marched into that military base to document and disrupt its operations. That march was led by local Indigenous women who had no say in this foreign power setting up their own colony within the colony of "Australia".



"The armaments industry is so terrible, it's terrible because it kills so many people and causes such suffering," Ms Rhiannon shared with me in a phone call, after I had met her at the picket.

"It's also so terrible because it robs people, robs the public of money that's needed for public education, public health, and public services."





The duration of the picket coincided with the irreverent arrival of Israel's president, Isaac Herzog. His arrival came at a time when Chris Minns' government was infringing on the right to protest, banning organised marches and slogans like "globalise the intifada."

A contingent of picketers (including myself) took a bus up to Sydney to join the rally, where we were faced with a heavy police presence that had already surrounded Town Hall. They had sectioned off all sides of the courtyard except for one, where protesters were herded until all sides were closed off. From there, people wanting to join the rally had to wait outside of the courtyard until NSW Police finally relented and let them through.

When speeches for the rally finished, police superintendent Paul Dunstan gave orders to organisers to disperse the crowd, which was a little difficult when his officers had blocked off every exit.

I made my way to the frontline where protestors were face to face with police when I saw an Indigenous activist push through the crowd after being pepper sprayed. Once again it was Indigenous people at the forefront, against the state, against injustice, and against weapons. And then, I was face to face with a weapon.

My eyes burning, my throat choking, I too was pushing back through the crowd. I luckily found myself amongst friends, who took care of me and washed out all the capsaicin from my eyes with saline. Not long after recovering though, we were being herded and pushed along the railway of the light rail towards Cen-

tral. Inadvertently, the police had begun pushing the crowd into a march.

Earlier there were whispers that police were holding on, and hoping to use, a Long-Range Acoustic Device (LRAD). It had been known for a while that NSW Police finally got their hands on one, and they had no opportunity to use it. When we reached Central station though, we heard a warning tone coming from it, and the crowd ran to all different sides to avoid the narrow range of the LRAD. Any exposure to an LRAD's sound can cause permanent hearing damage, and so that begs the question, is a loudspeaker that aims to blow peoples' eardrums a weapon?

Back down at the picket, police presence had eased to just two cops watching from a distance, though they were dressed in the same riot gear that the cops at the Herzog rally were in. Body armour and extra weapons in defense from what weapons?

The final day of the picket was solemn, with news coming in of police brutality at the rally against Herzog, though there was still pride and hope. The picket had successfully prevented Bisalloy workers from working shifts over its three day period, and people began to pack up. Of course there was a sentiment to keep the picket going, but with dwindling numbers it couldn't hold strong. Despite that, this is the longest picket Wollongong Friends of Palestine have been able to hold.

In the wake of all this though, a snap rally was carried outside of Surry Hills police station. Although much smaller in number, activists called the state and its police into question. Speakers questioned the abuse of Muslim

men and women who were praying the Maghrib at sundown, in accordance with their faith. They questioned the abuse perpetuated by police, with violence, and pepper spray, and the threatening presence of the LRAD. Most of all, they questioned why all of this was done in service of a foreign power.

In the face of state oppression, the weapons industry, and our government's continued complicity with fascist foreign powers since Pine Gap, I was reminded of Lee Rhiannon's words at the picket.

"This isn't just about Palestine, it's [about] how we build a world where justice, equality, and peace is the foundation of our society."



Who the hell is Herzog?

By Ryan Chapman

The President of Israel, Isaac Herzog, is having the red carpet rolled out after accepting an invitation from Anthony Albanese to go on a PR tour of the country. Herzog has presided over the past 2 years of genocide in Gaza, bearing responsibility for the deaths of more than 71,000 Gazans, the forced displacement of more than 2 million people, and a massive escalation in settler violence in the West Bank.

Throughout the genocide, Herzog has consistently justified Israel's targeting of civilians. In October 2023, he declared: "It's an entire nation out there that is responsible [for the October 7 attack on Israel]. It's not true this rhetoric about civilians not aware, not involved. It's absolutely not true ... And we will fight until we break their backbone." This incitement of violence continues to be echoed by the IDF, who were recorded in a video by an Israeli journalist, unashamedly chanting "We know our slogan, there are no uninvolved civilians."

This statement made by Herzog was included as evidence in a lawsuit at the International Court of Justice accusing Israel of genocide. Additionally, these comments were used again in September last year by the UN commission of inquiry and found Herzog, alongside his Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and former Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, guilty of inciting genocide.

