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State of the
Union

Prez’s Address

08

On Dit 76.4

The big deal in campus politics at the moment is whether the Overseas Student’s Association (and the Postgrad Students’ Association, but they’re less angry about it) have been made redundant by the new Students’ Representative Council. The SRC has been brought in to replace the old Students’ Association, making sure that every minority on campus has advocacy services and that there’s student organisation of political campaigns. As part of this, every student minority – including postgrad and overseas students - have a representative on the council.

The issue here is that Dilan Morragolle (President of the OSA and general member of the Union Board) thinks that the representative should be drawn from the OSA’s executive committee, whereas Ellen Ketteridge (President of the SRC and general Board member) and Lavinia Emmett-Grey (President of the Board, for all you casual readers) think that after this year they should be chosen through an election in which all students (at least, those who care) will vote.

Dilan is worried that the OSA will be made redundant if the SRC takes over advocacy, but Simone McDonnell told the board that Dilan had already said to her that none of the SRC budget would be spent on advocacy this year, which suggests he doesn’t actually care at all, and is just being paranoid. Confusion reigned.

This resulted in a small level of complete chaos in the meeting, with Dilan blasting everyone he thought was working against him, and Lavinia selectively enforcing the standing orders to force Dilan to speak far less than he would have liked. Lavinia’s good friend Rhiannon Newman, on the other hand, spoke whenever she wanted to, whether she was interrupting or not.

In the end, Dilan’s motion was defeated soundly, with only Ellen voting in favour of it (Dilan voted against the motion he’d been fighting for all night. Go figure). Paris Dean, Matt Taylor and Justin Kentish abstained.

In other news, the so-called ‘Barratt Clause’ was passed at the meeting, ruling that a President can only take their honoraria in fortnightly chunks at the end of each fortnight that they’ve earnt it (Eds - Where’s the ‘On Dit Clause’ for our honoraria?). The idea is that it prevents anyone claiming honoraria that they haven’t already earnt, which they could do when it was a lump sum payment.

And finally, the funding agreement between the University and the Union Board is ‘very close to being signed’... just like it was when the first On Dit was published this year. There have been some suggestions that now the University has everything it wants out of the agreement there’s no reason why they shouldn’t hold onto the money for a while and keep the interest they’re getting on it. Personally, I hope they hand the money over soon, so that some fragment of stability can be restored to the Board.

Hannah Mattner

The Adelaide University Union is currently conducting a two minute online survey to find out what students think about our existing services, what new ones we might offer in the future and what issues are important to you. You can find it at www.union.adelaide.edu.au and just by responding you go in the draw to win an i-Pod shuffle, a $50 Coles Myer voucher, a $20 Coles Myer voucher or one of 10 t-shirt and backpack combos. Aside from the prizes though, this is a chance for you to tell us what you think, so that we can help make your time at uni the most positive experience possible.

On another note, one of our board directors asked me to find out about the availability of after hours car parking for students on campus. For many students, walking alone on campus to and from their cars places them at risk, not to mention the headache of finding a park on Victoria Drive at times. The university offers a student rate for after hours campus parking permits which is half the price of staff rates. At $44 per year for motorcycles and $88 per year for cars, this is an option students may find useful. You can check it out at http://parking.adelaide.edu.au/index.php. Always remember that if you do feel unsafe on campus, Campus Security is able to provide an escort by calling 8303 5990.

Finally, the new Student Representative Council is nearly up and running. Interviews were conducted during the holidays for Office Bearer positions and it was inspiring to hear the broad range of issues and insights that candidates raised. Some may sneer at the idea of student representation, but the passion of so many applicants demonstrated to a jaded hack like me that the current generation of students has a genuine role to play in affecting the university community and the world.

If you would like to contact me with any comments, queries or just to give me a big hug, you can email me lavinia.emmett-grey@adelaide.edu.au

AUU President
Lavinia Emmett-Grey

P.S. Dear Eds (specifically Mike), I am not ashamed of going to Mansions. Who are you to talk when you probably spend your Saturday nights at alternative bars with overpriced goon and enough dim lighting for you to convince yourself that you’re cool?

**Eds - We were going to be nice but you had to go there didn’t you! Britney hat, nuff said.**

P.S “That’s the worst one by far” - Past editor Ben Henschke’s words... NOT OURS.
It has been a busy couple of weeks for the Clubs Association, even with the slow down associated with the mid-semester break. The first event in the inaugural UniBar Clubs Cup (a Dance Off) is approaching and will be held on the 15th of May at 8pm, so all clubs should be practising their dancing moves. There are ten events scattered throughout the year for clubs to compete in, so join us at the UniBar to witness the challenge between clubs.

The Clubs Association has recently released a new set of contact sheets for clubs, so if you are looking for a club to join, come in and pick up a sheet. Additionally, I am pleased to announce that a series of club ‘how to’ guides have been completed and are available for anyone interested in starting a new club, or those who are running an existing club and want some tips on how to run it. You can find these at either the Clubs Association (Ground Floor, LadySymon Building) or Union Reception (Level 4, Union House).

On a final note, now that most of the book keeping for the Clubs Association has updated, we have found that there are a number of clubs that are listed as active, although we are unaware of them. If anyone out there knows anything about any of the clubs listed on the right (or any club that has not been in contact with the Clubs Association) can you please get in touch with me at clubs.association@adelaide.edu.au as soon as possible.

Until next we meet.

Matthew Taylor
President
Adelaide University Clubs Association

**COME OUT, COME OUT, WHEREVER YOU ARE?!?!**

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Recently my communication has been cut off with friends in Indonesia due to the government’s choice to censor networking websites MySpace and YouTube. The reason? Recently, everybody’s favourite neo-conservative, Dutch politician Geert Wilders, decided he would piece together a video which runs footage of radical Muslim dictator hate speak, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Madrid train bombing and general atrocious warfare alongside quotes from the Koran provocatively placed to infer association.

In a situation such as this, I find myself unsure of where to direct my frustration. Free speech often throws this dilemma at us. Do we condemn Wilders for abusing his right to free speech and using it to mislead and incite racism toward Islam, or do we condemn countries such as Indonesia for enforncing censorship?

“‘I detest what you write, but I would give my life to make it possible for you to continue to write.’

Such are the trappings of free speech. To paraphrase the Voltaire cliché, in no way do I endorse or agree with the material in Geert Wilders’ viral video, but I have to accept that he has the right to make it. It is unfortunate that Wilders’ chooses to utilise his freedom in creating bigoted commentary; it is even more unfortunate that he is not the only one.

YouTube has become quite the forum for religious argument, sometimes informative and enlightening, at other times, misleading and ill researched.

Muslim members on YouTube have it tough in the post-September 11 climate. Often their religion is taken out of context and humiliatingly butchered; still I see calm and thoughtful responses, attributing to the Muslim YouTubers’ claims that Islam is indeed an understanding religion.

In light of Muslim YouTube users’ capacity to handle such antagonising criticism, there is little logic in Indonesia’s censoring of the websites; just another example of Islamic leadership crumbling under antagonistic pressure.

Wilders’ video quotes the Koran in one part of the movie:

“Prepare for them whatever force and cavalry ye are able of gathering, to strike terror, to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies, of Allah and your enemies.”

The true context of this quote is describing a battle between Muslims and a Pharaoh, and is followed by the verse:

“If they incline to peace, make peace with them, and put your trust in God. It is surely He who hears all and knows all.”

