

HOLD FAST

ISSUE TWO

WHS SENIOR STUDENT NEWSPAPER

MAY/JUNE 2018

Life Below the Line - Melbourne's Homeless Crisis

Feature pg 4

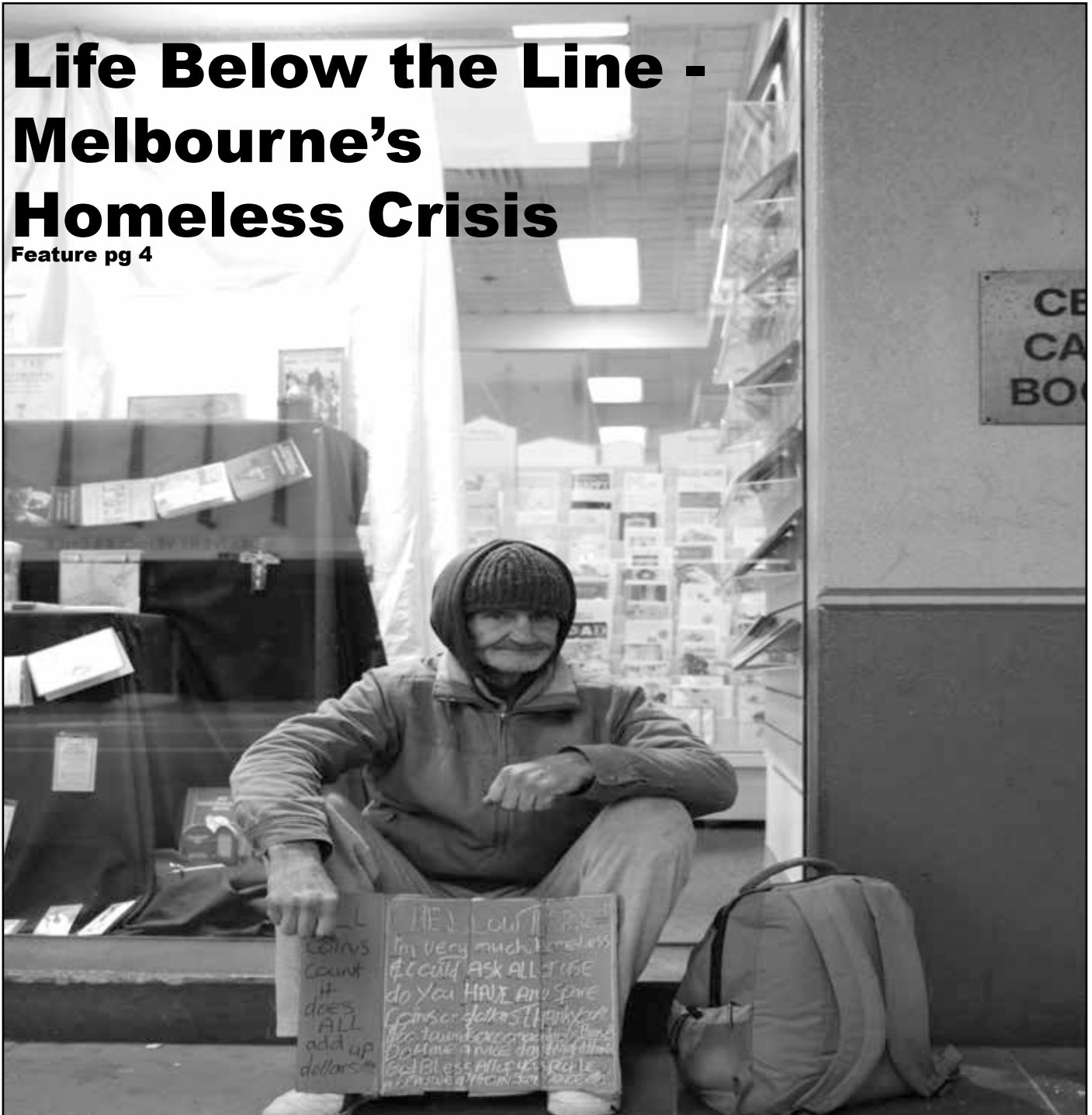


Photo credit Patrick Stewart

Western Chances providing for the West

Earlier this term, Williamstown High had the pleasure of welcoming Terry Bracks, Chair of the West-

