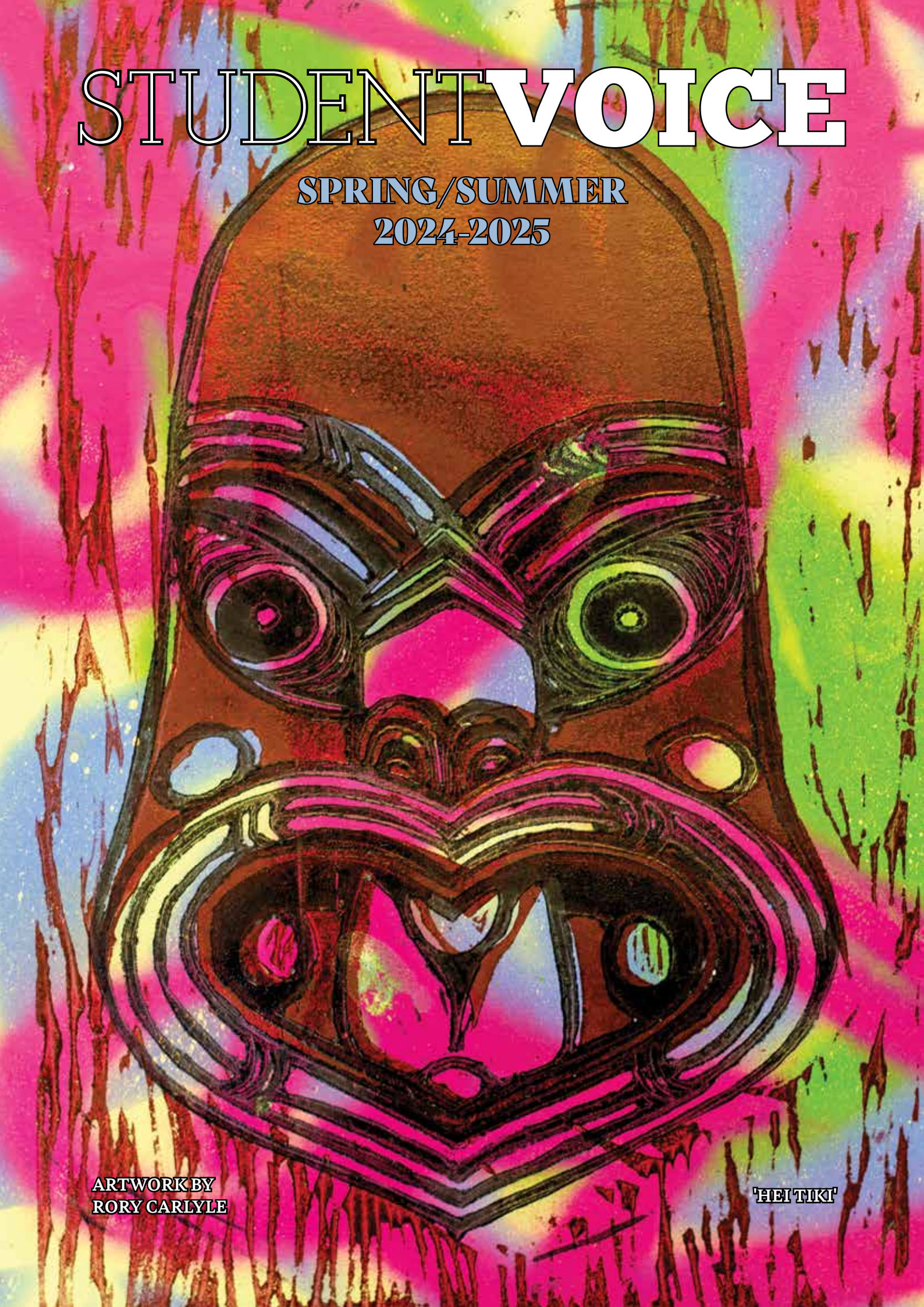


STUDENTVOICE

SPRING/SUMMER
2024-2025

ARTWORK BY
RORY CARLYLE

'HEI TIKI'





*Treaty finds unified support
page 01*

*Less may be more in valuing
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TREATY FINDS UNIFIED SUPPORT

AWHINA FLETCHER finds strong support for our founding document.

There has been some disagreement over the years regarding the Te Tiriti in relation to its translation and interpretation of its principles.

Now the Government coalition partner ACT wants a referendum to define the principles of the Te Tiriti.

I have interviewed three different people to get their thoughts about this highly topical issue.

MARCEL FLETCHER

Q. Did you participate in any of the recent protests regarding Te Tiriti?

A. No, however I do support the protesters.

Q. Why do you support it?

A. Because the government should be more focused on the economy than rolling back progress of the Te Tiriti O Waitangi (Treaty Of Waitangi).

Q. Do you think that the protests were successful?

A. Yes, due to the amount of participants who attended and their varying points of view.

MONIQUE FITISEMANU

Q. Did you participate in any of the recent protests regarding Te Tiriti?

A. Yes, I did participate.

Q. Why do you support it?

A. Because the treaty has never been honoured and our whenua (country) that has been passed down throughout generations is at risk of major development, a prime example of the government putting Māori second before corporate greed and the welfare of the moana and whenua (country) which our hapu (subtribe) rely on to gather kai and set up papakāinga. Māori land is a right my children and generations to come have to connect to as tūrangawaewae (place to stand).

Q. Do you think that the protests were successful?

A. Protests bring about change, there's power in numbers, I think that every protest is successful, it brings about awareness and lets the nation

know that we as indigenous will fight harder when our rights are threatened.

GAVIN FLETCHER

Q. Did you participate in the recent protests regarding Te Tiriti?

A. Yes, I have participated in the recent protests.

Q. Why do you support it?

A. The reason I participated in these protests is because I wanted to be a part of the solidarity of Māori people walking into the treaty grounds in peaceful hiko (March protest) to support the Māori people because of the injustices they have experienced through the years, with hope for a better future.

Q. Do you think the protests were successful?

A. Yes, I think that the protests were successful, because of the increasing support of and for Māori people. As this issue continues to evolve, it will be interesting to see if the referendum will still go ahead or whether the protests have been successful in preventing the referendum.



FALLING OUT OF THE STREAM

NATALIA NOONE-JONES says
one size does not fit everyone.

I've grown up in local schools – each year one step up from last.

Reaching Year 9 I was sorely disappointed. Primary school was equipped to push me as far as I wanted to go. I was encouraged to follow my interests, ask questions and go beyond the learning of the rest of my class.

The end of primary school was tearful for many, the end of an era. But I only had sights set on intermediate, sure it would be bigger and better.

I found myself in an accelerated class of like-minded people who cared about their schooling, were eager to learn and academically-minded.

Moving into Year 9, mixed classrooms were an issue. There were constant distractions from other students who had no interest in being there. A few often made a spectacle which took the teacher's attention and halted the progress of the entire class.

Although my teachers were a great help, I had to facilitate my own extension. The accelerated learning class had been scrapped, so extended learning was not so simple.

While some see streamed classes as exclusive or a creator of inequalities between students, it works for some students. There are arguments both ways. Some say the evidence doesn't support that results are better with these classes, while others say high achieving students are being stunted.

Whether results are getting better or not from streamed classes, the overall environment of the classes is more supportive of these highly academic students. I see it as a way of grouping like-minded people with similar needs. This allows teachers to focus their time and energy in fewer places at once. It creates competition and keeps that spark for learning alive.

Students in accelerated classes can share

notes and ideas to collaborate in a way others taking classes above their years would struggle to due to the year level difference.

Highly academic students would also struggle collaborating in mixed ability classes, given different learning abilities.

Mixed ability classrooms treat thirty students as if they learn the same way. Students learn at different paces with different styles of learning and working that help them understand the content. Schools need to tailor to students' individual needs, and specialised ability classes can do that.

It's a scheduling nightmare getting students into classes above their level, with some needing to switch their tutor classes to match subject slots.

Students taking classes ahead of their year tend to accumulate in particular classes anyway.

Another perceived problem is low self-esteem. In some schools, the termination of streaming is not based on the outcome of the class, but the attitudes other students have of the classes.

Should some students be deprived of their chance to extend because others may feel put out about it?

Sadly, schools in New Zealand seem to be abandoning the model. This may be better for some students, but in my experience, streamed classes have been beneficial.

The first few years of high school are teaching to the lowest common denominator. Prior to high school, teaching is for the sake of learning, fun and exploration.

Rote learning quickly becomes the centre of everything. Learn the curriculum, pass the test, get the credits. Everything feels less individualised, moving between classes with everyone else and having little in-

put into the content taught to you.

Is the curriculum really providing an education? Education is how a person develops and grows into a capable adult. It doesn't come from memorisation. It can come from playing a sport, experiencing a new culture or reading a good book.

Schooling is something we grab in fistfuls and stuff into our heads. We prod it and poke it hoping it might stay just long enough, then let it drop out and do it again... and again. It's stressful and tedious.