Such childish manipulation of the Islamic faith is only given authority when Islamic leadership responds to it in such a dramatic manner as censoring the internet. Surely Wilders has already won the battle by the arousal of such an extreme response.

Attesting to the wit of Muslim YouTubers, a response video was posted to Wilders’ video which took such Bible quotes as:

“You must completely destroy them; you shall make no peace treaties with them, and show no mercy to them” (Deuteronomy 7:2)

“And kill every woman who has slept with a man” (Numbers 31:17)

“Utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling baby.” (Samuel 15:3)

“I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.” (Matthew 10:34)

“And he brought out the people that were in it, and cut them with saws, and harrows of iron, and with axes…” (Chronicles 20:3)

In two separate videos, quotes such as this were screen alongside images of animals ferociously attacking each other in one instance, and American soldiers committing atrocities in the Middle East in another.

The end of each video contains a message which reveals the purpose of the responses as showing how easy it is to bring quotes from a sacred text to make said text seem evil. It should be noted that neither of these videos are malicious, and both purport to exist solely to prove a point.

Given that the Muslim YouTube community is so well-equipped to deal with and respond to such harsh and cruel criticism, it is completely unnecessary to censor the networking websites from the entire country. There are always going to be criticisms and debasement of one’s religion; in the information age there are numerous platforms where people choose to make cowardly and faceless attacks on just about anything.

The leaders of Islam, and offended Muslims alike, need to learn how to ignore such provocation. By banning websites such as MySpace and YouTube, the Indonesian government has done nothing but demonstrate that Wilders’ video was successful in rousing feathers; in utilising censorship, they will implore others to make similar attacks. The schoolyard bully is more likely to kick the kid who cries.

Free speech is important, and people who choose to ignorantly antagonize the faiths of others should be ignored.

John de Jong
john_dejong@hotmail.com

In response to:
‘YouTube, MySpace blocked in Indonesia’ - AP
The Age (Melbourne, Australia). 09/04/2008
As a socially superior member of society, it is extremely important for me to keep up appearances. Now I confess, I’m only ever up to date with the news when I’m sober, so when the 20/20 was announced I had no idea what the hell it was, and felt somewhat apprehensive as to why Burke wanted me of all people to attend. I then went to my PR advisor for a consultation, and enquired into the ordeal. He explained to me the importance of being incredible crowds containing an IQ calibre so ordinary, they could even believe Britney Spears was nominated for ‘Mother of the Year’. His shameless play to my vanity compelled me to attend.

When I arrived at Parliament House, I confronted with the same smirk of Kevin Rudd I immediately fired my PR advisor and stabbed myself in the knee. This was another gimmick summit; for dweebs and do-gooders ‘randomly selected’ to preach about their sissy values to a leader who has no good ones of his own. After a small medical interlude, I changed out of my ‘Mumbai Indians’ uniform and reluctantly went inside. There I met Mr Harry Dobson, and attempted to establish how we both ended up in this outrageous position.

The investigation was unsuccessful, due to a communication breakdown between us. Whether this was due to his ‘frisky whisky’ or my overdose of morphine, I’m not sure. When I woke sprawled across the summit floor in a pile of my own vomit some twenty minutes later, Dobson had vanished.

The actual summit was, to be put lightly, boring as hell. As a politician, I don’t need to, nor care to, listen to what children think. I was forced to pause and reflect however, when a small Malaysian student helped me up and wiped down my tie she said to me, “I really believe the SPP can make a difference if they reconsider Australia’s shifting ideal towards a National Republic.” Immediately, I wrenched her hairpin from her head and thrust it into my other knee. I’m sorry, but we’ve already voted on that. Making another referendum relating to dancing declined to improve their dancing ability...”

McKenney, one of TV’s most boring individuals said he did not regret taking drugs as it was a ploy to attract more viewers to the programme. When interviewed, Mr. McKenney said he was “on his ceiling” and that Dobson was entirely to blame for the fiasco. “No one in their right mind would trust Mr. Dobson he has f ox trotted me into a deal of lambada.” Dobson not wishing to continue with poor puns relating to dancing declined to make further comment.

Pseudo-Minister for Nose Candy, Harry Dobson, is facing allegations he supplied Dancing with the Stars host Todd McKenney with illicit substances.

Speaking from Colombia where he was visiting ‘family’, Dobson refuted the claims made against him. “Any statement from Mr. McKenney is entirely false!” said Mr. Dobson. “Furthermore, my colleagues Escobar, Sanchez and Ricardo will support me in that I have never sought to provide anyone with drugs and end up stuck in a home with regular middle-class Australians. This charity is to help relieve pressure and give them back that dignity once had over everyone else.”

The announcement was given full support by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who was recently caught on a train without a ticket and completely out of pocket.

“I don’t have 24 pounds to just ‘throw away’ on some book about Blair, who has earned over a million dollars on the speaking circuit since standing down.

“People like Mr Blair are out there doing it tough. I mean look, the poor bunch is getting paid to transport. Look what he’s been reduced to!” said Martin on the issue. “It is our responsibility to help get this poor man off the streets! The same goes to all politicians. Except Paul Keating. He’s just a stinger.”

This week Pseudo-Minister Will Martin announced a somewhat unprecedented need to create a new charity fund for retired politicians. Despite their substantial pension schemes, Martin claims politicians do it harder than most Australians when it comes to retirement.

“Politicians are not ordinary people,” he said at a door stop yesterday. “The super scheme is adequate, yes, but when it comes to the end, they still will probably

end up stuck in a home with regular middle-class Australians. This charity is to help relieve pressure and give them back that dignity once had over everyone else.”

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I arrived in Canberra on one of those evily chilly nation’s capital mornings and of course I was disastrously hungover from several days of drinking binge. My destination was the 2020 summit at Parliament House. My mission was to infiltrate it in order to listen to the new-wave ideas that Australia’s ‘best and brightest’ were to put forth and hopefully to suggest some of my own. A 24-hour fish and chip shop and dry sock vending machines were certainly of national importance.

But for some reason I was sceptical of the 1000. I couldn’t put my finger on why…Then it struck me! The ‘best and brightest’ were none other than a delegation selected by Rudd in order to ingratiate himself with Australia’s best academics (as if he needed too), business leaders (union heavies) and celebrities (where was Bindi Irwin?)! I almost choked on my nineteenth beer as I made this discovery in the Canberra airport bar.

After three hours of waiting in the blistering Canberra cold on the day of the Summit, I realised my chauffeur-driven Commonwealth car was not coming to pick me up and I was late for most of the delegates’ arrivals. After evading security I made my way in to Parliament House’s Great Hall where I was just in time to hear the beginning of Rudd’s address. He began: “I welcome you, Australia’s 1000…” He scanned the crowd and noticed myself and SPP comrade Will Martin staggering and giggling maniacally. “Ah, 1002. You in the back! Seize them! (Then something in Chinese!)” shouted Rudd. I thought we were done for by members of the Chinese Torch Relay Protection Squad charged towards us with Tianamen Square-like desire to kill us!

After spending a day in detention at Parliament House I realised my only hope was to escape. Fortunately, I was able to disguise myself as Ignatius Blanchett and although many remarked at the alcoholic stench and three day growth on a six-day old, I managed to give a brilliant performance. All things considered the 2020 Summit was a good place to have a yarn. But when dishonest, average buggers like those in the SPP aren’t invited it’s like a pub with no beer.