ern Chances organisation, to a function in recognition of the accomplishments of the Western Chanc-

es Scholars. For 15 years Western Chances has been offering scholarships to state school students

that necessitate additional services to ensure that all students get a fair go when it comes to school.

More page 9

INSIDE: SPORT, FILMS, STUDENT ART, TRIVIA, CROSSWORD AND MORE

YOUTH

our naïveté will bloom into familiarity
and soon enough our innocence will disappear
into the wrinkles under our tired eyes
after a lifetime of mishaps and maybes,
because as we shed that single tear
on graduation day,
we won't know what's coming
but our mothers will tell us
we're going to see more,
we're going to be more.
just hold onto your youth
for a little while longer.

Jazz Alkourashi, 12D



M.D

Editorial

The first edition of Hold Fast, to the whole team's delight, was extremely well-received. A lot of people worked very hard to put it together, so it was really gratifying to hear from people how much they enjoyed reading it. Already we've seen our team expand and hope to continue this growth in the future.

Building communities and creating environments in which people can connect with like-minded individuals is becoming more important than ever. Hold Fast is a space for those who wish to share their experiences or discuss their individual take on an issue. Following the first edition we feel more confident that we can achieve this, and can hopefully carry this message through all our works.

This month, our emphasis is on the importance of positive relationships within community. Finn's detailed look at homelessness in Australia gives us the opportunity to expand our knowledge and how this influences our beliefs. National Sorry Day on May 26th is an opportunity to reflect on Australia's mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to acknowledge the long-lasting effects of the Stolen Generations.

Many initiatives have taken place already this term which emphasise the crucial nature of compassion. The participants of Live Below the Line confronted the real challenge faced by those living on the extreme poverty line in Australia, and lived on just \$2 a day for five days. This exercise in the classic idea of "walking in someone else's shoes" highlights the need for Australians to recognise that there are many in our communities who are struggling to survive and deserve our help and support.

As students who attend a well-resourced school and live in comfortable, middle-class areas, we are fortunate. It's important for us to remember this. We are incredibly lucky. From this position, it is our responsibility to remain aware of this fact and that there are others who have far less. While it's a well-known concept, it's important for us as a group to recognise this and the value that we can have in society.



Becoming conscious of these facts, through education and conversation, is the first step in breaking stigmas. If a stigma exists, we can't empathise with others and without empathy we are not capable of helping or accomplishing anything for other people. This message is one of hope, and this edition aims to illustrate this. Through our recent school production 'Struggletown' we can see the message of being kind to one another reinforced.

We all hope you enjoy this issue of Hold Fast and take something from it. As always, if you are interested in writing to us we would love to hear from you. Any ideas are welcome as we aim to make Hold Fast a place for student collaboration. We look forward to hearing from more of you and preparing next month's issue.

Sarah Griffiths

Editor and Journalism Captain

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Australia's homeless Crisis:

As Williamstown High School lead up to its 'Live Below the Line' challenge, the focus shifted to that of fundraising as a meaningless endeavour, rather than the original intention; to raise awareness for poverty around the world. The posters dotting the walls of the school stand as a silent reminder of these issues, and how they affect all countries, yet rarely does this lead to any substantial thought or discussion in the majority of the cohort. Poverty as a systemic issue has, and unfortunately will continue to be, a factor in the lives of people a lot closer than many realise. But beyond the scope of our community and personal experiences, society faces the same challenges on a larger scale.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2016 census, it is estimated that more than 116,000 people experienced homelessness in some form on that one night alone - up from 102,000 in 2011. Homelessness is used as a broader term in the census, and encompasses people living in insufficient housing - meaning a residence that would require an additional four bedrooms to comfortably fit its inhabitants. This slightly broader view of homelessness which accounts for inhospitable living conditions leads to an average of approximately 50 people in every 10,000 without a proper place to sleep, a place to live or a place to feel safe. And among these people, 12-24-year-olds made