Isaac Herzog is a war criminal who proudly signs bombs to be dropped on Gaza, and this invitation by the Albanese government is a spit in the face to the millions of Palestinians who have suffered under Herzog's rule and the 71,000 murdered, with at least a third of those being children.

Around 58% of Australians think Israel is committing a genocide and demand that sanctions be placed on the terror state. This is unsurprising considering the historic March for Humanity in August last year that saw 300,000 march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge. With a majority of Australians recognising and expressing their opposition to the genocide against Palestinians, why would the government invite one of Israel's chief architects in said slaughter to Australia?

It is precisely because maintaining Australia's political relationship with Israel is more important to our rulers than upholding any sense of justice for the millions who suffer under Israel's terror regime. Albanese is drawing a clear line in the sand and choosing to stand on the wrong side of history.

We can not let him get away with this. We must stand on the right side of history and oppose Herzog's arrival!

In response, tens of thousands across the country plan to protest his arrival. Over 30 cities have stated they will be participating in the nationwide rallies on Monday the 9th of February. A rally will be held at Sydney Town Hall at 5:30PM during this nationwide rally.

In Wollongong, this call to action coincides with the Bisalloy picket from Sunday the 8th of February to Tuesday the 10th of February. There will be an opening rally on Sunday night at 8PM to protest Herzog, but also to kick off the picket. The next day, on Monday, a bus will be travelling from the picket around 3PM to take activists to Sydney Town Hall and shuttling them back to the picket afterward.

I urge all who reject war criminals receiving red carpet treatment from our government, all who are outraged at the ongoing genocide in Gaza, to attend the Bisalloy picket and attend the rally in Sydney on the 9th of February.

Editor's Note: This article was originally written and published on our website on the 8th of February, 2026, to promote the upcoming calls to action against Isaac Herzog and Bisalloy Steels.



By Serena Emanuele

Will there be another witch trial?

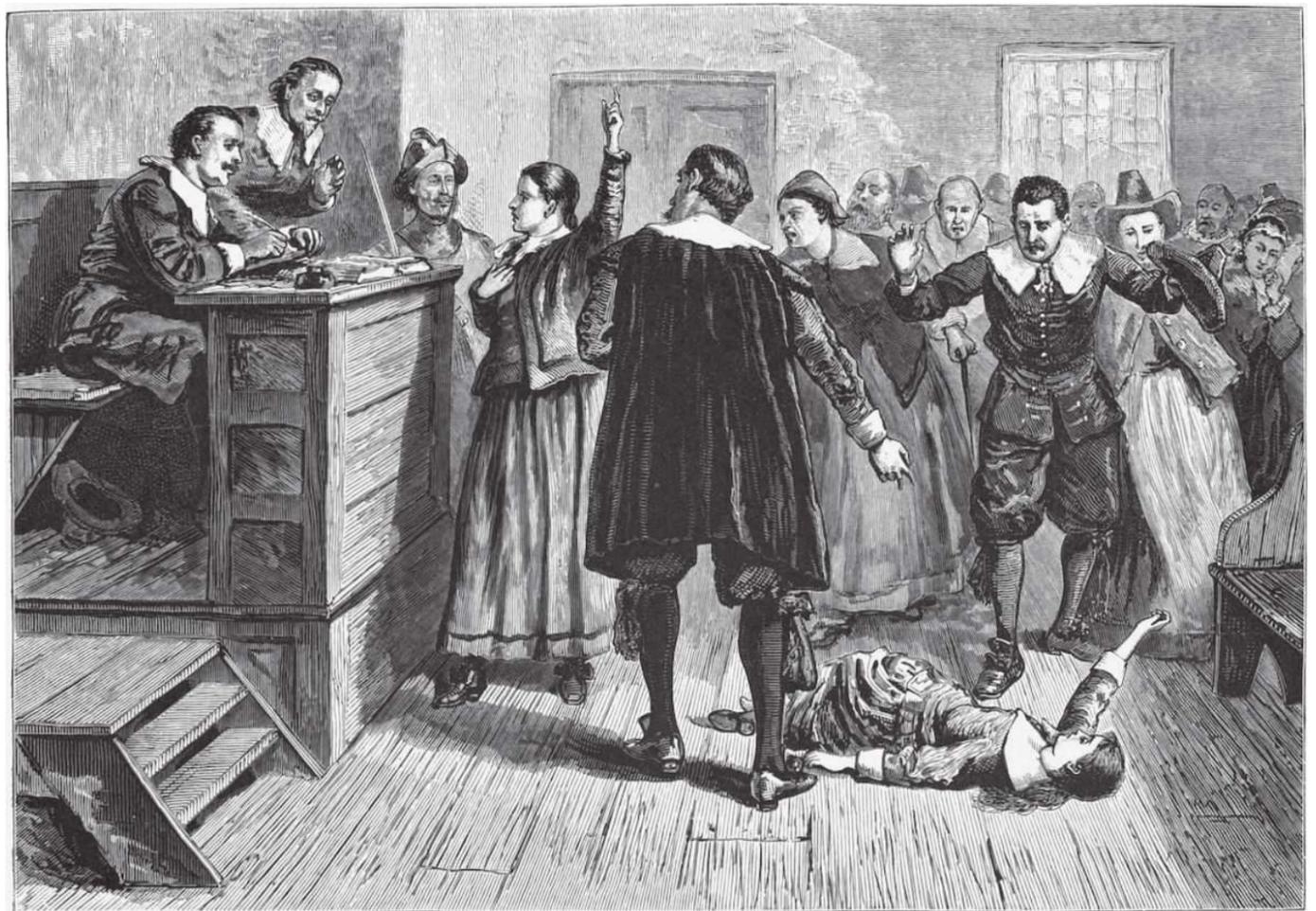
I recently watched a documentary called *Witches: The Truth Behind The Trials* that discussed the witch trials that occurred between the 15th and 18th centuries across Europe and America. It felt refreshing to look at something other than my TikTok or Instagram feeds and receive real information rather than the attention-seeking, mind-numbing, logic-lacking algorithmic content that sucks me into hours-long hypnosis. As I watched this fascinating docu-series, I found an unusual and disturbing connection to our modern society which I felt strongly enough to expand on.