D.
Democrats:
The Democrats believe in a society that reflects values of fairness, democracy, and freedom of the individual. An important aspect of a fair society is the freedom to practice or not to practice a religious faith. It is undeniable that individuals bring their own values into politics that may be based on religious belief or that churches have an important role in public debate, but it is pertinent to assess the nexus that should exist between government and religious authorities, especially in a multicultural society such as Australia.

The line between religion and governance in Australia has been blurred. More, now than ever, we see many public schools, hospitals, universities, aged care and employment services run by churches. There are two problems with this scenario: First, churches can use these services to proselytise or exclude those with other beliefs. Secondly, the relationship with the Government restricts the traditional role of churches to speak out against the government on social justice issues; such as Australia’s treatment of asylum seekers or the war in Iraq.

In conjunction with conservative religious organisations funding campaigns to elect their own candidates (yes I am referring to Family First), alarmingly, these groups are also having an increasing influence on the major parties. The 2004 ban on gay marriage is an example of how the religious right influences the decision-making of the major parties. Both the ALP and the Liberal Party voted to destroy rights. Regularly, debates on euthanasia, abortion and gay marriage centre on religion; the real merits of the arguments are not even considered.

Despite Edmund Barton’s resounding support for secular society in a federation speech of 1897, the Australian Constitution does not provide for a formal separation of church and state. Section 116 of the Constitution serves only to prevent the Government from establishing a state religion. For the Democrats, secularism is about more than that. Secularism is about freedom of religion and freedom from religion. While it is arguable that religion can have a positive influence on morality, a person is not entitled to believe that their morality is superior because it is founded in a religious belief. A push for adherence to Judaeo-Christian values in government is simply a way to infer this inferiority and give a privileged position to the dominant religious group. Secularism ensures that society is fair for all and ensures that governments fulfill their function to treat all citizens equally.

For more information please refer to:

Aleisha Brown
President
Adelaide University Australian Democrats Club
aleisha.brown@sa.democrats.org.au

Liberal:
The question of separating church and state is about as old as democracy itself and many theorists, philosophers, academics and politicians far smarter than I, have attempted to provide an answer.

In Australia, the issue has always bubbled away in the background and has roots back to the Constitutional debates of 1897, when Sir Edmund Barton outlined what he thought was meant by separating church and state.

Of course, the Australian Constitution included section 116, which reads:

The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.

The question for academics and political commentators is whether this section sufficiently separates church from state.

Obviously this, whilst an interesting question, is unable to be answered sufficiently now so I will stick to the lay-man’s answer, which if my experiences with US television are accurate would dictate a strict, constitutionally enshrined separation of church and state.

However, in Australia, there are many practical examples that would suggest otherwise, for example:
Want to ask the political clubs a question? Email ondit@adelaide.edu.au.

P.S Hey Greens, we want your input too, don’t miss out next time. Mazza and Jay-C still love ya!

• Ministers of the Crown being able to swear on the Bible an oath to office;
• The reading of the Lord’s prayer at the opening of parliament; or
• The public funding of religious based schools.

Then there is of course the rise of the Family First Party or the influence of Christian based lobby groups, such as the Australian Christian Lobby and Festival of Light.

Nonetheless, I would argue that the separation of church and state is accurately reflected in s116 and requires the state not to establish a church or endorse a particular religion.

In consideration of this answer, I have to ask myself what the strict separationist would say to a candidate, with strict personal faith, seeking public office. Would they ask them to denounce their religious beliefs prior to entering Parliament? or require them to declare a conflict of interest prior to debating a moral issue?

Obviously that is absurd. I believe the balance is right and like anyone, religious based organisations are entitled to participate in democracy as vehemently as the next and if anyone has a problem with that, it is their democratic right to join the Secular Party.

Todd Hacking
President
Adelaide University Liberal Club

Labor:
The role of religion in politics is always a contentious issue. Sadly in recent times one’s faith (or lack thereof) has increasingly been used to scapegoat members of society rather than to promote tolerance and understanding. Left unchecked, religion and the topics surrounding it, can easily become a wedge issue for any political party with a broad supporter base.

One must remember that an individual’s religious belief is just that, their own belief, and is just one of many possessed across our community. As such, churches and other religious groups are just one of many voices which form the various lobbyists in our community. All of which should be given the respect they deserve and have their concerns listened to by the government. No religious group can self-appoint itself with the moral high ground on issues facing our society simply because of their faith. It can be argued that those with no faith form decisions with an equal, if not greater, moral authority that those who form an opinion based entirely on religious convictions.

Fortunately Australia’s democracy is underpinned by the notion of separation of church and state. That said an individual politician may convey an opinion based on his or her religious viewpoint from time to time, but at the end of the day it is up to the electorate as to whether this is appropriate when the said politicians face the polls.

Finally I’d like to take the opportunity to address what I believe to be unfair criticism of the ALP and the Labor club in the Greens’ contribution in the last edition of On Dit. It was implied in their article that the government is not committed to implementing the recommendations of the HREOC report into discrimination faced by same sex couples in Australian law. This is simply not the case.

In no section of the HREOC report was the issue of same sex marriage raised, rather the report focused on rights same sex couples would be entitled to if they were in a heterosexual de facto relationship. I once again point out that the Rudd Government has committed itself to adopting the recommendations of the HREOC report, removing all discrimination in terms of inheritance law, taxation law and social security law for same sex couples.

The issue of same sex marriage is another important issue and is one that I have already stated the club would like to see further developments on during the term of the Rudd Government.

My advice to any person wanting to see more advances in these sorts of areas is to lobby the government & get involved, even join the party. The views expressed by individual politicians are just one of many held by members of the ALP. The ALP is a democratic party and its rank and file members have a say in ALP policies. There is no better way to affect change than from within, in fact this is why the majority of ALP members choose to join in the first place.

Scott Cowen
President
Adelaide University Labor Club
The Adelaide University Geological Society (AUGS) is a student-run society for students studying geology or who are interested in the field. Our main aim is to assist students by helping to subsidise the cost of field trips with fundraising.

AUGS run BBQs, pub-crawls, and industry days where companies are invited to give a presentation over beers and a feed.

Look out for the limited edition stubbie holders coming soon.

Membership is $10 ($5 for 1st year students). If you're interested please contact:

BYRON (PRESIDENT): byron.dietman@student.adelaide.edu.au
MITH (PROMOTIONS MANAGER): mitchell.keany@student.adelaide.edu.au

Let's Rock!
The Adelaide University Geological Society (AUGS) is a student-run society for students studying geology or who are interested in the field. Our main aim is to assist students by helping to subsidise the cost of field trips with fundraising.

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Mitch (Promotions Manager): mitchell.keany@student.adelaide.edu.au

Let's Rock!
Alfredo Reinado, the renegade East Timorese military leader, died this February in an assassination attempt on the President, Jose Ramos-Horta. Along with an injured president and a shocked nation, the dead rebel left behind an intriguing past of associations: with the Australian military, with his intended victim and politicians from both countries. Whether or not Reinado was mistaken in his eventual, tragic choice of enemies, he drew them from the ranks of his friends. The Australian Military, his President, the infant East Timorese Armed Forces, all at one stage considered this fervent dissenter an ally. The demise of this one fanatic and the near death of Ramos-Horta is more than just senseless violence; it indicates the difficulty for Australia to play peacekeeper, and for any nation to host a foreign force no matter how benign their intentions may be.