up around 21-26% of that group, with the highest rates of youth homelessness found in the Northern Territory and Victoria. But what has led to this growing rate of homelessness, and why are young people making up such a large percentage in this growing epidemic?

To understand homelessness, one needs to look at certain undeniable facts about Australian society and understand the issues and disadvantages surrounding them. The same census that reports these statistics of homelessness also reports that there were more than one million vacant dwellings on the night of the census. Theoretically, every homeless person in Australia could have a private residence just to themselves, without running the risk of any housing issues - though of course many people would be remiss to part with their holiday homes and investment properties merely to house a family escaping abuse, or one struggling to keep a roof over the heads of their children due to growing rent. But somehow, the rate of homelessness manages to coincide with a national average cost of housing increasing around the country, with greater rises in metropolitan areas. This also happens without significant growth of job markets in rural areas, leaving little opportunities for the people with enough money to buy a cheaper house in the first place. Economic stability is varied within the extremes of rich and poor,

but young people are always at a disadvantage in finding well-paying work due to lack of education and prior experience.

Part of the reason for these kinds of economic disadvantages however is the history of racism that has pervaded Australian society since days of colonialism. Primarily this racism targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who face marginalisation and disenfranchisement in all aspects of modern society from employment and education, to mass media. Despite only accounting for 3% of the Australian population according to the census, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 20% of the homeless population; though there are complexities in these statistics

involving attachment to country and traditional culture that are not commented on, that would be inappropriate to overlook. However, people of other ethnicities - such as immigrants and asylum seekers - are also victimised in this way. People of other ethnicities, specifically those who migrated to Australia in the five years before the census, made up another 16% of all homeless people. Immigration is hardly an inexpensive endeavour, and recent immigrants make up 74% of homeless people living in severely crowded dwellings due to this fact.

The leading factor for homelessness in Australia however, is not entirely an economic issue. Homelessness Australia, through surveys of actual homeless



Above and Below the Line

Feature by Finn Clifford, Pictures by Patrick Stewart



The Big Issue is a independent magazine sold on the streets by homeless, disadvantaged and marginalised people.

people, found that 24% of the homeless population were escaping domestic violence, ranging from spousal to child abuse. In recent years domestic violence has been an increasingly visible issue, yet people are still driven out of their homes, often losing financial support and stability in the process.

But despite these well known, and just as well reported issues, drug use in the homeless community is often used as an excuse to avoid giving money to people on the street, or

a source of blame as the root of people's struggles. But drug use is a symptom of the greater issues that a person faces prior to their homelessness or as a response to their circumstances. In fact, a study of homelessness and drug use by the Australian Institute of Criminology found that homeless people arrested for drug use had a nearly one in three chance of having been admitted to a psychiatric hospital in the past, and roughly the same amount also reported having spent time in jail - a fact generally re-

lated to socioeconomic disadvantage and desperation more than malicious offences. But the link between mental illness and drug use has been well documented and paints a terrible and melancholic picture of what is essentially the most obvious truth of this discussion. People who are homeless are rarely perpetrators of serious transgressions but are almost always victims of social stigma and economic oppression that is rooted deeply in our society. People are left trapped in cycles of desperation,

turning to drug and alcohol abuse to hide from the ugly truth of the realities forced upon them.

We should all take a moment to truly understand that regardless of their situation, regardless of what drove them to the point they're at now, homeless people are genuinely the most disadvantaged members of our society.

As human beings, they deserve our compassion, not to be ignored and shut out as they have been before.