The ubiquitous nature of our screens over the last decade has immensely harmed our collective psyche. And yet, we cannot ignore that without them, we would be ignorant to the mess that we are in.

One video crossed my screen a few weeks ago. It was a video of a woman, Renee Good, in a car, attempting to drive away from two ICE agents in America. Less than a mile away from where George Floyd was murdered in 2020 by police, Renee Good was shot three times, killing her. The media's response to the event was astonishingly inaccurate. Good was named a "domestic terrorist" by multiple sources including President Donald Trump, and the Homeland Security Secretary, Kristi Noem, who claimed that Good was driving towards the ICE agents in an attempt to harm them. As the video of the incident and her autopsy show, Good was shot at least twice from the side of her car, and the fatal bullet was reported to have entered her head through her left temple.

I think those who are of sound mind and in possession of critical thinking skills will agree who Trump and ICE remind them of. But, to me, these acts of terror also resonate with those of the Witch Trials.

Although the Salem witch trials are undeniably notorious, they were neither the first nor the last of these trials. In the docu-series, each episode describes and embodies the scenography of some of the different Western countries that held witch trials: Germany, Ireland, Scotland, England, Sweden, and America. We must not forget, however, the Eastern countries where women faced the same treatment, such as India, China, Japan, and Korea in Asia; Papua New Guinea in Oceania; and modern witch trials in Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, and Nigeria, to name a few in Africa.



In Europe, the witch trials were heavily influenced by Christianity and its biblical teachings. The population truly believed in witches: people possessed by the Devil to prey on children and vulnerable members of the community, to bring them into His claws. Women in particular were targeted throughout the hunts, justified by the belief that females were the weaker sex and therefore innately prone to be gullible towards Evil. This idea developed from the 'original sin': when Eve consumed the forbidden fruit which released her from the ignorance of the garden, giving women the knowledge – and, therefore, power – that threatened men's ability to keep control.

On a separate – but not completely different – note, America still weaponise(s) their scriptures to govern the people and land they occupy and deem their own – land that was stolen with the assistance of their religious preachings, divine missions, and the faith of their followers. Donald Trump, who frequently uses religion to justify his actions and theories, blatantly echoes every male leader depicted in the documentary.

As explained by the series, each country in which a major trial was held had a revered pastor or 'witch academic' who advised the judges, acting as a

communicator with God or a religious intellectual. In Salem specifically, this was Reverend Samuel Parris: a bitter, angry, and aggressive man who would frequently give intense speeches to his congregation.

The Salem witch trials started in his own home, when his daughter and niece began dabbling with fortune-telling, and sneaking out at night. Once caught, they both began to experience seizures. Whether to avoid the consequences of their rendezvous having been unveiled or whether they were truly having painful seizures is still unknown, but regardless, the pair accused three women of witchcraft. These were Tituba, Sarah Osborne, and Sarah Good.