Reinado, like his country of East Timor, had difficulties getting along with bigger neighbours. When the Dutch left in 1975, the nation celebrated an entire nine days of independence before the Indonesian invasion. Australia issued no protest at this aggression, despite knowing about the plans eighteen months in advance. Reinado was captured by the Indonesians, and worked as a porter for their military until his escape to Australia twenty years later. After a stint in an immigration detention centre (the standard DIMIA welcome), he worked in a West Australian shipyard. He returned home after East Timor’s independence mark II: an event once again spoilt by the marauding Indonesian Armed Forces who this time voiced their displeasure with a scorched earth policy and the murder of 1400 East Timorese.

Reinado’s experience in the shipyards landed him a position as commander of the Timorese navy, in charge of their two small patrol vessels. He spent time in Canberra training with the Australian Defence Force. In 2006, Reinado mutinied after the army was ordered to fire into a crowd of demonstrators, protesting at the sacking of 600 soldiers. Subsequent arrests, negotiations, prison break-outs and sieges punctuated a tumultuous two years in the mountains. Whilst his close friendship with Ramos-Horta disintegrated, he managed to garner extensive village level support during this time.

At the order of the East Timorese government, Australian soldiers squared off against the rebel in a dramatic siege in Same, a small highland village in early 2007. The Australians surrounded the town for a week, searching on the ground, house to house, and from Black Hawk helicopters. Their efforts culminated in a brief fire fight between rebel members and troops, and whilst four Same residents were killed, Reinado remained unapprehended. Subsequent inquiries found the ADF’s actions appropriate, however, the failure was embarrassing and did nothing to help local opinions of the Australians.

A foreign military presence has few friends, regardless of its intentions. The host government can blame it for security failings, justified or otherwise, often with a domestic political motive. The people hold it responsible for any deaths and mayhem regardless of the foreigners’ assiduity. Unsurprisingly, word on the streets of Dili turned slightly cynical when Australian Special Forces, international police and local authorities all failed to catch 50 prison escapees in a country as small as East Timor, especially when journalists had no such problems.

The reputation of the Australian forces in East Timor is mixed. It would appear that the military command is highly attuned of the sensitivity of their task, and the chief regularly appears in the local media, speaking the local language and informing East Timorese of progress. That said, the unfortunate inability of most Australian soldiers to communicate in the local language does the relationship no favours. Small incidents quickly become political point scores: a strip search of an East Timorese policeman by an Australian officer caused outrage, “an abuse of East Timor’s rights as an independent country,” according to Parliamentary President Francisco Guterres. Australians cop it in street art: “Xanana - fuck your mother and fuck Australia.” And another: “we are not Australians, we are Timorese and not yet Aborgins (sic)”. However, journalists claim that this hostility is not widely shared by the population.

Off the streets and in the halls of power, Australia’s reputation remains tarnished by our insistence of maintaining old maritime borders, which, conveniently, give us access to the bulk of oil and gas resources in the Timor sea. Australia’s reward for its quick recognition of the 1975 occupation of East Timor was a generous sea boundary arrangement with the Indonesians, far in excess of what modern international law specifies (equidistant between countries). Australia’s failure to recognise this law, and to return maritime boundaries to their rightful position has angered East Timorese politicians. Our $570 million in aid money is less impressive when compared to the $3.2 billion in oil royalties collected by Australia. A settlement was reached in early 2006, although East Timor still gets less than the equidistant arrangement would provide.

Reinado was a self styled folk hero, proud yet distressed in interviews whilst on the run. He spoke passionately about what he considered to be the military’s betrayal of its people. His charisma earned him the support of the unemployed, the young; those who had lost confidence in a government struggling in the nation-building endeavour. His poster boy prominence in graffiti art was testament of a romantic appeal, Che Guevara style, to a generation disenchanted by the poverty following independence. Electricity remains temperamental, unemployment savage and refugees number in the tens of thousands. Unfortunately, Reinado offered East Timor nothing more than idealistic armed struggle against a spurious adversary: a cause more inspiring than building a country from rubble, but ultimately pointless.

David Kaczan

**Eds - As always, apologies to David (and also Barbara), but if you require references, hit us up on ondit@adelaide.edu.au**
For once I am actually sticking with the theme of an issue - fanatics are a big part of foreign affairs after all. According to trustworthy www.dictionary.com, a fanatic is “a person with an extreme and uncritical enthusiasm or zeal.” The always quotable Winston Churchill gave the definition, “A fanatic is one who can’t change his mind and won’t change the subject.” Fanatics often are the leaders who make the news, as their actions can be brutal, shocking or just because they’re mentally not 100% there. They are usually part of a dictatorial regime - logical when you think that they are so committed to their beliefs that they can’t bear to loosen their control over events. Rashidjan has written an interesting piece called ‘Mad Leader’1, in which he makes some astute observations about the characteristics of fanatical politicians. He says,

Mad leaders surround themselves with mad people, devoted followers and blind killers who are equally clueless about what it means to be a feeling human being. A mad leader is not a funny caricature for political satire, but a sad picture of a possible catastrophe. He is a dangerous psychopath. According to most psychiatrists, mad leaders are individuals whose narcissism is so extreme and grandiose that they exist in a kind of splendid isolation in which the creation of the grandiose self takes precedence over legal, moral or interpersonal commitments.

With this in mind, it’s interesting to look at Parade Magazine’s annual list of the world’s top 10 dictators for 20082. There’s some old ‘favourites’, such as Kim Jong-il, who has managed to pull off top spot, and less well known leaders such as Isayas Afwerki. The list is as follows

1. Kim Jong-il (North Korea, in power since 1994): Last year ranked #2
2. Omar Al-Bashir (Sudan, in power since 1989): Last year ranked #1
3. Than Shwe (Burma, in power since 1992): Last year ranked #6
4. King Abdullah (Saudi Arabia, in power since 1995): Last year ranked #5
5. Hu Jintao (China, in power since 2002): Last year ranked #4
6. Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe, in power since 1980): Last year ranked #7
7. Sayyid Ali Khamenei (Iran, in power since 1989): Last year ranked #3
8. Pervez Musharraf (Pakistan, in power since 1999): Last year ranked #15
9. Islam Karimov (Uzbekistan, in power since 1989): Last year ranked #8
10. Isayas Afwerki (Eritrea, in power since 1991): Last year ranked #13

The list usually brings some controversy and I’m sure this one will as well. It is an American publication and so the writers obviously bring their own prejudices to the table. Not all of these leaders would be “mad” (although I definitely have Kim marked down as a pretty crazy), and I think the inclusion of Hu Jintao is a criticism of the Chinese regime in general rather than him alone. As you have probably seen, several of these men have been in the news frequently during the last month. Robert Mugabe of course is currently embroiled in the biggest battle of his political career to remain in power in Zimbabwe. The opposition MDC party, led by Morgan Tsvangirai, has claimed victory in both the presidential and parliamentary result. Weeks after the election took place however, votes from many constituencies are being recounted and the presidential result withheld. Mugabe has been in power for a long time and has enjoyed support from South African leader Thabo Mbeki, so I doubt he will just roll over and accept defeat - this fight will inevitably be a drawn out affair. Interestingly, a Chinese shipment of arms destined for Zimbabwe was unable to unload in South Africa because dock workers did “not agree with the position of the government not to intervene.” A court then ruled that the shipment should not be transported through South African territory, and the ship is now heading for an unknown destination (rumoured to be Angola). I would like to think that this action has saved the lives of at least a few Zimbabweans, even if it is only a short reprieve. Many Western leaders had hoped for a scenario where Mugabe “gracefully” resigns and retires somewhere in Zimbabwe to enjoy his wealth and immunity from the new government. Instead Mugabe is resorting to blaming everything on British imperialists again, whilst Tsvangirai has fled the country citing fears for his safety. Kofi Annan has asked “Where are the African leaders2?” in this turmoil, and warned that without action Zimbabwe could be heading towards bloody riots similar to those in Kenya after their controversial election.