Sport with Kai Smith-Pycroft

Football Continues to Build Momentum on Aussie Soil



Australian midfielder Aaron Mooy after he scored against Manchester United (Getty Images)

In Melbourne we think of AFL as football but for 265 Million players world wide, what we call soccer is real football. On November 16th 2005, football in Australia commenced its rise to relevance with the Australian men's football team (the Socceroos) famously qualifying for their first World Cup in over 30 years. The growth of football in Australia since that night has been nothing short of a miracle, with the Socceroos making it to their 4th successive World

Cup, and the Australian women's team (the Matildas) achieving a world ranking of 4th. The amount of young talent being developed in Australia is simply outstanding, with Socceroos members Aaron Mooy and Matthew Ryan being key players for their football clubs in the all-conquering English Premier League. In June the Socceroos will participate in the World Cup, while, the Matildas, lead brilliantly by young superstar Sam Kerr, recently qualified for

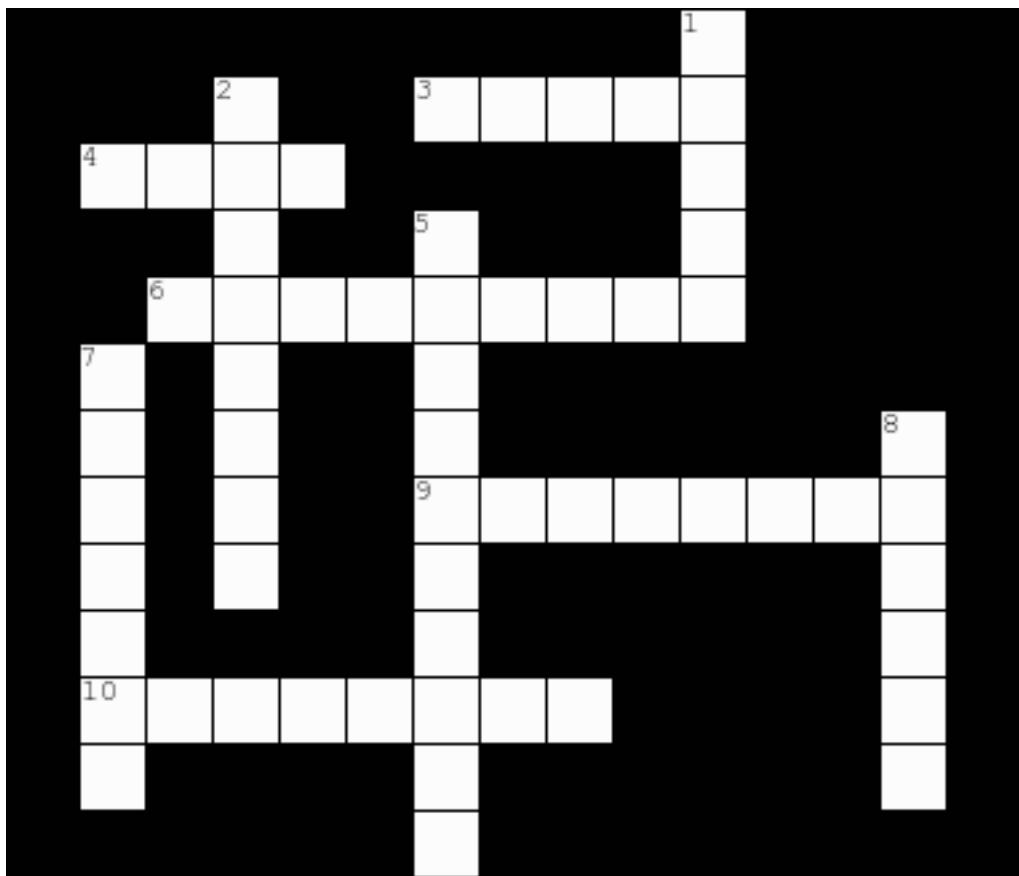
the Women's World Cup in 2019. Australia's qualifying for the World Cup is a significant achievement because, though Australia is well-known as a sporting country, we are the only country in which football is not a dominant sport to be participating in the World Cup. While AFL, Cricket and Rugby League lead the way in revenue and attendances, the development of football deserves full credit for building Australia's reputation on the world's sporting stage. Whether