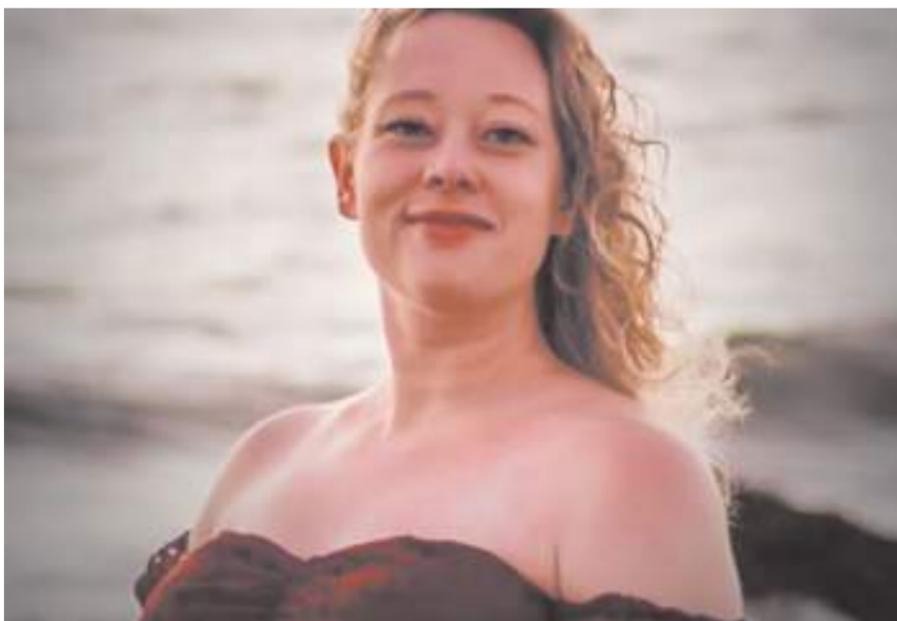
Tituba was a slave that the Reverend Parris had brought back from Barbados: a Black woman. Sarah Osborne had inherited land from her deceased husband and lived there with her children and her second husband – she was a female landowner. Sarah Good also owned a small strip of land, before her late husband's family legally fought her for it and left her destitute. She became homeless and the village beggar. These rejected women were eventually hanged for witchcraft and given the options of pleading guilty to receive a prison sentence and their life spared, having repented, or pleading not guilty and being hanged for their supposed dishonesty. Those who faced prison had to confront a further sentence outside of their cell, being shunned from their community for witchcraft. Many, however, did not leave the jail with their lives.

Although the Salem Trials started with accusations of witchcraft – and certainly persisted under this guise – it became clear that as the trials progressed, privileged men in the village understood the power of inescapable accusation. More landowners started to be accused of witchcraft, including men. One man, Giles Corey, was accused, but he refused to give a plea. In order to get one, it was legal to subject individuals to torture. He died being crushed by stones, as his plealess case ensured his son would inherit

the land.

Religion and politics had intertwined with no escape, as was frequent at the time of colonisation, the slave trade, and the so-called 'Enlightenment'. The beliefs of the people overrode evidence and truth, and become the definitive decider of another's fate.

We may like to say history is repeating itself, but in fact, this chapter never ended. 400 years later, world leaders are still invading countries, kidnapping, and killing in the name of their religion. Conscious of consequence and meaning, we still kill Good.



Images sourced from the BBC and the Salem Witch Museum

O-Week recap!

By The Tert Executive

Welcome new students, to another O-Week! We hope you didn't have too much trouble enrolling into your units and that you were able to take a nice picture of yourself for your student ID (unlike our Editor in Chief).

For those of you who made it to our stall, we hope you loved the goodies we had on offer this year. Our postcards were designed by our lovely Head of Graphics, Jade Grimson, and a newcomer to our team, Luka Spanicek! We'll continue to hand out what postcards and magazines we have so stay on the lookout.

Serena (Tert Coordinator)

Being an active participant of the O-Week stalls since my first year, I can say with confidence that it can really make one's head spin out of control. Over the years, UOW's Orientation Week has become bigger, crazier, and much, much... louder.

This semester, The Tert stall was located in front of Building 20 which although very close to the library, still felt a little isolated from the rest of the Party. Instead of the Instagramable popping music, the bright colours and the happy crowds, our stall got stuck between the No-Mans Land and the Smash Room. Each conversation with a prospective team member was met with a clash, a bang, as well as a boom from the angry and stressed second and third years smashing their sorrows away, no doubt.