Hu Jintao has also been fending off international criticism. The widespread protests during the Olympic torch relay have brought continuing attention to human rights abuses in the Tibet region and constant debate in the media about whether it is right or wrong to interrupt the Olympic flame. The footage of a runner in the London leg being mobbed by a crowd was certainly a confronting image. Most nations are committing their support for the August Olympics, including Kevin Rudd, although he did dare to mention the human rights issues in a speech in China. It’s interesting to note however that after insisting there would be no Chinese security during the Australian leg, Rudd has now allowed Chinese forces to accompany the flame. They will be confined to vehicles however, and have been threatened with arrest if they scuffle with protestors. The diplomatic situation is tricky - as Parade Magazine itself states in its justification for including Jintao, “China is a close economic ally and our (America’s) second leading trade partner. Our country’s trade deficit with China stands at almost $1 billion a day, and the U.S. government owes Chinese lenders $388 billion”. Nobody wants to offend China and so condemning events in Tibet has become difficult for world leaders. Those who have, such as French President Nicolas Sarkozy, have been widely criticised. Protests are set to continue though, and while this article will have been submitted before the flame arrives in Canberra, I’m sure there will be large demonstrations here as well and perhaps clashes between pro-Tibet and pro-China supporters.

I’d like to dedicate this article to my biggest critic Christopher Byrne and to apologize to him for my lack of Northern Ireland content so far.

On Dit 76.4
People often use quotes as some kind of higher philosophy by which they should live their lives. “Work hard, play hard” is a philosophy patented by Nike and embraced by many young people around the world. However, whether this is a feasible or healthy way of living, even for a short period of time, remains to be seen.

Our generation live hectic lifestyles, attempting to do as much as we can as quickly as possible. We are contactable 24/7 with mobiles, the email, and instant messaging rarely switched off. Along with this, sleep has become a low priority. Although the data suggests that we’re becoming successful faster, there is now evidence of the high price we pay. For the sake of random facts and good trivia, the record for the longest period without sleep is 18 days, 21 hours, 40 minutes during a rocking chair marathon. The record holder reported hallucinations, paranoia, blurred vision, slurred speech and memory and concentration lapses. Although this is extreme, almost all students have reported to have “pulled an all-nighter” at least once before. Some have even done it two or three nights in a row. Personally, it’s against my religion to start an assignment more than a day before it’s due. The short-term effects of even one night of reduced sleep have been well documented. Being awake for 17-18 hrs reduces your alertness to that of a blood alcohol level of .05. After being awake for 24hrs, your performance is similar to having a blood alcohol level of 0.08-0.1. This is approximately a three fold lengthening of your reaction time. To be blunt (and not like James), when you deprive yourself of sleep and then drive, you are endangering yourself and every other road user. 7% of motor vehicle accidents in Australia are due to sleep deprivation and because they are often high speed collisions, they account for about 20% of road deaths.

However, it is the effect of chronic sleep deprivation that is of greater concern. Chronic sleep deprivation seriously and detrimentally affects both mind and body. Teenagers today average about an hour less sleep per night than 30 years ago, for which I am sure the introduction of Facebook is entirely to blame. Unfortunately this change in sleeping habits is occurring too quickly for our genes to keep up and we are left to suffer the consequences. Chronic lack of sleep causes neurons to lose their plasticity making them incapable of forming the synaptic connections necessary to encode a memory. While I sit here at 4.49am (liar!) writing this article, apart from the obvious irony, I know I probably won’t remember much of what I’ve written in the morning. A US study found teenagers who receive an A-grade average get 15 minutes more sleep than those who average Bs, who in turn get 11 minutes more than those who average Cs (way too many ‘average’s). Sleep deprivation actually affects 18 to 24 year-olds more than older adults, as our brains are still developing. However, just like George Bush being President, feeling tired can feel normal after a short time, even though it’s still hurting us (ha.ha.). Those deliberately deprived of sleep for research initially notice greatly the effects on their alertness, mood and physical performance, but the awareness drops off after the first few days. You may be sleep deprived and not actually know it.

Chronic sleep deprivation is a risk factor for many diseases including cardiovascular disease, depression, cancer and diabetes. In fact, restricting 20-year-olds to four hours sleep puts them in a pre-diabetic state, similar to that of an 80 year old. Further, adequate sleep has recently been found to be as important as diet and exercise in preventing obesity. Sleep deprivation increases grelin levels, making us hungry, and reduces leptin levels, decreasing the feeling of satisfaction following a meal. Our bodies go into a starvation state and we crave sugar and fat-rich foods. It is now increasingly believed that sleep deprivation is partly responsible for the obesity epidemic sweeping the world. As sleeping time has decreased, waist lines have increased. Children who sleep less than ten hours at the age of three are much more likely to be obese when they are seven years old.

The irony is that the medical profession itself is the worst perpetrator of sleep deprivation. An article published in the NJEM showed that every extended work shift that was scheduled in a month increased the monthly risk of a crash during the commute from work by 16.2 percent. In a study of 2,700 interns working in ICU across the US, 1 in 5 reported making a sleep-related mistake that resulted in a patient being injured, and 1 in 20 reported making a fatigue-related mistake resulting in the death of a patient. The odds of interns piercing themselves with needles or scalpels while caring for patients, and thereby exposing themselves to potentially contaminated body fluids, are 61 percent greater when they have been working more than 20 consecutive hours, as compared to when those same interns have been working less than 12 consecutive hours. Despite this overwhelming evidence there are no formal caps on doctors’ hours in Australia and doctors seem unable to take their own advice. The AMA has reported that some doctors are working 39.5 hours straight. However, even as I write, the pressure for formal caps on working hours is rapidly increasing and it may not be long before we find the “good old days” of 24-hour shifts are gone.

But how can we counteract this movement of adolescents towards the 24/7 lifestyle? How do we change the sleeping habits of a person, a household, a community, a nation? I leave that for you to ponder. In the meantime, I’m going to try to change the habit of one person… myself. So I’m off to bed. Good night.

Ross Roberts-Thomson
Health Subby
Do you find yourself avoiding the footpath cracks when walking? I know I do. Though commonly thought to be superstition, compulsively avoiding the cracks on the footpath can be linked to obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). However, if you are just avoiding the gaps between the slabs, it does not mean that you have OCD. It just means that we are acting on an irrational superstition.