Education means continual improvement. It's a slow process over time and cannot be rushed. But every year is a rush for teachers and students to fit in all the scheduled assessments, leaving barely enough time to skim through the content before moving onto the next topic. This means abandoning the previous topic whether it's been properly understood or not.

Students often fall behind if they're sick, involved in out of school activities or not keeping up with the homework required just to stay on top of everything.

There's little room for flexibility when something happens like... a global pandemic... or a cyclone.

Years 9 and 10 are the calm before the storm. They're painfully slow, repetitive and work poorly as transitional periods. Suddenly things speed up in NCEA L2 and 3. Is this really setting students up for success?

We're set such low expectations and get too comfortable, unaware this will soon change. This isn't the best way to make use of the limited time we have in school.

Some schools start the process of gaining credits at Year 9 to prepare students earlier for the NCEA system. If Year 10's were taught some optional L1 internals they'd

have an opportunity to gain early credits or experience to serve them when it really matters. Unfortunately, there is not much time to fit Level 1 internals into their busy schedules. Spreading the load would take some pressure off our last few years, when the year is jam-packed with assessments.

As a senior, my classes have become more individualised. I am no longer restricted by the learning abilities of others. At the same time workload has gone up, so too the pressure of finding a direction – a career path.

Options only really start to open up in year 11 and 12. It's not until now that I'm discovering what my future career may look like. Though by Year 13, students must be sure of their paths beyond school, as many enrol into universities.

It's the age old question – 'what do you want to be when you grow up?' We've been asked since we were 5. My plans beyond school are the most common thing asked from anyone I haven't seen in a while.

Though students have had their whole

lives to consider it, it's not until later teenage years we start to see what's out there and what those options look like. Sure, being a singer or astronaut sounds awesome, but now we're considering the realities.

In Years 9-12 schooling absorbs everything. It takes so much of our time and energy there's little room for an outside life

After being expected to spend class and home studying, students are shunted into the next stage of life, it all feels quite sudden and a massive lifestyle change.

During senior years at high school, the job hunt begins for many. My school uses student-oriented websites which include a careers department, job listings and careers expos every year. Schools can hold career expos, as many already do, as well as getting professionals to speak in classes. Career expos could show what a day in a particular career looks like.

It's tough getting a response from employers let alone an interview or going so far as to land a job. Important skills such as

writing formal cover letters and CVs that are appealing to employers are not being taught. Schools are supposed to be preparing us for the real world.

While we're in English dissecting films, some students don't know where to start with a professional email. Rather than irrelevant works of far-fetched dystopian fiction, some students could study advertisements or websites as texts. Some of our curriculum has no real-world applications and specific to only a handful of jobs.

While there's little wriggle room when it comes to NCEA, Years 9 and 10 can be adapted to teach job and interview skills, careers education, studying techniques and real-world skills.

The younger we start, the better.

Whether it's relevant to an intermediate school student or not, these events are inspirational and exciting at the least and possibly life changing.

A glimpse into the reality we will soon face.

MEDIA FUTURE CLICKS WITH FICTION

VIOLET TUCKER wants objectivity from the hawkers of the news.

With a number of well-established media platforms either closing down or cutting down, questions have been asked about whether the Government should step in and provide more funding.

Media managers and journalists argue there needs to be more 'objective' reporting instead of a patchwork quilt of opinions from celebrities, ideologues and influencers.

There's been much talk of the problem, but little idea of a solution. Personal views get 'clicks' but are not always true. It seems to be difficult to prioritise fact when fiction gets more engagement.

But how objective are our key journalists? There is a clear bias in our main media institutions.

Jacinda Ardern received a long media honeymoon and almost fawning admiration. Luxon got no honeymoon but a lot of criticism for his coalition partners, one

of which put Jacinda Ardern into office six years ago.

America's news hardly differs, it's simply just intensified. Blue vs red, left vs right, glib phrases up against each other. The most outlandish comments gain the most airtime, hence Trump's dominance, but it seems to take over actual policy.

The media is both a product and cause of this. Most news platforms have the natural inclination to divide into two separate camps, leaving American people existing in an echo chamber of their own beliefs.

Does such a thing as objectivity exist anymore? The term seems to have lost all of its meaning, not only because people cannot seek out objective sources, they do not want to. This begs the question of how can we discern whether or not something is objective when we are constantly involved in such a politicised world?


There is a reason why people are not

watching the news as has traditionally been the case. The whole media model is shifting and people are getting information through other channels.

The danger is objectivity will be further diminished as people read or watch things that suit their existing perspectives.

This shift made it easier for sensationalism and opinion-driven content to eclipse factual reporting. The result is a fragmented media environment where objective journalism is struggling to find a foothold. This prioritisation of clickbait over accuracy contributes to a public discourse that is increasingly polarised and of little benefit.

The reality is established news platforms must accurately reflect both sides of a story if they really do want to keep their audience properly informed. Media sites shouldn't have a political agenda to follow. There is always room for fact and opinion in a world defined with both.



CROSS-GROUPING - PROS VS CONS

KRIS BHONSLE says the jury is still out on the pros and cons of ability grouping

Cross-grouping is a tool created to grow tomorrow's leaders.

It can be amazing, OK, great, not-so-great, cross-grouping offers pros and cons.

Cross-grouping, also known as ability grouping, is a pretty common method of breaking up students based on their skill level.

It's the polar opposite of mixed-ability grouping with mixed-ability grouping allowing students to work with smarter or less intelligent students.

In New Zealand, cross-grouping is used pretty much everywhere, it has one of the highest rates of cross-grouping second to only Ireland. About 95% of schools use streaming while 83.5% of secondary schools use streaming in one or more subjects, for comparison, our Australian counterparts across the ditch, while there is no official policy, about 98% of schools use some sort of streaming.

THE CONS

One of the biggest arguments against cross-grouping is that it's classist and racist, now the first thing that might pop in your head is how is it supposed to be racist? Well, it's racist because teachers sometimes place Asian or black students in lower streams or place European descent students in higher streams. As for how it's classist, higher class streams may tease/abuse/bully lower class streams. Streaming is also criticised because pupils in higher streams tend to have high levels of confidence while middle and lower stream pupils tend to be stressed and under confident, they claim this widens and widens until they become disillusioned and unmotivated, into the pit of self-hate.

PROS

Let's go to the benefits of streaming. Firstly if you're trying to teach something in a step-by-step manner then for somebody who's behind a step or two, they can't do the thing they're told to do e.g. trying to do

exponents before learning multiplication. This forces teachers to teach students stuff individually or in groups but sometimes, that isn't enough. Take primary school math, for example, you can have stage 5s to stage 8s in one school, you can have kids on one end of the spectrum learning about parallelograms and pi while at the other end you have students learning about vertices.

What should you do, either take everybody's time and focus on the lower end or just temporarily cross-group them?

CONCLUSION

By 2030, the plan is to end streaming in New Zealand, the push is being led by Tokona Te Raki after the Ministry of Education and Mātauranga Iwi leaders approached them, so Tokona Te Raki formed a team and some schools are now changing their system and phasing out streaming.

So what do you think, is streaming worth it?

LESS MAY BE MORE IN VALUING EDUCATION OPTIONS

AVA GARRATT scrutinises private schools and their value for money.

Private schools in this country continue to demand outrageous fees.

This gives shape to an obvious question – are they truly worth the investment, or is their value more about social prestige than educational excellence?

It's no secret private education in New Zealand is extremely expensive, and after the sector has seen a 13% rise in costs over two years, it's only getting more expensive.

The most expensive secondary school in NZ: Christ's College. Charges \$32,250 per year, not including hidden compulsory costs: \$2,750 registration, acceptance cost, \$1,600 heritage and building levy, not without mentioning devices, co-curricular fees and uniforms they no doubt require. Adding all this up, one year at this school costs more than a 4-year bachelor's degree of law at the top university in the country.

These extreme fees are unfortunately not exclusive to Christ's College. There are more than 90 private schools in NZ with more than 30,000 students paying for their primary and secondary education. These high costs exclude most NZ families from accessing these schools, and the increasing costs means some existing student families can no longer afford them.

What makes families make this large investment in a high school education, and why should people have to pay for one?

People tend to associate private schools with academic excellence, as they do generally have higher pass rates than the rest of the country. In 2020, 66.7% of private schools were in the top 25% of schools in NZ, whereas only 15.5% of state schools and 45.2% of state-integrated schools were.

But are those results that much better than other schools in New Zealand? Not really. This higher performance is most likely from social privilege, not necessarily education. If a student is receiving private tutoring outside school (as a number of private school ones do), they aren't under financial pressure to enter the workforce at an early age and under extra pressure to do well in school. It doesn't matter where they go as they are likely to perform highly anywhere.

The same study showed once separating a student's socioeconomic background

from the data, a student would only increase their likelihood of obtaining UE by 6.9% (from 30.5% at state schools to 37.4% at private schools). It also showed that state-integrated school students were the most likely to obtain UE. Measuring by UE is important because a number of private schools do not use the New Zealand curriculum, instead opting for systems like Cambridge or IB over NCEA, but UE accounts for success in all these curriculums.

So, what drives families to pay \$32,000 a year to only increase the likelihood of success by 6.9%?