Regardless of the lack of space from the abundance of our beautiful UOW student clubs, we still managed to attract quite a bit of attention from our insane posters, postcards and stickers (which are all gone now).

By the last day of O-Week, which featured the Arts and Business faculty students, a thunderous rain came pouring down and we took to talking with our mascot, Evangeline (see the montage). For everyone who came out to see us and chat to us about everything Tert, we are always grateful and we love you.



Jade (Head of Graphics)

What a week... and there weren't even any early-morning lectures. This week was all about welcoming new students to our community, which was such a great experience for everyone involved. We managed to give away so many freebies from posters to stickers to postcards - all designed and created by our brilliant artists (and non-artists!). I hope that seeing our works has inspired new students to submit their own art to our upcoming issues. We can't run without your creativity.

From hot days to pouring rain, I'm so grateful to the Tert team for making this such a memorable week, as well as everyone who came to see us in our little corner. Here's to another great year of sharing stories and uplifting student voices!

Alek (Editor in Chief of The Gala)

My O-Week was spent mostly in The Tert office, figuring out what a newspaper is. I did allow myself a day to go around and take photos of each of the stalls, and I was in love with quite a few.

Filo UOW, you guys had the coolest stall by far! In the style of a cart, carrying all sorts of snacks, there was no one else like you. I still haven't finished all the snacks you guys gave me, I'm way too full.

Rock Climbing Club UOW, you've got some awesome plans for the year ahead and I'd love to tag along to one of your trips out to the bush, to climb an actual cliff... On second thought, maybe I'll stick to the ground. Good luck up there though!

UOW Palestine Society remains staunch as always. University is a great time to become an activist and fight the good fight, so I urge everyone to get involved with the Nationwide Student Strike for Palestine on the 11th of March so that you can tell your kids that once upon a time, you did have morals.

Asher (Editor in Chief of The Tert)

My O-week was mainly spent doing the things I love most: carrying heavy things around campus, and running around like a headless chicken. Nevertheless, it's always a joy to see so many friendly, enthusiastic faces showing their interest in the Tert. I truly loved meeting all of you, filling your bags up with our gorgeous merch and past mags, and seeing your faces light up at the mention of our upcoming Esoter(t)ica theme. I will be expecting every single one of you to send in your submissions by March 21st.

When I wasn't chasing the free food or getting rained on behind the Tert table, I had a lot of fun seeing all the vibrant clubs and societies on campus, jamming with the UOW Music Club, and pre-tending to be a first-year student to get as much swag as possible from UOW's support services. But my favourite part was The Tert team's unofficial afterparty: reading your (scandalous!) confessions with our friends from WUSA, and laughing deliriously at stupid memes until we were ready to brave our treacherous journeys home.





By Asher Wood

Antipholus has clearly gone mad! He steals, lies, and pretends not to recognise his own wife. His servant Dromio is no better: straying from his quests, making insubordinate jokes, and even locking Antipholus out of his own house. Surely some kind of demonic possession is to blame!

But here's the thing: there're actually two Antipholuses, and two Dromios to go along with them – two sets of identical twins, torn apart by fate and reunited without their knowledge in a spiralling journey of mistaken identity. Thus unfolds *The Comedy of Errors*; one of Shakespeare's earliest plays – and perhaps his most ridiculous – now presented in a new 'Theatre Under the Stars' format by Sport For Jove in collaboration with Merrigong Theatre Company and UOW. Bring a picnic rug, your favourite foods, and all your besties, and get nice and close to the action – but beware, your ticket might come with an impromptu workout class, or even put you in the splash zone!

Theatre Under the Stars is set to be a mainstay in future Merrigong seasons, following the success of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Wollongong Botanic Gardens in 2023. I found it slightly unfortunate that the Gardens weren't chosen as the venue for this new series, with Kooloobong Oval feeling like an inferior substitute in terms of the surrounding terrain and scenery. Similarly, with the expansiveness of *Midsummer* in mind I thought that the outdoor setting wasn't being used to its full potential, with most of the action remaining firmly on the stage. With that aside, though, open-air theatre is always a joy, especially when it involves such side-splitting antics as *The Comedy of Errors*. Local residents – lorikeets, cockatoos, flying foxes, and a highly opinionated kookaburra – chimed in as they saw fit, and Mt Keira got a shoutout from the tourist Antipholus of Syracuse. We were lucky enough to have pleasant weather, and the audience was well looked after by the lovely Merrigong team, including a pop-up bar selling food and drinks to complete our picnic dinner.