it is Aaron Mooy scoring against Manchester United or Matthew Ryan saving a Wayne Rooney penalty, not enough can be said about the state of football in Australia as compared to 15 years ago. While the Socceroos may not bring home the famous trophy in July, we can be assured that they will give it their all and continue the impressive growth of football in this great sporting nation of ours.

Trivia Time with Jack Davies

1. How many countries are larger than Australia?
2. What is the capital of Portugal?
3. How many eyes does a butterfly have?
4. Which actor made his debut as James Bond in the film 'Casino Royal' in 2006?
5. In the 'Ice Age' movies, what is the name of the woolly mammoth?
6. Where is High School Musical set?
7. Which president appears on the front of the \$2 bill?
8. What was the highest selling album of the 1980's?
9. When was the fast food chain, McDonalds founded?
10. In the show 'Seinfeld', what was Kramer's first name?

Crossword

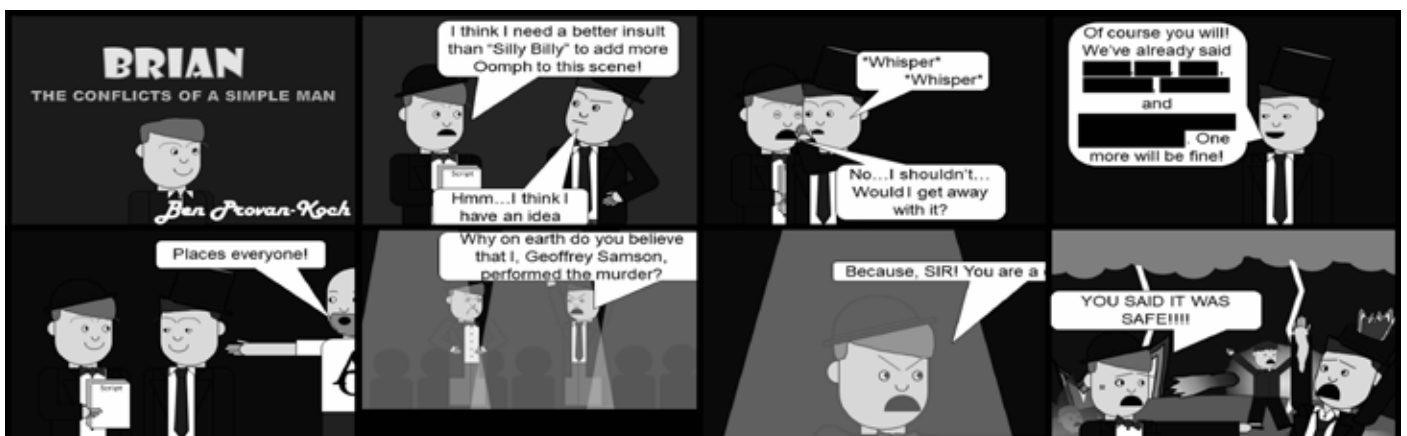


Down

1. Sparing in the use of words: abrupt
2. Intended to teach, particularly in having moral instruction as an ulterior motive
5. Showing great attention to detail; very careful and precise
7. Using or expressed in more words than are needed
8. A fruit and a colour

Across

3. Cellular device
4. To frustrate efforts or plans
6. Easily influenced; pliable
9. Mac or PC
10. Not being what it purports to be; false or fake



Hobsons Bay Inspirational Youth Awards



was nominated for a 'Hobson Bay Inspirational Youth' award. As one of the participants myself it was a touching feeling to know that your actions were being recognised by the wider community.