It is widely accepted NZ private schools have far better funding than state and state-integrated schools. As private are funded privately through donation, tuition and boarding fees they have much larger funds at their disposal. Meaning large, new, and technologically advanced facilities are far more accessible to these schools. Also they can afford to pay more staff, giving students smaller classes and higher teacher to student ratio, easier for teachers to teach.

Some would argue teachers are better at private schools, as they are paid higher salaries through private funding compared to state school teachers who receive wages from Ministry of Education. While there is a high likelihood these teachers will be happier with their salaries and under less financial stress, this is no indication they are better teachers than their state school counterparts. Private schools can also offer a bigger range of extracurriculars, as they are more likely to have students able to invest time and money into them.

If you're a parent who wants your gifted child to be able to grow their abilities, and you have money, you'll send them to a school offering their chosen sport or extracurricular. Many of these schools have a wealth of connections and attending those schools gives students access to those. This gives them a greater chance when applying for universities, looking for employment and all sorts of other opportunities. Not to mention the social prestige that comes with saying you attend a private school is undeniable, a symbol of status and wealth.

These are all certainly great advantages to private schools, but doesn't mean there aren't drawbacks other than financial drain. The additional pressure on private school students cannot be doubted. If your family

is paying \$32,000 for your education, you cannot afford to waste that opportunity.

It's terrible to have to put that on yourself, it causes extra pressure combined with the stress of everything else teens go through. All while growing up and getting ready to enter adulthood. This creates a recipe for alarmingly high rates of anxiety.

Perhaps the biggest issue with private schools is their lack of diversity and world view. As private schools are typically concentrations of the wealthiest and most privileged students in communities, it comes as no surprise that there are very few Māori or Pasifika students and almost no working-class students at these schools.

At Christ's college, only 6.1% of students are Māori, and only 1.1% identified as Pasifika. Matters seem to get worse in bigger private schools like Kristin, where only 2.8% of students are Māori and <1% are Pasifika. This makes it clear private education is inaccessible to Māori and Pasifika students. This is most likely the result of being systematically disadvantaged in NZ society. Meaning on average they will be less likely to afford private education.

And while many private schools offer scholarships to families with financial difficulties, it doesn't take away from the fact that most private school students are of European or Asian descent, all coming from privileged backgrounds.

This means there is little to no diversity at private schools, so students coming into schools with narrow world views (as many young people tend to have) are possibly leaving with even narrower world views.

I spoke with a teacher who knew of Year 12 students at Saint Kentigern's College who had no idea what the word 'culture' meant. It's outrageous. It is not necessarily a reflection on students at private schools, or their families, it's a reflection on the state of NZ education.

If we cared more about our state schools, and developing them into better places of education, people would not feel the need to access private education. Ultimately, private education in Aotearoa is not worth it.

Public schools offer good education and far better environments for students to grow, without the cost.



SCHOOL SWITCHER COMPARES

KRIS BHONSLE doesn't want to change schools anytime soon.

Have you ever changed schools? How did it feel?

Maybe you lost your besties, maybe you came down from being the king/queen of your age group, always being student councillor, having a mob of followers, intimidating the smart kids into submission and forcing them to give you the answers – to becoming some little newbie at the bottom of the pecking order.

If you got bullied by the big bosses army and couldn't rest during lunchtime, moving would be a blessing.

I have moved schools three times.

ACADEMIC DIFFERENCES

I was only at Glendene Primary School for the first year in my schooling career.

The teachers used a good amount of time on the mat and sometime using interactive stuff like physical games, and they also used worksheets sometimes.

Glendene used the 'picture page' as its usual literacy page layout. In reading differences, they used a technique of calling up students while the others remained busy. It was pretty effective, I believe, as it gave teachers time to successfully work with students.

I started school at Glendene Primary in 2019. It was a smidge smaller than my current school, Flanshaw Road Primary. Glendene had 168 students and now it's 127. Flanshaw is at 312.

While I was at Glendene I had the opportunity to attend school with my sister. She was also my class rain monitor which meant I got to spend a lot of time with her. Looking back, I notice having my sister

with me was a huge advantage. Most of my classmates were the only child or had younger siblings. I was part of the lucky few that had older siblings, and with this I raced ahead of my peers, this gave me a lasting advantage.

There was a sandpit, swimming pool, a playground, a massive field that was 0.85 hectares and two large courts.

So far this was my world, with a few close friends.

I was ready for Year 2 but something struck me, and hard, I had to move schools.

This was really saddening, all my friends I played with all the time were gone for me, my little world had broken apart.

GLENDENE TO FREYBERG

Freyberg was much larger than Glendene with 382 students.

Glendene was roughly 48% Pasifika (partially because there was a Pasifika preschool next door) while Freyberg was roughly 42% European and 32% Asian, giving me a decent culture shock.

Glendene is about 1.98 hectares while Freyberg is around 1.94, so Freyberg feels much more dense. Glendene has around 64.1 people per hectare while Freyberg's at 196.9 people per hectare.

I could make more friends, but it wasn't as peaceful and quiet as Glendene. And there were more Year 6s to fear.

ACADEMIC DIFFERENCES

There was a lot of emphasis on worksheets in maths at Freyberg, with little to no use of devices.

We didn't use the whiteboard a lot, most our learning was when we sat on the mat and our teacher explained concepts verbally.

In reading, we were all still in the colour ring which meant levels were much closer than, say, a college student, which meant we sat on the mat a lot.

In writing we used books with layout that had a 'picture page' half covered by an empty rectangle followed by a normal page.

I disagree with this because this has caused some people to develop a habit of skipping pages to start on a 'picture page' because they had title lines.

That habit sometimes lingers around to middle and even senior syndicate which wastes paper and makes it hard to keep track of it in a chronological sense for the teachers.

Freyberg Community School was massive compared to Glendene, so it took slightly more time to become 'Freybergian'.

There were some benefits. I am Asian (I'm actually an Indian which technically counts as Asian) and as Freyberg is 32% Asian I fit pretty good in this new school.

Freyberg had some nice stuff. They had a heated indoor pool which was great for me (I suck at swimming, I only know how to put my head underwater and I can float on my tummy with the aid of a boogie board.)

It has a nice half-hectare field (according to the measure feature from Google Earth.)

They have one large court and two playgrounds.

I no longer had the influence of my sister at Freyberg which means she didn't help

me with my work.

I had to stop being isolationist and start being a social person. So far things were going pretty well but I began to stop getting too close to my friends because I had the thought I was going to move schools and I was right.

FREYBERG TO FLANSHAW

Flanshaw Road Primary is my current school. This is my fourth year at Flanshaw.

It is pretty diverse – 38.1% European descent, 25.9% Asian, 33% Pasifika and 26.6% Māori, so it's a small culture shift because of additional Māori and European groups, but not too much.

There is a similar amount of students, with Freyberg at 382 and Flanshaw at 312.

Another smaller difference is Flanshaw's classes are named after types of trees, for example, my class is named Tawa, which is like calling your class oak or redwood.

There is no heated indoor pool in Flanshaw unlike Freyberg, but there are more playgrounds.

ACADEMIC DIFFERENCES

Flanshaw tends to use whiteboard and interactive games in maths to grab the attention of pupils, and catch students off-guard fiddling with pencils or doodling.

In teaching Flanshaw uses online tests with students often beyond the level the physical tests reach.

In writing, a lot of the learning is done in a hybrid fashion with teachers explaining it and providing the pupils to practice online.

Flanshaw is a nice school, like Freyberg it has a decent group of Asians so like Freyberg it is somewhere I fit.

Flanshaw has three playgrounds (it wasn't the best because each syndicate got one playground but on the flip side when I started I didn't have to go face to face with 11 year olds.)

It has one small junior court, a basketball and netball court, a rugby and football field (soccer) and a small swimming pool.

I also had the same feeling I had at Freyberg where I thought I was going to move

schools again, but lucky for me, it never happened.

We have a few programmes during lunch-times such as swimming and sport, with the student sports councillors occasionally deciding they should do something for the people who elected them by setting sport games, which nobody likes.

Changing schools is both helpful and harmful. It can be used to escape problems like bullying or it can be forced by issues such as lower rent. It can cause problems such as stationery costs, uniform costs, depression, low academic achievement and more bullying.

It seems better to just stay where you are and avoid those issues. It would help if we introduce more anti-bullying campaigns in schools whenever possible.

We can reduce stationery costs and increase fundraisers or find other sources of income. If we try, we can turn Aotearoa New Zealand into the most prosperous of the prosperous, the most wealthy of the wealthy.

Today's children are tomorrow's leaders.

VOX POPS

What is good about Flanshaw Road School and what can be improved?



KRIS BHONSLE

It is a decent school and staff members allow you to take responsibility. It makes great use of class grouping in the senior school and the middle school. But in the junior school they are a bit loose with rules because some new entrance/juniors run out of class. It is not very strict with the juniors and they need more rules for them. But in short it is a pretty good school.