To turn our attention to the production itself, I fell in love with the set instantly. It's cobbled together from mismatched furniture, cluttered and piled high with suitcases, and coated in multiple fading layers of paint, all coming together to evoke the busyness of the port



city Ephesus and the journey that has brought our main characters here. The staging is low-tech, with simple practical effects giving it a truly Shakespearean energy and feeling right at home in the outdoor setting. Similarly stunning are the costumes, designed by Bernadette Ryan, blending historical with hyper-modern to add an extra layer of confusion and mystery. In costume, the visual similarities between the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios went from striking to uncanny, making for an ultra-immersive experience where even the audience was never quite able to tell who was who.

However, the mood was soured by the inclusion of graphic elements that appeared to be AI generated. Although it was a minimal part of the overall staging (which gives all the more reason to simply leave it out), the use of AI cheapened the artistic integrity of the production and felt like it contributed to a dangerous precedent for future productions. The arts sector, along with many other industries, has overwhelmingly sounded the alarm about AI, for ethical, environmental, and job security reasons. I worry that the normalisation of its use by professional theatre companies like Sport For Jove will lead to further exacerbation of these issues within the already fragile

Australian theatre industry.

On a lighter note, the play's directors Damien Ryan and George Banders weren't afraid to take the silliest, most lowbrow approach to *The Comedy of Errors*: toilet humour, slapstick comedy, and an occasional modern reference had the audience in stitches. It felt gloriously faithful to how Shakespeare's original audiences would have connected with the show. The choice to transpose some characters into the modern era – like a trad-wife gymfluencer and a spiritual healer utilising a cultural mishmash of practices – was particularly funny. Bringing it all to life, the cast felt like some kind of synergetic hive mind, working together as a well-oiled machine to create maximum chaos. The physical comedy was given plenty of room to breathe, with characters pausing to react in silence, which was hilarious at first; but it began after some time – along with some of the other recurring jokes – to feel overdone or unnecessarily drawn out. Despite being one of Shakespeare's shortest works, and even with the explosive energy of this cast, *The Comedy of Errors*' 2.5 hour runtime still requires stamina of a viewer, and some of these moments served to exacerbate that.

The added musical numbers, com-

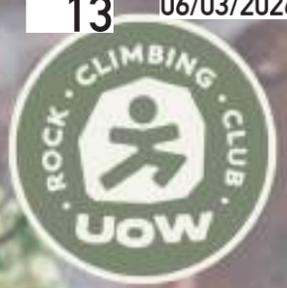
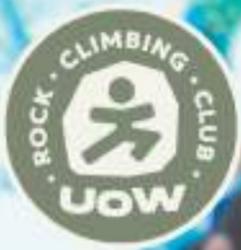
posed and performed by Naomi Belet, brought a haunting quality to many of the more tense plot points and served to remind us of the stakes, keeping the audience grounded and smoothing out what would otherwise have been some very abrupt tonal shifts.

On the whole, despite a few flaws, *The Comedy of Errors* is certainly worth the watch, especially when it means you get to enjoy the Theatre Under the Stars experience. It's immersive, larger than life, and filled with twists and turns, which are tied off into a miraculous happy ending – something I think we could all do with at the moment.

Editor's Note: This article was originally published on our website on the 16th of February, 2026.



Photos provided by Grant Leslie



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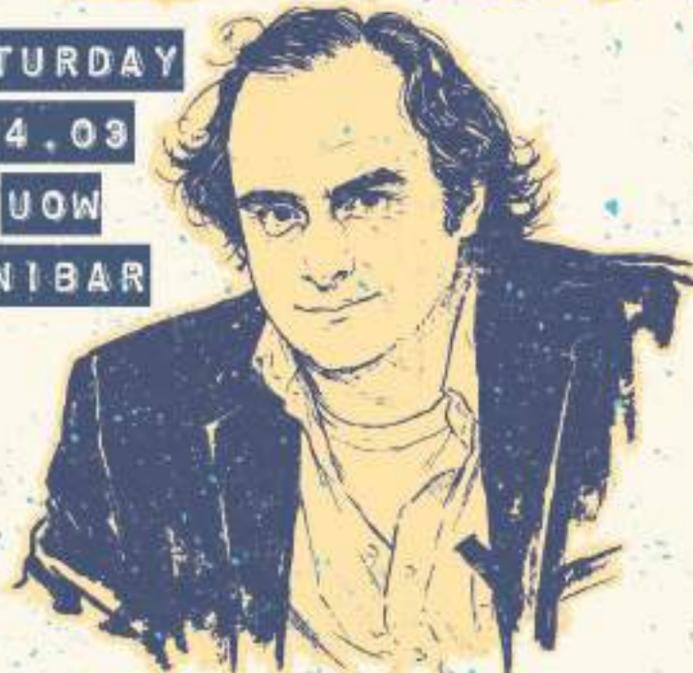
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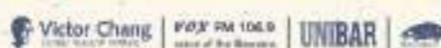
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Father Augustus' absolution