How about the way your clothes are arranged in your wardrobe? At times I have this compulsive habit to arrange my clothes according to colour. Is this a ritual taken to relieve stress or anxiety? Well, David Beckham was reported to do this while at home. If England’s greatest living footballer does it, it can’t be that bad, can it? But, in severe cases, this can interfere with people’s life if they were to spend long periods of time colour-coding their clothes. Yet, it is arguable that people who arrange their clothes in this way are often just tidy or plain organised.

“You have to resist temptation. Kleptomania, a failure to resist the urge to steal objects not needed for personal use or for their financial value. As with most obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders, there is an increase in anxiety before the theft, followed by a feeling of gratification afterwards. It is estimated that six in one thousand people are kleptomaniac, however this could be an underestimate as most people with the disorder are too ashamed of their behavior to confess. Winona Ryder fits the profile of a kleptomaniac. She cuts holes in clothes to get the tags off - which makes one wonder if she is going to wear them?”

Aldous Huxley, Author

I just love this. How about shopping?!!?! How many times have you bought something, only to realise that you don’t need it? Tough luck for people with this disorder. Throw in a credit card and hey presto, they would end up with huge credit card bills they can’t pay and might even commit fraud to sustain their habit. The age of onset is normally between 18-30 years, and the symptoms usually wax and wane throughout a person’s lifetime.

For another example, children, and might I say adults, are often fascinated with fire. Children can show a fascination with fire, as they do with many phenomena they do not yet fully understand. However in the case of adults, if they are obsessed with starting a fire, could be identified as pyromania. Pyromaniacs, by definition, cannot resist the urge to set fire to things. Maybe it is just another way to relieve tension.

Some people have the tendency to pull hairs out of the body. The most common part where the sufferers would pull hairs from are the scalp, eyelids and eyebrows. In the case of extreme condition there can be large areas of bald patches. This disorder is known as trichotillomania and it is much more common than expected as it affects about 2% of the population. But rest assured, if you occasionally pick hairs out of your body, you are unlikely to have this disorder. This is because trichotillomania sufferers usually have extensive hair loss as a result of their habit.

After a string of losses in a poker match, do you place a higher, riskier bet? Pathological gambling is an obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorder. But unless your love for the roulette wheel is ruining your finances and your relationships, you are unlikely to actually be one. Sufferers might start to sweat and shake uncontrollably before entering a casino. Their anxiety is then relieved after they sit down and begin gambling. The brain shows intensified activity following a string of betting losses and the increased brain activity coincided with subjects placing a risky bet. The brain appears to believe it is due for a win after a series of losses and this belief is what turns some people into pathological gamblers.

I can resist anything but temptation. Kleptomania, a failure to resist the urge to steal objects not needed for personal use or for their financial value. As with most obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders, there is an increase in anxiety before the theft, followed by a feeling of gratification afterwards. It is estimated that six in one thousand people are kleptomaniac, however this could be an underestimate as most people with the disorder are too ashamed of their behavior to confess. Winona Ryder fits the profile of a kleptomaniac. She cuts holes in clothes to get the tags off - which makes one wonder if she is going to wear them?

“Defined in psychological terms, a fanatic is a man who consciously over-compensates a secret doubt.”

Aldous Huxley, Author

On Dit 76.4

Goldy Yong
“See Ya Later Ma, I’m Joining A Cult”

i.e. Economic Insights into the Short-Run Functioning of your Garden-Variety Weirdos.

Few things send the shivers up the spine of the comfortable middle-classes more than the word ‘cult’. Conjuring up images of Jonestown and UFOs, or perhaps of Tom Cruise on Oprah’s couch, most would like to believe that those who join cults are brainwashed into it. What other reason could there be for entertaining such strange and abnormal beliefs in such bizarre social arrangements? Economists however have this habit of assuming everyone is perfectly rational. Perhaps the greatest critique of economists, this assumption does nonetheless yield insights into just about anything you apply it to. The appraisal of the cult is no different. Larry Iannaccone is one such economist interested in the economics of religious belief. His hypothesis regarding cults goes something like this:

For one reason or another some people are dissatisfied with society. Perhaps they desire a greater level of trust between neighbors. Or maybe they’re sick of everyone thinking and reacting differently. The nine-to-five slog may not suit them, but they are still unable to give up the collective security offered by doing things with other people. Maybe they want a purpose, a dream, a shared set of values. Whatever, the point is some people prefer to be in a cult. The definition of a cult is a quasi-religious movement, usually charismatic in nature, which requires its members to live their entire lives within the movement, often in communal living arrangements. Socially, there are definite advantages to belonging to such a commune. Philanthropic, hardworking, efficient and independent of the outside world; it’s highly appealing to say the least. There are many things that people value, such as love and community, which can only be produced in cohesive, committed groups. A cult is one form of such a group.

“But what of the weirdness?” you say. You don’t want to join a cult that makes you eat nothing but whole grains, wear white all the time or chant. Say there exists a cult where everyone trusts each other, shares their belongings and lives in peace and harmony. Nothing freakier than that. Sounds boring to me, but given the absence of anything stranger I might well give it a go. I drop in, eat, drink and be merry, and leave in a month once I start missing home. I may be personally better off, but the cult certainly isn’t. The cult is a free resource, and I chose to free-load and go home, contributing nothing to the group. Such a cult wouldn’t stay functional for long.

So what do the cult leaders do? Why, they up the price. Only those who are truly devoted to the cult would put up with doing anything out of the ordinary, especially if it is costly. Would you sell your home and pool the money into a community if you were planning to leave soon? Things get really efficient once you make your members do things like stop shaving, wearing pink or trying to contact aliens. Now not only is it financially expensive to join the cult, but the rest of the world starts thinking you’re bonkers too. It gets to the stage that the only like-minded people you encounter, or the only people willing to hear you out, belong to or are related to your cult. As such, leaving the cult becomes extremely difficult. Given the high entry and leaving costs, you wouldn’t contemplate joining if you’re not committed. If the benefits offered by the cult are worth it to you though, you may well put your lot in with the cult. As such, the things we see as extremist (or to utilise this issue’s theme, fanatic) exist to ensure a high level of commitment, making it possible for a sect to produce goods and services very difficult to produce in the outside world.

We only ever hear about the cults that go wrong. This may indeed be a significant number of them. I’ve tried to show the attraction of cults, and why cults chose to act the way they do, in the short run. However, the maintenance of such a cult in the long run requires a great level of trust. If this trust is broken by the rank-and-file members, then the cult simply falls apart. If the trust however is broken by the leadership, much more dire results can occur. I’m not suggesting we all join cults. Some cults are scary. And naturally I don’t approve of any organization that stops you thinking for yourself. I’m saying is that we as a society should stop being so shocked. There are perfectly logical reasons people join cults, and perfectly rational reasons why cults are strange. In fact, the two are linked: cults are strange because the people who join them are perfectly rational. Maybe if cult members really were brainwashed, there would be no need for the weird antics, and we would have no trouble accepting cults alongside mainstream society.

If you’re interested in learning more, Econtalk has a podcast of Larry Iannaccone describing his research at http://www.econtalk.org/archives/2006/10/the_economics_o_7.html

Myriam Robin

**Eds - I think we will all be checking the back seats of our cars after printing this image of Tom Cruise. Don’t fuck with those Scientologists!**
The English word “fan” is derived from fanaa, which comes from “fanatic”: someone who has lost their reason in devotion to something.