YSSAH PALICPIC

I think Flanshaw is a great school because it teaches music and Enviro (a school team that helps the environment). It has BTM (a school dance team) and it also teaches loads of other stuff. I also like how each year there are lots of book fairs and mufti days. There are lots of lovely hard-working and incredible teachers.



COCO PETHYBRIDGE

I love Flanshaw because I've been here for a while this is my 6th year. I love how there is music and lots of fun activities. But they need to make more rules cause sometimes people can get out of hand like when people don't get their way they will scream. I also love doing BTM (school dance team). I think they should get bike racks.



MS JONES

I love Flanshaw. It has cultural diversity, kind students and passionate teachers who always try their best. They have natural environment like the bushwalk and lots of physical space to play. What I think we can improve on and would like to see happening are more community events and cultural food day. I really like and want to focus on more Enviro projects.



WHAEA ATWELL

I love the family feel Flanshaw gives to tam-ariki (children), Kaiako (teachers) and whānau (family). They all work together and care for each other. I love the range of opportunities students receive based on their interests and talents. I think it would be really cool to have a Samoan fale for cultural practices, to use as a space and make our Pasifika children thrive.

SUMMARY

It appears lots of people love the cultural food day and all the other activities like BTM (school dance team), Enviro (a school team that helps the environment) and

music class. But lots of people also think there should be more rules around the juniors because they can get a bit out of hand. – Vox Pops gathered by AWHINA FLETCHER



CANCELLING THE WONDER OF WORDS

NATALIA NOONE-JONES surveys a literary landscape pruned by the censors.

Childhood classics such as Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* and *The Witches* have been controversially censored to replace words like fat, ugly and double chin.

Though enormous rather than fat I argue, is hardly any better. Female turned woman, crazy to very, men to people. Even mother and father deemed unacceptable and replaced instead with parents.

Unless you're living in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, mother is not a swear word. The effect on the reader of changing these words is so infuriatingly minute it's not worth the time or money.

Altering these words changes the writing style and personal voice of the writer who isn't here to defend his own work. Roald Dahl is particularly known for his descriptiveness and choice of words.

There is also the ethical issue of changing someone's words after they've died, claiming they said or wrote something they didn't.

Books are an essential source of knowledge. They expose young minds to new perspectives and educate, they're not just there to boost literacy. Educate, is that not the purpose of a school?

Books have been banned from such insti-

tutions, for the most absurd reasons. *The Lorax* was challenged for attacking the logging industry in an area where parents predominantly worked in logging.

Charlotte's Web was banned because including talking animals is 'sacrilegious and disrespectful to God', *James and the Giant Peach* because a spider licking its lips was judged too sexual and Anne Frank's *Diary* for being, in the words of the Alabama state textbook committee, 'a real downer'.

While I agree one must be selective about what children are exposed to, it's a different matter for high school students, who are no longer under their parents' rule.

The banning or censorship of books in schools should be based on the student's safety and well-being, not the personal bias of parents in the area, or in order to manipulate the future population. Such is shown in the banning of *Captain Underpants* as it encouraged the defiance of authority.

Nor should books be chosen based on whether they align with a particular organisation, or countries, political or religious views.

We've seen situations like these in the book burnings under the Nazis. Publicly destroying books containing information that opposed their regime was a way of stripping

people of their power by taking away their sources of information and sending out the message that defiance would not be tolerated.

This allowed them to control the messages the public were absorbing from the media, only allowing access to sources that aligned with their beliefs. This way, Nazis were able to show propaganda at all times with no variation in opinions.

The ideas in these burnt books may have inspired opposition to their regime. But even this method of censorship didn't work, as it sparked protests and inspired opposition.

Think back to the recent and local protests against Posie Parker's public speaking in New Zealand. Parker, who thinks of herself as a women's rights activist, is seen by others as transphobic and a prime example of a brand-new term. The MILF. Parker's tour of New Zealand was abruptly ended due to safety concerns after protesters yelled, disrupted and dumped tomato juice on her.

This was highly controversial, with some spectators believing in Parker's right to free speech and others in anger of her anti-trans sentiments and supporting the protesters' right to protest. To not grant this right would equally be censorship, but aggressive and physical tactics are unvali-

dated.

It is certainly difficult to find a balance between the rights of two opposing parties, and just because one party is granted their say, that does not mean anyone is forced to listen to it.

This brings me to cancel culture.

People have been banned from social media platforms, generally for spreading conspiracy theories or their ultra far-right political opinions – such was the case for Alex Jones and Marjorie Taylor Greene as well as several others.

Myanmar military officials have been banned for spouting hate and misinformation in their accounts during the Rohingya refugee crisis. Perhaps the most obvious example is the former president of the United States... Donald Trump.

Of course, he gets a mention. After all his wild and wacky opinions he doesn't keep to himself, such as the 'vaccines cause autism' tweet or the 'wind turbines kill bald eagles' one, he was finally banned for inciting the Capitol Riot in 2021.

While some people are absolutely slammed by the public in the name of cancel culture over minor things, he is without a doubt not one of them. And while banned far right political commentator Gavin McInnes may claim he has been the target of 'lies and propaganda', meant to silence his voice, how do we distinguish between the ridiculousness of cancel culture and genuinely deserved and necessary bans from media platforms?

A J.K. Rowling likeness was removed from a Seattle museum for what was deemed as anti-trans sentiments. Comments have included a satirical post about the use of the term 'people who menstruate' rather than 'women.'

Rowling has also sent several comments explaining that her point of view comes from a perspective of living through abuse based on being a woman, assuring the public she believes in trans women's rights but cannot agree sex is not a real thing because she has lived through the negative consequences of being a woman.

Her books have now been criticised for racial stereotypes in creating characters, a too white wizarding world and lack of LGBTQ+ representation. What. On. Earth? Considering that LGBTQ+ people make up less than 10% of the population, and the series is based on children and teenagers, many of which do not have their sexualities revealed,

I think readers can excuse that this demographic isn't represented in this series. I believe the criticism over *Harry Potter*, a childhood favourite for many years, for lack of diversity is unwarranted.

An author has the right to write their

books the way they want to. There are no discriminatory sentiments in the book so why is society so quick to hit cancel? Her comments which have been interpreted as transphobic have led to the calling for a boycotting of the *Harry Potter* franchise and seen direct threats of violence towards her.

The cancellation of J.K. Rowling may just be one example of unfair and unnecessary censorship based on the interpretation by a group of people, showing the rise of cancel culture.

Without understanding a person's intentions, how can the public make judgments? Many people even make their conclusions of others based on the word of the public, without seeing the evidence themselves. And does any dispute nullify all the other work a person has done, would personal issues with J.K. Rowling make *Harry Potter* a bad or harmful book series?

If Albert Einstein had made sexist comments in public, would we disregard the quantum theory of light? Would principals remove Shakespeare from their libraries if he turned out to be a slave trader or not teach children about gravity if Isaac Newton was homophobic?

Being allowed to question authorities is vital to maintain democracy and ensure the leadership is there to serve the people, not the other way around. We don't want to live in a society that oppresses and inflicts pain on its own people.

The media have the power to question political leaders and affect the views of the masses. They give a voice to the commoners and hold leadership accountable for their actions. The media gets results because they unify readers, who then cause a commotion, which the authorities are forced to address.

With great power comes great responsibility to report truthfully. Censoring the media allows authority to control the way they're portrayed to the public and cover up unscrupulous business. The people they represent have a right to know what they're up to.

To disagree, to protest, to fight back against the tyranny of a ruthless authority. The punitive imprisonment of protesters and journalists who criticise authority figures is not only immoral but damaging to society.

On a more everyday note, every person should have the right to their opinion, and in most cases, be able to voice it if they so desire. After all, who gets to decide one opinion is right and another is wrong?

Diversity of opinions allows robust arguments and conversations – leading to the improvement and development of ideas. In the early 1900s, Alfred Wegener had the rejected opinion that a continental drift took place which separated the countries. It is now a generally accepted theory.

Ignaz Semmelweis believed hand-washing saves lives when no-one else did, Gregor Mendel believed in genetics, Kate Sheppard in women's rights and Rosa Parks in black rights.

The literal definition of 'woke' is alert to racial prejudice and discrimination. It's about being awake and aware of what you're doing. These days woke seems to have taken on a different meaning – eliminating all possible causes of offence, discouraging confrontation or disagreement.

People collapse their beliefs and opinions – the things that make them unique – for fear of upsetting someone else. Similarly, being politically correct outlaws certain words that may be offensive, whereas, for older folk these are the names of beloved childhood toys they can't use anymore.

Other words or phrases that apparently can't be used include; spirit animal, spooky, normal or typical, no can do and cat got your tongue, all because they stemmed from racist jabs or cultural appropriation.

Even 'brainstorm' is supposedly offensive to people with brain injuries. These words come up in articles titled 'Things you are saying that you didn't know were offensive', 'Insensitive words you need to stop using', and 'offensive words to avoid.'

If no one knows it's offensive, then who's going to be offended? Some of these common sayings may have stemmed from discriminatory slang, but nowadays, they're standard and are used to communicate a different message.