A correspondence from the Catertolic Galatican

Good day to you, my loyal children, and welcome to the Confession Booth. I am Father Augustus, and I will be taking on your burdens, shouldering them so that you may re-enter the world born anew in the healing light of our Lord, Tertus Christ.

Over the course of Opportunity Week at the University of Wollongong, my disciples collected your many thoughts and worries in a ye olde cardboard box. They gave them to me, humbly asking that I provide my perspective on their quandaries, and of course I agreed!



IT IS I, EVANGELINE, AND I ABSOLVE YOU OF ALL SIN!

I once push ~~my~~ ^{my deaf mutes} mutes sister down the stairs at his wake

I... ordinarily don't condone violence, but I am sure there's two sides to this. Indeed, if there was ever a place to do something that dramatic (and possibly entertaining), it certainly is a wake - in this priest's opinion, at least.

I never figured out the fake history too complicated!

Me too, dear child. I have honestly not the faintest idea of what is going on over there. Best of luck to you...

I blessed The Crown Bathroom.

I am not sure if I feel like I should congratulate you or condemn you! If this means what I think it means, please at least tell me you washed your hands afterwards...



I have a crush on my uni friend

Oh, goodness, dear child, I completely understand what you are experiencing. Believe it or not, this old priest had a few crushes back in the day himself; whether they worked out or not, who's to say... That being said, I believe you should express your feelings to this friend post-haste. You do not want to spend your whole life wondering what could have been; you would much rather look back knowing that you stayed true to your heart, would you not?

I am planning on recreating the Habsburg dynasty on the Sims

Well, I am not quite sure what a "sims" is, but it seems like you have your work cut out for you. The Habsburg Dynasty - as it is correctly spelled, my child, no need to thank me - is rather interesting, and I look forward to seeing how you interpret it in a creative and visionary manner.

I think Mr Bradford is hot!

From what I have Googled (as the kids say), I cannot say I agree with you; that being said, one's attractiveness - to me at least - relies largely on their behaviour around others. Mr Bradford certainly protects others... At least, I hope he does. Fictional or not, I wish you the best of luck in courting this gentleman.

I (Lillian) got 3 in sciences pray for a girl who had a boyfriend

Goodness, dear child! That is certainly a long time to spend yearning for another; I admire your dedication, but I wonder if it would be better for both your mental and spiritual health if you spent time caring for yourself instead. Of course, it seems by the tone of your message that you have since moved on from this girl, in which case, congratulations on realising that you truly deserve reciprocation. Best of luck in your future romantic endeavours.

I love the taste of raw potato

Well, there are certainly worse things that you could love the taste of. Although, isn't raw potato poisonous? Well, I am certainly praying for you and your health, in any case. May the Lord's healing words find their way to your digestive system, hopefully breaking down the toxic compounds before they make their way into your bloodstream.



I still talk to people I don't like and then tell about this to mybff

Firstly, I must say, I adore your handwriting! Secondly, I confess, I do the same thing. Oftentimes social niceties prevent us from speaking our minds; simply another complication of participating in what we have deemed "civilised" society. If it comes to a point where you feel upset, pressured, or just overall bad about seeing these people, put yourself before the "tea" as the kids say. Good mental health is as important as good friendships!

I pirate all my streaming services (Shan Loona)

You are certainly not alone, my child. Media should be free for all to enjoy without the harried nature of subscriptions and monthly plans and whatnot. I listened to a selection of Loona's songs, and I must say, this old man is a fan! I like the beat.

Pulse shall

burr

What a violent threat! I admire your steadfastness, however misguided it may be; I am but a priest living in the Irish highlands, so I am unaware of who or what this "Pulse" is... I only hope that you find reconciliation with them someday.

I've convinced 3 people to buy the same sex toy for a brand I don't work for

I'M GAY

I like the Tertus 1,000,000x more than my own uni paper (Honi Soit)

I used to write to Federal Prisoners in the United States.

If it works well enough for you that you have convinced others of your enjoyment, I believe a position at their company would be in order. And if you, uh, have the name of that brand, feel free to message, um... You know what, never mind.