It was a wonderful night and we were able to see all the work other young people were doing for the community. It was a great way to meet and talk to people in our wider community who care and will work hard to make a difference for your future.

Our peers Aretha Stewart-Brown and Alyssa Bearzi and former student Sienna Curnow were also honored for their contributions to the community.

On April the 23rd everyone who participated in the WHS World's Greatest Shave, including or-

ganisers Emma Bocevski and Jasmine Alkourashi,

Nick Buchanan-Keet

LIVE BELOW THE LINE

This term, a group of Williamston High School students participated in the Live Below the Line challenge. This involved eating \$2 worth of food per day for between two to five days. Two dollars a day is considered to be the extreme poverty line. For everyone involved with the challenge, it was a scary concept, but one we were willing to attempt.

The week felt like an eternity. Those who budgeted well felt more energised than others. A \$10 budget for 5 days' worth of food may seem easy to work with but, the fact is, it's not. Waking up was difficult and even walking made our bodies ache. The lack of nutrients in our food made us weak, sluggish and unable to complete simple tasks. Tears were shed, stomachs rumbled and, by the end of the week, taste buds were repulsed by the flavour of 2-minute noodles. A diet of ramen, apples and plain rice really doesn't do the job! It was a lesson well learnt, exposing us to the harsh con-

ditions those who actually live off of \$2 per day have to endure.

At the end of the week we had a fundraiser for Live Below the Line. It was a great success, although the weather was not in our favour. The barbecue we ran, whilst being very cold and soaked by rain, drew people in, excited by the idea of a warm sausage or burger. Collectively, we raised \$750, an amazing amount we were all happy with. We had also received prior donations from the friends and families of those who were involved in the challenge, which brought our total to an astonishing \$1212. This money will go towards supplying school books or food, or scholarships to individuals affected by poverty.

The week was challenging, but we pulled through and are extremely happy with the results!

Adelaide Collins and Pan Mavridis

Writer's Club

When: Lunchtime on Tuesday, 15th May

Where: Room L5

What is Writer's Club?

Writer's Club is a place to allow for the interaction of us creative minded students. In this space, we will be able to share around ideas and all work towards creating stories.

What will I do in Writer's Club?

As a group, we will be running workshops such as prompt work, allowing us to circulate ideas and all work towards a similar focus, and more individual work where support and advice can be given.

What can I write in Writer's Club?

Any type of creative writing is welcomed! Short stories, novels, prose, plays, creative non-fiction, screenwriting, scripting, song writing.

Come along, everyone is welcome!

Western Chances Providing for the West



Eloise and Alexandra chat with Terry Bracks, Chair of Western Chances. Pic Jagger Skillbeck

Western Chances enfranchises is the real honour.

An impressive 98% of the Western Chances scholars go on to tertiary education which is a great success for a relatively young organization. Western Chances engages with the community, creates community and depends on the community to ensure that all students play on an equal playing field and can go on to excel. What is really important about Western Chances is that the scholarships are not impermanent, so reapplying is no issue and can keep you updated with benefits for many years of your education.

Western Chances help provide services which include a range of fiscal aid, textbooks, myki cards, Lord Somers Camp, and additional help to students to get into scholarships that offer more money. At the lunch, Alexandra Solomos spoke eloquently about her experiences as a Western Chances scholar. We then had the honour to ask Terry Bracks a number of questions about her experiences as a founder of Western Chances.

The organisation comes from the West. The founders live in areas where they see students that have difficult circumstances struggling to get the right resources and materials to do as well as they can do at school. Western Chanc-

es gives the opportunity to celebrate the diversity we see in the West and provides whatever help to whatever circumstance.

Terry recounted how the opportunity to meet the real students is 'a bit odd, despite the organisation being student-focused.'