Even the children's rhyme 'eeny meeny miny moe' has a dark past, but children aren't singing racial slurs anymore and that's not what it's about. How can people be censored down to specific words or phrases? And how can a word be judged objectively offensive when it's down to each individual to judge what's offensive to them?

Authorities have the right to censor to protect groups of people from harm or discrimination, but in many situations, trying to silence someone will only aggravate the situation.

Beyond that, people should be able to question the status quo with access to all sides of the story to develop their own opinions, not just the most accepted point of view.

Limiting people's knowledge to push onto them the most agreeable viewpoint or stop them from speaking up because it raises too much disagreement or creates too many questions is unethical and a method of censoring for control.

We shouldn't censor content based on what we've interpreted from it or read into it – if we're reading between the lines that's on us, not the writer – and certainly not based on assumptions we've made of how some other demographic is going to react to it, because we simply don't know.



SUPERHEROES WANTED

MIKE SMITH, MOLLY DENNISON and JALARN ANDERSON find their vocation.

Most of us harbour a desire to stand out, to be a game changer, to make a difference in someone's life. If this is you and you're pondering a career path suitable for your particular style, Occupational Therapy may well be the answer.

When I graduated some of the students in my year had a catchcry; 'Saving the world; one client at a time.'

I have worked at an acute psychiatric ward in Dunedin for seven years providing psychoeducational groups based on depression, anxiety and stress among other things. The work is interesting and rewarding.

There is also time for me to run a music group which happens on a fortnightly basis. This is my other passion – being a rock 'n' roll musician.

One of the cool things about being an Occupational Therapist in a mental health ward is being able to bring something of yourself to the job; be it art, interests, craft, music, sport, dance, whatever.

Allied Health workers like Occupational Therapists, Social Workers and Psychologists study under what's called the Social Model. Doctors and nurses on the other hand study under the Medical Model. This means we see the patient/client as being the sum of their deficits.

The Social Model allows Allied Health

workers to look at the patient with a holistic view. What is this person like? What are their interests? What goals or dreams do they harbour?

Occupational Therapists work through life stages, in a variety of settings with individuals to enable them to participate in meaningful activities appropriate for them. They also work with people with a range of physical and mental issues.

I personally use Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) with my client group. We use activities which include anything from basic self-care tasks, washing, dressing, showering, and laundry, with work-related activities, social interactions and hobbies.

Occupational Therapists are trained to evaluate a person's cognitive, emotional, physical and social abilities and collaborate in developing an individual treatment plan to achieve their goals.

Molly Dennison and Jalarn Anderson are two third year Occupation Students doing their final placements on Wakari campus.

Molly said she always wanted to work in health initially thinking about Nursing but decided OT seemed more client-centred.

Jalarn wanted to study Science or Genetics, but chose OT when she discovered the course involved anatomy, public health and psychology.

Both girls are enjoying their placements, Molly with Community Forensics and Jalarn on a ward which rehabilitates long term patients back into the community.

Looking to the future, Molly would like to work with kids, especially those with learning disabilities. She had an earlier placement with the Ministry of Education and 'enjoyed it immensely.'

Jalarn says she would also like to work with Specialist Education or Stroke Rehab. She has enjoyed her mental health placement on this campus and would also like to work at an inpatient Mental Health ward.

Seeing these hopeful young women in front of me I was reminded of my own graduation in 2016. It was a rainy windswept day as we lined up at the School of Dentistry for our march down George St to the Town Hall to receive our degrees.

Most of my colleagues were young women less than 21 years of age who were happy to walk up the street with this grey haired ex-tradesman, musician, actor, political activist who, in the twilight of his years, was doing something usually only young people do... graduate from uni/Polytech.

I was as excited as hell. One young fellow graduate took hold of my arm and informed me of how proud she was of me.

I almost teared up.

TRENDING TREASURE OR TRASH?



VERA XIAO tracks the cost and waste of staying on trend.

How many times have you seen something on the internet and bought it purely because it's on trend? Stanley, Drunk Elephant, Sol De Janerio?

These are the brands most trendy in high schools at the moment, with sales rocketing up.

At this point they don't even need advertising to be a well-sought after brand.

According to many surveys and reports an average person spends around \$5,000 – 7,000 each per year to keep up with the current trends.

These brands are doing increasingly well off of the back of the teenage trend market.

Is spending this money worth it?

Obviously, there has to be some value in these products if so many people are willing to purchase these items for such an obnoxious amount of money.

However, trends move rather fast and tend to die off as quickly as they started. For example, at the start of 2024 Frank Green was still on trend. Now only 5 months later Stanleys' are on trend and Frank Greens' have disappeared.

In 2023 we were all mooning over Frank Green, but now we are taking our Stanleys' everywhere as though it's our new child.

When you want to buy something think of these simple three steps:

One: consider if it's really you that wants to buy this product. Or is it just you trying to fit in and following a trend?

If you think you genuinely want this product ask yourself how long it would take for you to get tired of this thing.

If you think that you will never get tired of this thing then move onto the next step.

Lastly, are there any cheaper dupes of this product anywhere? If not, then it may be logical to buy this item.

Why do we even want to keep up with these trends?

It's an expression but it's expressing the trend – not you.

Humans like to fit in and follow the herd, but is that all you want to do?

Are you made for following others? Or are you made to make decisions yourself?

You may think many people are following these trends and you will blend in the crowd.

But in reality many people don't buy these products and are living just as good as you are with many better and cheaper options.

Many people go through these products rather fast.

In a survey I made someone had gone through seven Stanleys' and Frank Greens' over the last 3 years.

Globally, people have spent around \$125,000,000 on Stanleys'. Not only is that a whopping amount of money, but even worse this money is not showing real value.

That amount of money could feed 2.78 million starving children three meals a day for an entire month.

Many people think that there is no harm in these trends and that they are just teens expressing themselves.

Behind these lighthearted and aesthetic pieces of clothing and accessories are mountains of landfill waste building up every year.

They are choking our blue planet and turning it dark grey.

Make a choice.

Either keep consuming things in trends and continue polluting our planet, or make a change and help your own style grow and our planet grow the right way.

It's like one of those 'Pick a Path' games and now you can make the change.

FOOD FOR FUTURE THOUGHT



KRIS BHONSLE makes a case for investing in nutrition.

This year David Seymour and the Act party attempted to scrap the Ka Ora, Ka Ako, the Healthy School Lunches programme.

A last second petition by students saw Act change the policy to decrease the cost per child to about \$3, while simultaneously expanding it to early childhood centers.

Act says it will provide food parents would pack, instead of hummus or quinoa, they will provide stuff like sandwiches and fruit.

Before the coalition government, Labour ensured the lunch food was at high nutritional standards and made properly with hygienic standards. With Act, this may not be the case, instead the food will be brought in bulk which isn't going even close to its former glory.

It could cause health problems like obesity and dental issues. If they don't get good food then bad things could happen, because hundreds or maybe thousands of students will miss out on having a decent lunch.

Studies show students who don't go hungry score 60 points higher than kids that miss a meal every week, and 83 points compared

to students who miss a meal 2-3 times a week. Twenty points is a year of learning for a 15 year-old, these hungry kids can be 3-4 years behind their nourished counterparts.

One of David Seymour's main arguments against Ka Ora, Ka Ako, the free lunches programme was that it was creating a lot of waste, about 10,000 lunches per year, but when you put that into perspective, that's only 4.5% of all the lunches.

There are also plenty of things schools do like donating semi-fresh produce to charity. However, compared to previous campaigns like KidsCan's which was far more targeted than Ka Ora, Ka Ako, the free lunches programme would be way more efficient and targeted.

In the bigger picture, the circular economy connects with the free lunches programme.

Take a look at bread, first it starts at the wheat producers then the wheat goes to wheat flour producers, they could be one company that does both, doesn't matter, then the wheat goes to the bread producers who send it to a supermarket.

Take PAK'nSAVE for example, where it

goes to the consumers who eat it. In a circular economy the semi-fresh bread could go back to wheat or flour stage, or maybe it could be reused or turned into some sort of stuffing, or it could go to the Ka Ora, Ka Ako programme for a day while it's still at decent quality.

Act reduced the free lunches programme to \$3 per child with bulk buying lots of goods from a warehouse for a cheaper price.

It sounds good but in reality, it's not too good. In a warehouse, everything isn't checked all the time, so diseases or mould can spread. It is entirely possible for a customer to lose money because no-one's going to give children mould.

Making food and monitoring it rather than gambling on bulk buying is the way to go.

Imagine life without this amazing programme, the effect on students, teachers, parents and everything else. In 30 years it's not going to be today's adults, but today's children.

We need to help them learn and explain how they could run everything, like the economy.



ALMOND MOM IS NUTS FOR NOTHING

Treat that phobic mum to a big breakfast, says ISOBELLA BAGGALEY

Imagine you're Gwyneth Paltrow for a day.

You begin with a wonderful intermittent fast, nibble on a few foods that will not spike your blood sugar, then go on to bone broth for lunch and a nice Paleo supper, all of which assist your detox.

Oh, and you make sure to complete one hour of activity, as the actress says in a contentious video on her wellness routine – one in which critics argue the *Goop* creator reverts to an unacceptable toxic dieting culture.