Fanaa is the Sufi term for extinction. It means to annihilate the self, while remaining physically alive. Persons having entered this state are said to have no existence outside of it and be in complete unity with God. Fanaa is similar to the concepts of nirvana in Buddhism and moksha in Hinduism which also endeavour for the annihilation of the self. The state of Fanaa may be attained by constant meditation and deep contemplation on the attributes of God, coupled with the denunciation of accepted human attributes. It is the death of the subconscious mind, or so to speak. Some people find this state relatively easy to attain, easy of course being a highly relative term. It liberates one from all necessities outside of their spiritual quest; the ultimate aim is the truth and peace.

The Sufi fanaa in its triple manifestation, fanaa of acts, of attributes and of the essence, does not have an exclusively negative effect or action. It is the annihilation of everything contingent, whether this be in the form of action, attribute or essence. More precisely, it is the annihilation in the mind of the person of everything that is not God; at least that what the word and its implied meaning is for a person hoping to achieve inner peace.

There are three ways in ones journey towards the state of fanaa. The first is the way of ignorance, through which each must travel. It is like a person walking for miles in the sun with a heavy load on his shoulder, who, when fatigued, throws away the load and falls asleep under the shade of a tree. This is you and I, who spend life blindly under the influence of our senses and gather our loads of action and consequence, our belongings and necessities creating a difficult environment through which we all traverse anyway to reach the destination of our own goals and expectations.

The next way is that of devotion, which is for the lovers. One may be the lover of people or the lover of God. But the one who loves devotion to the point of worship is intoxicated in that very act and finds his world has been overwhelmed by his object of affection which lasts him in his mind, to the end of his journey.

The third is the way of wisdom, accomplished by but a few. Where one disregards life’s momentary comforts, unties oneself from all earthly bindings and turns his eyes to the everlasting, inspired with divine wisdom. He gains command over his body, thoughts and feelings, and is thereby enabled to create his own heaven within himself that he may rejoice in until he is merged with his eternal goal.

All must journey along one of these three paths, but in the end they arrive at one and the same end. Perfection is attained by the regular practice of concentration, passing through the three grades of development. In the end, one annihilates his subconsciousness in the pursuit of his fanaticism. The intention is to attain inner peace and not be affected by the vagaries of life and to fill oneself with the peace. It is true that each and every one of us years for that peace, and our means of achieving it are varied and diverse, whether we know it or not. But for just one second look at it this way; “There is no other reason to fight, but to find peace and love.” And therein lies the paradox. Such is the truth of the fanatic.

“Whether a particularly obsessive attachment is a fixation or a defensible expression of love is at times debatable.” Sheik Jamal

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...and another thing

The Dulux Colour Awards provide students with a rare chance to delight in industry and public recognition and on Wednesday March 19th the 2008 student specifier winner, Kitinan Kiertgumjorn from Melbourne University, was elated to have his work recognised at such a prestigious and highly regarded event.

22-year-old Kiertgumjorn will take home $1,000 prize money, media attention and specialized industry experience; an ideal career kick start for any colour creative. The 2008 ceremony, held at Dock 5 in Melbourne’s Victoria Harbour, saw the conventions of colour challenged in an extraordinary event environment transforming the raw exclusive venue, fit to acknowledge the inspired projects of architects and interior designers.

Dulux’s 2008 esteemed panel of judges included, international guest interior designer Dr. Frederique Houssard-Andrieux, Cox Rayner’s Michael Rayner and Jimmy Possum’s Margot Spalding.

Kiertgumjorn’s project was acknowledged amongst a plethora of acclaimed architects and interior designers, from firms such as McBride Charles Ryan, Matt Gibson Architecture and Design and Carr Design Group, reaffirming the standard and high calibre of designers drawn to this program. Kiertgumjorn saw the Awards as a stepping stone, to showcase his work, as well as an arena to network with industry greats on the evening opportunities that are critical to emerging designers. “Dulux is such a well known brand and to be acknowledged and awarded at this prestigious event is very humbling, I feel privileged for being given this amazing opportunity,” said Kiertgumjorn.

Recognized as Australia’s most prestigious program of its kind, the Dulux Colour Awards celebrates and fosters the talent of both industry professionals and aspiring innovators. Over the past two decades the Awards have amplified the profile of several budding designers, including Danielle Atkinson, Michael Bernacki and Drew Williamson, and in 2009 looks set to hit new heights.

For your chance to make a colourful entry into Australia’s design profession keep a watchful eye on www.dulux.com.au or email dca@couture.com.au.

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Student and budding architect, Kitinan Kiertgumjorn, tickled pink with Colour Award
Fashion Karma

Well, you know the old saying ‘what goes around comes around’; it’s what the fashion world brings to us each year.

Let us observe; we all sat and laughed at the ridiculous fashions of the ’80s. Who could believe that high waisted jeans were fashionable? I mean who would be caught dead wearing a pair of pants that sat as high as Steve Urkel’s?

We all made fun of that era, laughing in passing at the bargain bins outside Kmart sporting non-hipster jeans or pants for $10. Who would buy that? If it didn’t show your navel it wasn’t worth buying (and most of the time it showed more than that too - many of us can vouch for seeing many an unwanted sight sitting behind someone in a lecture wearing low sitting tight pants or jeans).

Yet none of us can laugh now...because we are those people wearing the high-waisted, tight jeans that we scoffed at seeing in the Kmart bin. Yet, and perhaps even worse, to be in the latest fashion jeans and pants at the moment will set you back a whole lot more than $10. Not only that, but to take another obvious feature of the hard-wearing denim jean, the cut, we find another cruel repetition of fashion history.

For many years we all had to have wide leg jeans or boot cuts. We would never want to be seen wearing a straight leg version of the jean, it would be far too obvious that we purchased from the Big W jean bin, as there was no flare effect. It would have been a heinous fashion disaster in the making.

Yet now, once again, we are the dancing puppets of the fashion world, who has commanded that skinny-leg, ankle-hugging, almost ridiculous-looking (in that they give an insect-like leg effect, particularly in black) are the new ‘it’ thing.

Once again, I have to laugh at our karmic misfortune, but only before I look down at my own skinny leg jeans and realise that I have been duped just as much as the next fashion-conscious victim.

When will the madness stop? I am sure that the puppet masters in Paris, Milan, and New York watch with glee at those of us who so readily laughed at previous fashions now donning the same fashions we so happily teased, and paying top dollar to do so.

Yes, we are victims of fashion karma. The vicious cycle that will inevitably repeat itself over and over again. As the designers are no doubt chanting while laughing evilly in their studios in Rome, ‘dance my puppets, dance’.

It is really hard to believe that some of the worst dressed people in the world have access to so many of the best fashion designers, stylists, and advisers on the globe. Yet, tragically, they seem to get it so wrong all too often.

Even around our campus the worst dressed offenders only commit minor wrongs in comparison to the photos we present in this issue. Sure, you can walk across the Barr Smith Lawns and see track pants, high school graduation jumpers, and careless other misdemeanors - but it really takes effort to look this bad.