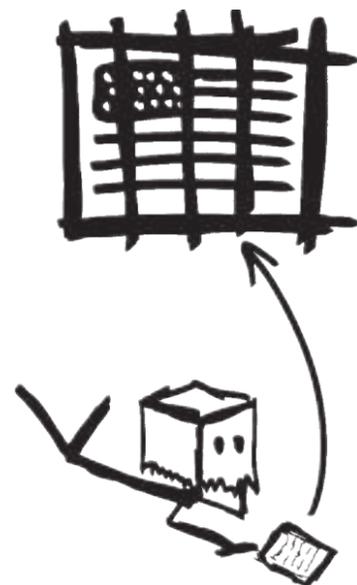
I am not sure if this is serious or silly, but either way, I am proud of you for declaring it so thoroughly. I encourage you to continue this journey of self-discovery, self-love, and self-confidence; oftentimes, coming out will truly change your life. Or so I've heard... ;)

Goodness, my child! Such hatred and malice from a child of Tertus Christ is unforgivable, particularly in this humble place of acceptance. We adore our friends at Honi Soit; their writing and designs are admirable, and we strive to maintain a strong bond with its team. I sentence you to one million rounds of Hail Mary - perhaps then you will understand the true value of friendship...

I would be curious to know what exactly you wrote to them about. I'm sure they appreciated the information about the outside world, in any case. Perhaps I will begin writing my own confessions to incarcerated individuals... or not.

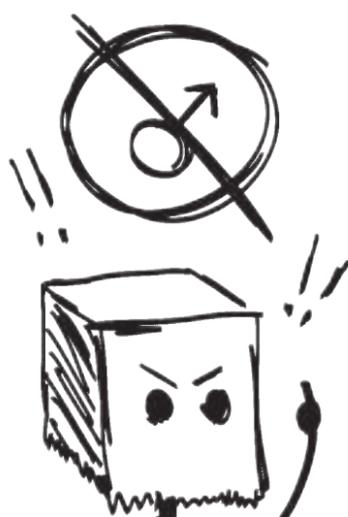


I'm a misandrist I just really, really really, really, really, really, really, really really don't like men.



Understandable, my child. Men have done some terrible things in their time. I pray you do not have an encounter with one ever again, if that is what you wish.

Jacob Elard can go to hell



I kept taking money out of my parents' money box because I got like \$20 a week from them. Now I lie to get money from them because they're middle class and I'm a house on Jokersaker

Well, that was certainly an entertaining experience! I do hope that someday the Confession Booth can open up again to receive your thoughts and feelings, as I do so enjoy reading them and providing help where I can. This has been Father Augustus, and remember to follow the teachings of Tertus Christ, and keep up with their fortnightly and semesterly releases!

Dear child, I did not mind his work in the film 'Frankenstein', but I have not had a chance to see 'Wuthering Heights' yet... If his work is truly as bad as this message implies, I shiver in anticipation at what damage he has wrought on the big screen. At the end of the day, though, you've got to admire that Australian representation.

I truly feel for this difficult situation, my child. I ordinarily do not condone stealing, but it seems like you're in a tricky position; to accrue the monetary means to survive completely by yourself is hard enough as it is, in this economy. I pray that someday you find a way to manage your assets without guilt or debt.



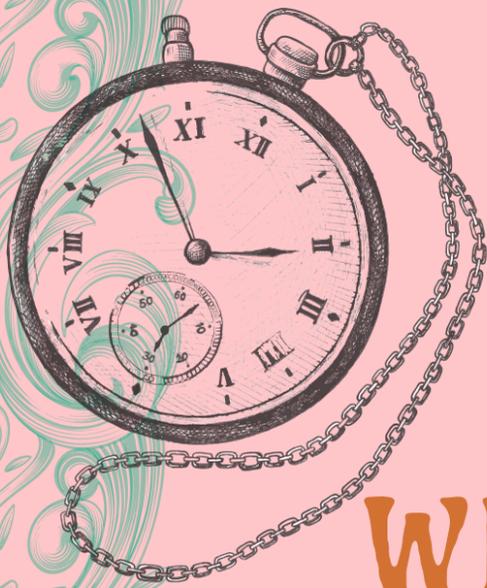
Маца

There was a bit of empty space here at the end that I didn't really know what to do with, so look at my cat. Maybe in the next edition we'll look at someone else's cat. I can do whatever the fuck I want with this paper, I'm king twat of The Gala and no one has the balls to step to me. Except my boss. She'd probably kill me.

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