Ms. Paltrow and the dietary habits she promotes are known by another moniker on TikTok: 'Almond Mom.'

An Almond Mom follows the rigid dieting culture of the 1990s, in case the platform's brilliant algorithm hasn't presented any such videos in your feed.

You know, back when a lot of women allowed the self-deprecating tenet that 'nothing tasted as good as skinny felt' to dictate how much food they consumed or did not consume.

If that sounds outdated, it's because it is.

Ms. Paltrow is not the only one bringing these patterns back. Almond Mom stems from supermodel Gigi Hadid's mother, Yolanda Hadid.

The Hadids headlined a series of *The Real Housewives* and in one episode upon being informed she was sick, Yolanda was filmed advising her daughter to take a couple of almonds and chew them slowly...

An Almond Mom (parent) is obsessed with food to an unhealthy degree and places an extreme value on thinness and weight.

Yolanda Hadid is not the first so-called Almond Mom, but the now 10-year-old video gives clarity to a framework that many girls and women grew up with.

In the world of an Almond Mother, diets reign supreme, being skinny is highly valued, and if you're hungry, a couple of almonds should do it.

Almond Moms aren't only Oscar winners and former *Real Housewives*. They're everywhere.

Not only are they denying themselves everything from cake to the more innocuous complimentary chips or bread to save for the main course, but are also teaching the faith to their children.

More specifically, to their daughters, in an attempt to convert these children to their joyless food cult – passing their eating disorders down like family heirlooms.

With more issues than *Vogue*, almond mothers go through diet fads faster than... whether it be green kale detox juice cleanses, or the high-fat fat loss Keto diet, or the raw natural Paleo diet... each almond mother will have her diet of choice she will stick to like religion.

Others highlight the triggering toxic mantras their almond mothers live by, including 'a moment on the lips forever on the hips' reciting them with cheerful fervour.

Despite all of the health problems arising from using these arguably questionable substances, the daily presence of artificial sweeteners is a necessary evil in the life of an Almond Mother.

Who cares if aspartame could cause cancer, if it keeps you skinny?

I wish self-compassion and body positivity (or at the very least body neutrality) were what Western society pushed women to cultivate throughout their lives, not simply in underwear advertisements.

Many, if not most, people are still not quite there. And one thing the Almond Mom craze has shown is that our parents, like us,

are only human.

Their bad habits are guided by unhealthy societal norms and poisonous beauty standards, rather than developing spontaneously.

Diet fads and weight loss crazes of the 1980s may appear outdated or far gone from our cultural landscape, yet our mothers were taught this when they were young and impressionable girls.

While no one should ever feel obligated to forgive and forget, rather than pointing fingers at our own mothers.

It is imperative to criticise the environment that established their upbringing, to break the cycle of passing on harmful views around food to future generations.

When you examine the backdrop and everything that is at risk, there is something wonderful hiding in this Almond Daughter revolution.

Something more than mocking TikTok and horror at Ms. Paltrow's outdated and strict eating habits.

Just as Almond Mom attempted to convert Almond Daughter to estrangement from her own hunger, there may be a near future where Almond Daughter converts Almond Mom to sustenance, contentment, and joy.

Seems freeing, doesn't it?

If you are an Almond Daughter, take your mother out for a meal. If you're an Almond Mother, accept your daughter's offer and choose the first item on the menu you genuinely desire.

No matter how much Paltrow tries to portray having bone broth for lunch as 'wellness' or how much your Keto control yells about the perils of white bread, nothing will make us feel healthier, more energetic, and alive than having food freedom.



FREEDOM SEASONED WITH VARYING FLAVOURS

VERA XIAO says we can choose to hear, and be heard.

We all know that it is hard to take care of one human being, let alone 5.2 million.

That is the everyday job of our Prime Minister.

As the decision-maker for millions of lives it can be difficult to please everyone all the time.

In extreme cases, citizens will protest, sometimes to the point of violence. Which, in my opinion, is incorrect because at school we learn to respect each other and our thoughts and opinions. As adults there should be no difference.

Prime Ministers of every country from the rich to the poor are always surrounded by bodyguards wherever they go, as there are many unhappy people that will happily hurt the Prime Minister due to disagreements with the government's decisions.

People don't seem to realise that the Government is trying to make the country a better place for everyone.

At school we celebrate respect and diversity, but when we grow into adults we seem to forget this. The former Prime Minister sometimes visits schools. One visit in particular ended unpleasantly.

Protesters stood at the school gates shouting 'Go home Jacinda.'

The visit ended with Jacinda being driven away and a van with protesters in hot pursuit. That is not exactly respect.

Even at the Ponsonby production which was only a school performance, Jacinda had to have many bodyguards, you may not have noticed them but they were there.

Did you know that in 2023 5.7 million New Zealand dollars of our taxes were used for security for MPs and their staff? Which makes the whole protest even more illogical, as those who are protesting against the

government are the ones who are also causing the need for bodyguards and driving that large economic cost to all of us.

The USA Capitol riots in 2021 was a protest against the US government and many disgruntled citizens stormed the Capitol building in Washington, DC.

People were very upset about the results of the election because Donald Trump had not been elected as President.

They stormed the Capitol (a place where important decisions are made for the USA government) and caused mayhem – how not to show our ideas.

The reason we need a Prime Minister in New Zealand, and in fact all of the government, is to make the country a better place for everyone.

You never meet a Prime Minister who says 'my job is torture my citizens', so it's safe to say they don't purposely have bad intentions.

In my old school the majority of people hated Jacinda Ardern and her government for making them wear masks as they see them as uncomfortable, oxygen-sucking torture devices which lead to them feeling their personal freedom is being taken away.

People in New Zealand don't seem to realise that without masks many of us would have COVID already and COVID is not like the flu, especially when there wasn't an effective cure.

The government is trying to teach us how to adapt our habits in certain situations to make our lives easier and safer.

Nonetheless, many threat letters have been sent to Jacinda, one in particular read:

'Very soon we are going to eradicate Jacinda from this earth for good, she is killing our people and our means to live in happi-

ness and she is done for, very soon.'

I suggest that when you want to express your opinions to the government try being polite and sugarcoat it.

The goal of expressing your opinions is to be heard and I don't believe that sending threats is ever a good or effective way to get heard or respected for your opinions.

In contrast to the behaviour in New Zealand, I would like to point out the behaviour and attitudes in Asia, with regards to mask-wearing.

In 2003-2004 there was a SARS Virus outbreak, which later turned out to be even deadlier than COVID-19, but due to government control and obedience from the populations in accepting the need to wear masks, a successful outcome resulted.

In total, only 774 deaths were officially accounted for throughout the whole SARS pandemic. While globally, COVID-19 caused over 5 million deaths.

This shows that Government control over citizens in extreme cases is good, but is only successful if everyone is willing to make sacrifices and do their part.

The next time you're about to yell at the government, think again, we need to respect each other no matter what age we are.

Wouldn't it be great for the Prime Minister to feel safe and we could collectively spend \$5.7 million NZ dollars each year on something other than security? What would you spend that money on if you could?

The Government is trying to help us, not just rule over us. We can improve our communication with our government by seasoning our words, or sugarcoating our sometimes strong opinions.

Even if we don't agree, there are better ways to be heard than by protesting and violence.

SWITCH OFF AND SMELL THE FLOWERS

Force-fed media diet loses its flavour for NATALIA NOONE-JONES.

Clicking. Texting. Swiping. Tweeting. Ping-
ing.

It's everywhere. TV blaring, ads screeching. Our lives are inundated with media, an information overload.

Kids and teens have news thrown at them from every which way, cowering under its reign.

High school students seem to have several layers of stress and anxiety. I'm not surprised, considering I hear from some it's standard for students to spend 4-6 hours a day, on a school day, on social media.

I'm old school, apparently, as though I'm living before the invention of digital technology. I didn't realise reading books was so last century.

High school students have lots to juggle in their minds. There's the everyday stuff – finishing assignments, not missing the bus or leaving their laptops at home.

There's future planning, or in other words the always elusive answer to 'what do you want to be when you grow up?' Big decisions creep closer constantly. Considering where we want to live, further study and the kind of lifestyle we want to have.

Many are still unsure and fear limiting their options.

Then there's wider world stuff. Wars, famine, obesity, climate change, politics – things we feel we have little to no control over, sometimes occurring in countries halfway across the world, not even reaching our shores.

Yet the news reports it all, or whatever form of news the young'uns consume these days.

Wars all the time. War on people, the earth, sugar. Reports of murders in streets that could very well be our streets, ram raids in places we visit frequently.

There's that constant 'what if?' at the back of our minds. News shows encourage downloading their apps to have that information at your fingertips, getting the breaking news as it rolls in.

But what if that easy access is not working as a tool but creating problems for young New Zealanders in particular?

Teenage mental health in New Zealand is poor, people drowning in the pressures of the world. But how much of it is even real? The media puts out its tantalising news marinated in shock, drama and fear, garnished with overly emotive language.