This is largely because the application process is mainly done through administration of schools and through email so that the opportunity to listen and to meet the beneficiaries of the scholarship is really rewarding. Seeing realistic representations of the students



Terry Bracks talks to Eloise Murphy-Hill. Pic Jagger Skillbeck

Recipient's point of view

A Western Chances Scholarship can be a life-changer for those who are going through a difficult time. As Williamstown High School students, we are so lucky to be gifted with this opportunity that rids of the financial woes of some school necessities. This scholarship allows for a greater focus on education, instead of the struggle of purchasing resources needed for education and thus, providing a sense of confidence and worth that is imperative during these last crucial years of high school.

Alexandra Solomos and Eloise Murphy-Hill

Stripes and Gripes

Film Reviews with Jagger Skillbeck

Avengers: Infinity Wars

Marvel Studios

Another issue, another Marvel movie to review. This time, it's the epic conclusion to phase three in the Marvel Cinematic Universe; Avengers: Infinity War (Part 1). This is set to be the melting of all previous 19 films in the MCU with every film being relevant to the plot of this one. It surrounds the purple geologist Thanos (Josh Brolin) who is attempting to retrieve all six of the Infinity Stones, which if paired together, grant the power of the universe at their beholder's fingertips.

Stripes

This film is fantastic, let's just get that out of the way. The fact that Marvel Studios have managed to gather all these characters from each respective film and give them their own time to shine in this film is really impressive. I can almost guarantee that your favourite character has some valuable dialogue and a heartfelt moment. Going in, people assumed there would be issues trying to incorporate all the characters but it is actually one of the film's strengths. The fact that there are so many characters to care about and take the spotlight, means the massive two and a half hour run time seems insignificant and you are actually left wanting more. Some of the standouts are Scarlett Witch (Elizabeth Olsen), Spiderman (Tom Holland), Gamora (Zoe Saldana) and Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr) who all go through difficult



Josh Brolin as Thanos

personal battles that tie in to the main goal of stopping Thanos. These stories hit home, and are very effective at slowing the pace when required and drawing empathy from the audience. The other impressive part of Infinity War was that you really felt the scope of the threat in Thanos. In the previous Avengers film, the threat of damage was really limited to just a city, which while still being on a large scale, could have been dealt with pretty easily and you always felt like the protagonists were going to come out on top. In this film, the characters as well as the audience, know the stakes. In Infinity War, you really do feel that the weight of the universe is resting upon the Avengers shoulders and you certainly feel that all the heroes may not come out the other side.

The callbacks to previous Marvel films were vast and covered all bases of the lore. I found it really rewarding as a Marvel fan, to see easter eggs that the audience in the theatre and I would jump at when first noticing them. A good bit of fan service al-

ways goes down a treat for a franchise. Not only that, but the style of the film would reflect the characters and setting. If we were moving away from Earth and into space to see the Guardians of the Galaxy, the colour palette, music and cinematography would all change to reflect the previous Guardians film. This made the balance of characters a lot easier.

Marvel does have a tendency to create great heroes whilst paying little attention to the villain. Infinity War puts this to bed with Thanos (Josh Brolin). A staple of a great villain is a belief that their mission or goal that the audience can objectively view as "evil" is actually for the greater good. Despite Thanos's obviously terrible goal, his belief that he is doing the right thing validate his character, and in turn create a fantastic villain.

Gripes

There honestly wasn't too much wrong with Infinity War that I could conceivably pick up on. Saying this does not mean that it is among the greatest of all time, but it just didn't have

any blaring weaknesses to be picked on. If I had to hunt, I would say that there were a few issues in relation to pacing, but it is difficult not to have that when you have to jump from so many different characters and locations. Occasionally however, it did feel like some scenes flowed a lot better than others. Also as usual, some jokes don't really land but they are few and far between.

I wouldn't recommend seeing Infinity War if you are yet to see a Marvel movie, or are unfamiliar with the lore. This film rewards the core fans and honestly it would be very difficult to follow if you hadn't experienced any previous pictures. This review is coming from someone quite invested in the previous films. This is a climax to a 10 year build up and so if I'm gushing about it too much then that would be why. If you are looking to see a film to see a film making perfection, you may be disappointed, but it isn't to be enjoyed in that light.