One would think that having a great deal of money would lead to better fashion; but in these cases that theory did not hold true.
Andrew Russ – Academic/Muso/Producer/Entrepreneur Extraordinaire

When I was in first year, I had THE coolest tutor for Euro studies. Not only was this guy oh so wise and worldly on the paradigms of post-modernism and impressionist art, but he had a mad ‘young Johnny Depp’ / Beatnik style going on, brought a guitar case to class and was uber generous with his early minutes every odd Friday arvo, rushing off to exotic interstate locations to record with and play in bands, write music for theatre and cook vegetarian cuisine in between hardcore PhD studies. Need I say more? Two years on, after hearing his name attached to upcoming artists in music and on stage I thought it was about time I caught up with the renowned Andrew Russ.

You obviously have a solid involvement in music production; I’ve heard your name linked to Adelaide band Bakewell Street…

I used to play in a band with the lead singer’s brother… I’ve pretty much just helped them do a couple of demos to begin with. They’ve just recorded elsewhere and are doing overdubs I’ve got in a little studio at the back of my place.

What other bands have you been involved with?

I used to play in a band called Special Patrol, who you may remember, they play around the traps. I left them about five or six years ago but about two or three years ago they came to me, heard I was doing a bit of recording so we demoed their whole last album in my bedroom in Norwood, then went to Sydney and recorded it properly in the studio.

And I’ve heard your name linked to The Audreys as well...

No, no… I’m in a theatre company and one of the head actors, Cameron Goodall, I used to play in a band with him called The Freelance Republic. I got into theatre through him and he had a bit of a side project going, called The Audreys which did pretty well for itself. I just lent Trist (Goodall), Cam’s brother and the other guitarist in The Audreys an amp the other day.

You’re in!

So tell me more about your theatre involvement, you said you got into theatre through a friend from your band?

I ended up starting a band… with these guys from the Flinders Drama department. The band sort of petered out but when they set up their theatre company they asked myself and another guy to come in and do the music. We did this huge show at the Queens Theatre, you know that big, cacophonous warehouse… big loud guitars, drums, synths. It was good fun, after that they asked me to join and since then we’ve been slowly and slowly getting bigger and better.

And that’s the Border Project? I saw your Fringe production, the ‘choose your own adventure’ style Trouble on Planet Earth… what else is the company behind?

The idea of the theatre company is to get young people who don’t really go to theatre anymore, traditional theatres kind of left them behind. We sort of try and get them back in. Our last three shows that we’ve done have tried to do that in various ways. We did a show called Please Go Hop, which was basically a four-hour board game we did for the Fringe. It was based on the ’80s and people loved it! Some even sat there for the entire four hours and watched the game unfold. I think the fact that they could drink while they were doing it helped... The next show we did after that was called Highway Rock and Roll Disaster, pretty much a theatrical rock and roll gig, which we’ll be doing in Sydney around August/September. We got asked by the Sydney Theatre Company to be part of their second tier theatre, with Cate Blanchett now working there, she’s taken over the directorship of Sydney Theatre.

Wow. So have you met her?

No, but we’ll see what happens. (laughs) ...At the moment the music stuff’s going quite well, especially all the theatre work. We’re getting quite a bit of funding and lots of opportunities...

After Andrew returns from his Sydney rock and roll disaster with Cate Blanchett, he’ll be doing a show called Disappearance at the Festival Centre’s Inspace program in October.
Let's then take a walk down memory lane and talk about another type of hate crime: minority abuse. Oh sure, you love God and God loves you and Jesus sits on his perch up in heaven, looking down on the heathens with his judging eyes. The sun is shining, it is a beautiful day and the world of Christians, Muslims and in fact, almost every religion imaginable is filled with rainbows and puppies. The most spectacular rainbow is vomiting love, which flows down the rivers and into every home through a series of complex water treatment facilities. The world really is a magical place until the distant sound of a record scratching in the background halts this blissful existence.

“Hold on,” the narrator’s voice calls out. Rainbows may be eminent in the world of gay, but they certainly aren’t vomiting love, or are they?

Very much in vogue in the late nineties was lesbianism. The noughties however, have seen a new age of homosexual love with the gay male being all the rage.

So while fanatics the world over still fling religious hate against the homosexuals, one can not help but draw the similarities between them and monkeys flinging poo. The difference being that monkeys are actually considered intelligent animals - bible bashers are not. Now happy homos, let’s not forget that we are in Adelaide. There is no Deep South and no slack jawed yokels here; no overly powerful religious sects. How then can A-town’s gay scene scream rape when there is a severe lack of gay hate? Perhaps I am just blindly oblivious to the fact that hate crimes and minority abuse run rampant in the town, but for someone who has only lived in Adelaide’s inner suburbs, one can draw the conclusion that homophobia is on a slow and sure downward spiral.

This quaint little city has moved ahead in leaps and bounds since the 1972 bashing and drowning of renowned gay Adelaide University professor, Dr George Duncan. The murder of Dr Duncan resulted in the decriminalisation of homosexual sex in the state, and since then, South Australia has had a relatively good rapport with its homosexual community.

Undoubtedly there are still those bigots roaming the streets of our fair city, making the odd remark. I myself have experienced the line "oh I know where you boys are going - filthy faggots" one gay day in May, walking towards the southern parklands with my ex boyfriend (for totally wholesome activities I assure you good reader). Further to this I have seen my bestie leered at many a time, although I do still concede that anyone wearing skin tight bright purple female pants (when they have a penis) deserves to be laughed at. These two snap incidences aside, my life has basically been bliss with boy on boy action at the pub never seeming to bother anyone.

Teddy bears made way for real ‘bears’ and candy canes were swapped with real canes to appease those who were into bondage. Free love filled the streets and the choir sang out in harmony until that fateful day when BANG, the AIDS virus became an issue again. Unbeknown to many in the ‘breeding’ community, Adelaide currently has the highest increase in HIV infection of any major gay community in Australia. Us filthy faggots deserve it, as I am sure the closeted priests that touch little boys in their no-no parts would say. An abomination against god, our way of life simply must be stopped, mustn’t it? Why else is AIDS only considered a gay problem ... well no not only a gay problem, but also a problem the blacks face. Can’t convert them? Instead, let’s introduce a way to wipe them out. I’m sure that the woman who protested at Heath Ledger’s funeral would be happy with the severity of painful punishment that our kind are dealt. After all, AIDS does not exist in the straight community, I’m sure she would have you believe. Oh poor woman, I raise my glass to you. Here’s to wishing that you have a lazy ovary and never produce hate-filled offspring.

On a lighter note however, with the current era has come a fascination with the gays. Ten percent of the population, supposedly ‘that way inclined’ has made the topic of gaydom much less taboo. A friend of mine was rather chuffed with the fact that she boasts four gays on her facebook. Good on you love, I have more than 100.

It saddens me when religion gets in the way of friendship and understanding but to be honest, in the opinion of this poof, there really is not much of a divide anymore. If there is; then is it actually noted or all in your head? Though there may be only one official gay bar in Adz, there’s more more to it than that. There’s Rundle Street, various pubs and clubs, many disgusting beats that should be avoided at all costs and even Australia’s largest gay and lesbian festival hosted in our most wholesome city of churches.

It may be the city of churches, but Adelaide is damn near one of the most accepting cities, for Australians who love a bit of double breasted, or sausage sizzle action. Feast festival draws crowds both interstate and internationally. Perhaps it is because there is a rather butch looking female named Shaniqua guarding the entrance to Picnic, or perhaps it is because straight all share the candy / leather canes.

**Ed’s - Tongue firmly in cheek**