Flashy headlines are often misleading, but they're certainly attention-grabbing. Humans tend to over-complicate. In fact, humans are downright amazing at it, whole societies of complicated human constructs.

Bombarded with so much all the time, it's commonplace to hear of students with 3-4 hours of sleep a night, hardly eating, closing the curtains and staying up late fixated on the little screen in their hands, living like vampires in dusty coffins.

They're forgetting a few important things for overall wellbeing – sleep, sustenance and sunlight. People often forget how much even the weather can affect our mood, how being dehydrated or sleep-deprived can make us feel.

Mindfulness is a mental health technique and can be applied to virtually anything. In our bustling, colourful world it makes sense to slow things down every now and then.

Focusing on something so small and current, particularly breathing, is calming. It's simply logical to be thinking about the noises, sounds and smells around us rather than trying to imagine what's going on 10,000km away.

It is easy to over-stimulate our brains with all the content floating around out there.

People were not built for multitasking with 17 different things at once, staying up until 2am or working 12 hours a day.

The media can blow things out of proportion and use fear as a tool to boost sales. If we don't buy that beauty product, we might look ugly, then people will avoid us. If we don't wear those pants, we might not look cool, if we don't buy that treadmill we might get fat.

Further to boosting sales, the most engaging movies are the biggest, the noisiest and the most shocking. There's only so many times one can watch apocalyptic movies before they start feeling blue.

Looking at everything on TV, from news shows to action thrillers, you might think humanity's going down the toilet.

Though consider what the news would look like if it were proportionally accurate to the events of real life. It's unlikely they'd retain viewership if they reported that 'today 570 people got promoted' or 'there are currently no wars going on.'

If the news reported that all was well, or at least, represented the world more positively than not, viewers would think it a waste of their time informing themselves.

People forget that conflicts are in our heads.

While someone's been sitting and stewing in their anxieties, the trees haven't moved, the birds are still singing, the world hasn't blown up.

Anxiety can be debilitating, but it's important to switch off, turn away from the screens, the newspapers and the 'damning reports' on this, that or the other thing, and get out into the real world again, remember where we are and what we're doing.

The world around us moves so much slower than we think, and with much less drama. It's nice to be a part of it.



ALL HAIL THE REGULATION REGULATOR

FINN LLOYD watches the fresh political tide rolling in.

Ushering in of a wave of change on an end-less triannual tide, New Zealand voted in a new government.

After six years of Labour, the electorate decided on a new direction with productivity at its heart.

The nation is not producing enough goods, services or overall economic growth to keep inflation at ideal levels – an issue weighing heavily on the minds of the people as ‘what’s that got to do with the price of eggs’ transformed from the rhetorical to the literal.

The man at the centre of this issue, who campaigned heavily on the topic and is now Minister for Regulation believes, among other things, that regulation (or less thereof) can improve productivity and reinvigorate a stagnant economy.

But can he prove the critics wrong and show that the establishment of a Ministry for Regulation can solve these issues?

Regulation Minister David Seymour of ACT said, ‘There are 30 ministries creating regulation, but only one removing it. Improving regulations will make it easier for people and businesses to get things done, rather than fighting red tape where they don’t need to.

Regulation is a critical, but often under-appreciated, factor in a country’s economic performance. Countries with high-quality regulations tend to do a much better job of meeting their citizens’ needs than countries with poor-quality regulations.

The new Ministry for Regulation will be providing leadership and oversight across the whole regulatory system, carrying out

sector reviews, enhancing the things that work, and changing the things that are holding us back as a country,’ Seymour maintains.

And perhaps there is a larger issue than productivity.

It’s hard to find a government process that doesn’t involve multiple sheets of paper and an accompaniment of boxes to be ticked.

In commercial sectors there are also a multitude of requirements to be fulfilled, codes to comply with and fees to be paid.

Look at recent changes to the building code surrounding ‘granny flats’ to understand how contentious this can be.

But do the benefits of deregulation over-

come the drawbacks? Or will the long-term effects of deregulation stifle future growth in a way we are yet to know of?

ACT is but a part (comprising a little over 16% of the Government's parliamentary seats) of a larger government.

In the past, Seymour's now partners-in-crime have made statements that would oppose policies the government (at ACT's behest) now enacts.

Will this tide of deregulation be allowed smooth waters to travel through?

I was told this, 'Politics is all about finding a way to live together, and yes, sometimes there's conflict. In this case, I think all our parties know regulation is a problem.'

A unified front, then? Perhaps it is simply getting to grips with government – a new experience for many of ACT MPs (and our new PM, among others).

It could be these diamonds have been found in the rough and simply need to be cut to shine through the scepticism.

But these are issues that present long-range consequences – the good and the bad to be faced by the next generation – those that are now in schools, some progressing even further, who must either reap the rewards or bear the burden of decisions happening now.

What role might students and young people play in such an enterprise?

And what do the leaders of today anticipate for the future, where they will be replaced by younger generations who've passed through these reforms?

The good news, Seymour claims, is that the work to improve regulations is intended to make things easier for them [students and young people] and solve problems rather than create more unnecessary obstacles – so they shouldn't have to do anything more than they'd have to right now.

My desire, he says, 'is to help provide the right conditions for young people, and for more New Zealanders generally, to achieve their own goals and aspirations unhindered by red tape that we've determined we can cut. We have not announced all sector reviews yet but will be doing one per quarter, aiming for meaningful, cross-cutting impact at a national level.

In general, our ambition is for the new Ministry to make things easier for students, young people, and New Zealanders generally, to live, work and operate in our society.'

The impact of 'unnecessary obstacles' on future productivity is touched on here. With growing questions of scope in terms of these cuts from opposition parties, the thoughtfulness that is said to be lacking appears to be solved – quarterly sector reviews appear to cover vast areas of pol-

icy-making (and breaking) and would largely satisfy the claims of recklessness that have been made.

We can, of course, look for the proof that invariably lies in the future; if successful, these policies would no doubt offer a fast, efficient, and ready avenue for growth in our nation.

But for those that begin the education of the nation's future, will these policies make it easier to free up Mum and Dad for work, and provide a crucial service in the heavily conversed sector of Early Childhood Education?

After all, education is a years'-long experience, mandated by law, which serves to prepare young people to take advantage of such productive measures – from the earliest stages to the farthest.

How will this lean new Ministry benefit those involved in Early Childhood Education, for example.

Will the prophesied impact in this sector flow through to later stages of education for these young people?

'Children are critical to the future of New Zealand and their health, well-being and development is important. Quality early childhood education can be transformational for children.

The review will assess whether the current set of regulations are achieving the right outcomes for early childhood education. The way early childhood education is currently regulated is complex, with multiple and potentially conflicting regulatory systems.

Parents, teachers, and workers have told me about unnecessary rules, paperwork, and compliance that takes time, increases costs, and delays new centres from opening.'

'We need to remove unnecessary compliance and cost so our early learning professionals can focus on what's really important – education and care of children.

The scope of the review will be focused on real change and will examine the regulatory systems for education, health, safety, child protection, food safety, buildings, transport, power sources, agriculture and workplaces as they apply to the early childhood sector.'

Early childhood education – the flagship sector for regulation reform – is a focus of this legislation.

'Quality early childhood education can be transformational for children' – sure – and in order to secure a world-class education system, the very earliest of stages must be shipshape.

It is worrying to read that regulation in this sector may even conflict with other regulation – which of course results in confused

providers and an unfair distraction from their crucial role.

Ultimately, these reviews, if carried out, appear to solve many of the problems facing early childhood education – and many other sectors, it seems.

It is a relief to hear that there is progress to unblocking the pipe of progress – and that a thriving, productive nation awaits these children, fresh from quality education, as they themselves take the reins of power.

It seems apparent that there may be a larger problem at play here – almost every government has had new, exciting plans in place to achieve great reform, and leave their mark on the nation.

And yet, many of these problems persist today.

Is such a long-term plan doomed from the beginning?

Look to National's 'roads of national significance' program for an example, being reopened and completed now, over a decade after the program began (thanks to Steven Joyce's autobiography), in what seems to be a process filled with unnecessary stopping, starting and paperwork.

This program, and many others like it, have suffered from the effects of our 3 year electoral cycle – nothing like other comparable countries (UK - 5, US, AUS - 4), who seem to have little trouble with governments planning far ahead in the future and tackling large projects.

Infrastructure, for example often takes an age to complete, and must be done right.

Programs like the above and regulation improvement would, if completed, boost our infrastructure production and upkeep: but they rarely are.

It may all be a case of petty politics - tearing down plans and policies for no reason other than ideology and spite – and it seems that there is a lack of any agreement, on either side of the debate, on what is good for New Zealand.

But this is a problem which will persist until something is done about it. And this action is becoming more welcome as issues such as a cost-of-living crisis persist, too.

This new Ministry has ambitious goals. Can they follow through? Can this regulation regulator open the floodgates of productivity?

And can the project survive another electoral cycle? The 3 year frequency of elections poses a threat to any large, long-term plan – and has hindered plans in the past.

Will it simply be a matter to return to in the future, when we will see the result of these decisions realised?

For that, only time will tell.