Final Thoughts

This film is a brilliantly fun ride with high stakes and drama. The emotional rollercoaster it takes you on is something to be savoured, and every minute of the massive run time is worth it and I was just left wanting more straight after.

Rating:

Cracking cheese Gromit
166.5/185

**Now showing at the Sun
Theatre, Yarraville**

School Events

Mr Commons Talks Struggletown with Olivia Meehan

What was the purpose of the fly?

The purpose of the fly was to symbolise science vs nature and how mankind is trying to control through politics and other power mechanisms. They're trying to control populations or cohorts of beings to be submissive but you can't tame flies. The flies will always creep through the cracks, so to speak. The fly symbolises descent, or man's quest to dominate nature.

What was your favourite scene?

I think my favourite scene was Mason and Bree in the trolley. Why I like it is, it encapsulates capitalism, and you know, "you pushed me yesterday, so it's your turn to push. I'm not gonna push you!" It's all about give and take and how we as a culture are sharing less.

What was the most difficult part in creating the world of Struggletown?

For me personally, the most difficult thing that I had to do was trying to come up with 23 lead roles. That was not easy! You try and give them all equal representation in the play, which was something I did and that was difficult.

So, the whole play was based on Trump and Clinton's 2016 election campaign. Why did you decide to base your play on this election?

The onset of the election was ugly. It usually follows a similar play script of, you know, Coke or Pepsi, Republican or Democrat. But this year was extraordinary

because Trump didn't really have a backing, he was a rogue within his own party. Clinton, on the other hand, had all the backing of the Democrats. Trump with his war chest of money exposes the problem with politics in America. The problem is that money corrupts... It was around the time, Trump and Clinton were everywhere. They were making the election about things that it shouldn't be made about.

What was your favourite memory of the whole Struggletown experience?

Definitely closing curtain when everyone is smiling on stage taking that last bow. There is a great sense of achievement by everybody involved and discovering their potential is really important.

If you could describe Struggletown in 5 words what would they be?

We all struggle. Be kind!

Is there anything else you would like to mention about creating Struggletown?

The people that composed this musical have extraordinary talent. This play would not have been possible without Will Salisbury. He arranged and composed a wonderful band. The acting was fantastic, the cast and ensemble worked. Everybody that participated gave their best which is really remarkable and I think productions bring out the best in people. Overall it was definitely worthwhile doing. A lot of work, but definitely worthwhile.

Struggletown Recap

Bree Carroll - Drama Captain



Over the months of early February until April, Williamstown High was busy putting on their annual school musical. This year's production, Struggletown, an original musical written by Mr Commons, was set in a rundown town called Struggletown. Two messengers named Woody and Major were stuck in Struggletown after the recent election of the new mayor, The Swamplord who embodies the president of the United States, Donald Trump. The messengers were advocates for The Swamplord's political rival Ethel (Hillary Clinton). The two messengers went on a journey to try and change the hearts and minds of the simple folk of Struggletown. The musical included all the drama students from years 10 to 12. The year 12s worked very hard, as the leads; every-

one had at least one main role to showcase their acting talents and all did an amazing job. Although the show took some time to grasp and the rehearsal process was long, the end result was incredibly fun to put on with a lot of laughs had between the cast and the backstage crew. Struggletown provided a lifetime of memories that bonded the year 12 class further. As Drama Captain, it was amazing to see the first show of the year go off with a bang. I would like to thank everyone that helped with Struggletown, onstage, backstage, the lighting and sound crew and everyone who came to see and support their friends and family in the show and, lastly, Mr Commons for allowing us to share our visions and put on a great show.





WAR

child

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WHS ARTS INITIATIVE

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ALL PROCEEDS GO TO WARCHILD AU, IN AID OF THE FAMILIES TORN BY WAR