NO TIME FOR WASTED ENERGY

We need courageous, visionary leadership coupled with fearless, honest innovation to take us into the future.

This can come from surprising places.

Kaipara mayor Craig Jepson may be a 'boomer' but he had a vision 30 years ago that could have transformed waste management, and rail transport across both islands.

Jepson's Olivine waste to energy (W2E) project for the defunct Huntly power stations would have obviated the need for most of our toxic landfills and subsidised all our rail networks, pushing municipal waste off the trucks and highways and on to rail wagons.

Two W2E plants in the North Island and one in the South would have converted all the country's waste into electricity with all waste carted from rail heads to the incineration plants, and subsidised passenger rail at the same time.

Ironically, Jepson's dream was pushed into the rubbish bin by opponents citing outdated technology to deny Olivine's proposal.

Similar obfuscation hinders W2E today, and landfills continue to poison and overflow in a slow, toxic journey back into the carbon cycle.

Waste minimization must remain irrefutable public policy, followed by waste recycling with high-tech WTE incineration generating electricity with the remaining ash delivered to landfill.

We must gauge how much WTE capacity is needed and plan national collection and rail route projects to support this capacity.

At every stage, the project should be marketed and explained to iwi and the public, including open description of the challenges and benefits of WTE technology.

Regional government can leverage partnerships and skill sets from the private sector in implementing WTE projects with the best technology.

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Ancient fibre can rebuild the regions

We need a new approach to funding local government.

The burden of infrastructure renewal must be shifted away from ratepayers. We can use our local authorities' ability to engage in the market by identifying sound investment in co-ownership and partnership profit-making initiatives that serve ratepayers.

The global industrial hemp market will grow from \$4.6 billion in 2019 to more than \$20 billion by 2027. New Zealand has an environment and agricultural system suited to large-scale hemp cultivation to deliver large returns to the regions.

Hemp is a superplant, serving mankind for thousands of years.

The false 'evil drug' stigma in the 1930s prevented potential in high value and biodegradable hemp being developed. Unbridled, chemical giants choked the globe with plastics and blew the ozone to pieces with aerosols.

Cellulose derived from hemp was cheap, organic and much more versatile. It can be eaten.

Dupont had to protect its interests in petroleum-based plastics.

Hemp delivers fibre, textiles, oils, seeds, organic cellulose, ethanol, green biofuels, green bioplastics, animal feed, even high-protein vegan meat and nutritional supplements. Hemp stores far more carbon than pine. There is no forest 'slash' mess to clean up. Its uses range from building products to foods, medicines and cosmetics, to absorbing and removing toxins from soils (bioremediation).

Looking at one hemp product, hemp concrete, gives a glimpse of the potential of this product. Hemp concrete or 'hempcrete' is a bio-composite alternative to concrete for construction and insulation. Hempcrete is 'carbon-negative' or 'better-than-zero-carbon' because the hemp plant absorbs more carbon from the air during growth than it yields during its production. It continues to absorb carbon after being used in construction, storing more carbon over the building's lifetime than was emitted during construction.

Preliminary 3D-printing research shows hempcrete has a density as low as 660kg per cubic metre, with adequate compressive strength for printing individual walls.

Hempcrete alleviates the negative impact of the construction industry on the environment and provides low-cost

buildings. Hemp reinforcing (rebar) is stronger than steel and doesn't corrode.

Grown from October to January, hemp is a perfect rotational crop for dairy, beef and sheep farms, with no change to existing land use. Hemp rehabilitates soils from the effects of superphosphate by absorbing heavy metals such as cadmium, with no effect on the commercial hemp crop.

Hemp is low in water use and needs similar fertiliser to maize. It smothers weeds after a few weeks' growth and does not need pesticides.

Hemp grown for fibre alone will return at least \$2000 per hectare. Higher value hemp seed, oils and animal feed can be produced from the same crop. Exporting the fibre is one option, and processing products here would show a far better return as the international demand steadily grows.

Each region in New Zealand could develop different products or combine to produce a lower number of 'best return' products.

Local authorities could enter partnerships with farmers and landowners, with the councils' profits used to subsidise rates. Using local government could also help target the best scale, or capacity, for the hemp industry here.

The cost to set up processing is quite high. Some of the \$1.2 billion available for the Regional Infrastructure Fund could be used to replicate the best examples across the world where industrial hemp is already established.

Look at one district. South Wairarapa – 70,000 hectares in dairying, beef and sheep. In a crop rotation with existing farm practices many thousands of hectares could be in high-profit hemp production, contributing to the regional economy, infrastructure and well-being and easing their \$30 million rates burden on ratepayers.

Processing investment, depending on product, would be around \$10 million. Government is sceptical of unfounded data, and farmers are conservative in the adoption of new crops. Hemp research needs to be credible, concise, and backed up by scientific evidence.

In her definitive study 'New Zealand's Industrial Hemp Industry' Otago University's Polly Brownlee spoke of the creative innovation and collaboration needed to realise hemp's enormous potential.

The first spade in the ground needs to be visionary leadership.



CELEBRATE THE DIFFERENCE

EMIL VINCE finds 'slow and steady' deepens the learning experience.

Steiner School teaching uses the head, hands, and heart.

It felt unpressured, learning was not rushed. You could learn at your own pace.

The first school I attended was Cambridge Steiner School in the United Kingdom. I started the year I turned 7.

It was small with about 50-60 children. I had the same teacher each year, so they got to know the students really well.

There are a few distinctions between a mainstream school and Steiner School.

The main one I observed was Steiner Schools delve deeper into learning which makes it slightly slower, but steadier. I was not always aware of how much I was learning, as it was combined with teaching

through practical skills such as craft and outdoor education.

At the end of each term, we would present something we had learned to the school parents called Harvest of Work. We would perform a play each year.

There was also a lot of art and craft in Steiner School, which was sometimes combined with science and other subjects.

When I was 8, along with my family, we went to live in New Zealand as lots of my wider family lived there.

I decided to attend Flanshaw Primary School which I knew was going to be quite different to what I was used to.

At my new school there were a lot more students and more multi-cultural. I liked

the different cultures and how we would celebrate many of them.

There are a lot of sports and competitions in mainstream schools. Although Steiner Schools spend a lot of time outside, like outdoor education and gardening, they do not do competitive sports until intermediate school.

There is not as much art and crafts in a mainstream school which I would change if I could. We can learn so much through using our hands and being creative. If the school doesn't provide it it can be hard to learn art, especially when you can't afford private lessons.

All schools have good strengths and I enjoyed moving to a different school experiencing the alternative ways of teaching and learning.



CHANGING LIVES

YSSAH PALICPIC looks back at her 'forever home.'

I am from the Philippines.

Before I moved to New Zealand I was close to all of my family and friends in the Philippines. I saw my family often because we lived near to each other in Sampapalo, which is a large city.

I was in kindergarten because I was 4 years old while my sister was 5 and in primary school. She would usually go to school in a Jeep with my cousin. We all loved seeing each other every day.

Almost all of my family would come to celebrate a holiday and we would be excited to see each other, like we hadn't seen each other in years.

My Mum and Dad had to make a tough decision. Would we move to New Zealand

or stay in the Philippines? If we grew up in New Zealand would life be better or should we stay in the Philippines?

Mum and Dad had a lot of pressure making that choice because if we move to New Zealand we have to start over with our lives and learn a new language.

Should we stay close to our loved ones in the Philippines? They chose New Zealand for a better life.

Mum felt excited and a bit sad about leaving all her family. Dad felt great because he could support our family, but he was a bit nervous. We came to NZ because Dad was offered a job there.

He arrived first and we landed one hundred days later. I came here knowing no

one. It was super difficult to learn a new language with no family to take care of us.

My Mum was working and made tonnes of friends in a few days, while I was struggling to make any friends. Soon I went to Flanshaw Road School and met my amazing and hard-working teacher, as well as my supportive friends.

After four years here we finally visited my family and the Philippines. Going back, some things changed. My family's houses had been renovated. Everything there reminded me of my childhood and how great it was. Now I think how different my future would have been if I hadn't moved.

We are still exploring New Zealand and accept this will be our home, but the Philippines will always be our forever home.



VICTIMS SUFFER IN SICK DEPICTIONS

ISOBELLA
BAGGALEY
questions
viewer
fascination
with tragic
titillation.

In 2022, Netflix released the controversial drama series *'Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story.'* Starring heartthrob Evan Peters who rose to fame in creator Ryan Murphy's far more lighthearted horror series *American Horror Story*, *Dahmer* quickly rose in popularity to the No. 1 series on Netflix.

This overlong recontextualisation of a demonic serial killer masks its insensitive titillation with the idea of supposedly reclaiming the stories for the victims. They are instead grossly exploited and retraumatised.

The drama series depicts the life of Jeffery Dahmer as an entertaining story, rather than an utter tragedy. He is portrayed not as a horrendous killer but as a morally apprehensible protagonist. He is put on a pedestal while showing immense disrespect for his victims, presenting him as a fantastical force to be followed which is absolutely obscene.

A family member of one of Dahmer's victims shared their thoughts on the documentary on Twitter, saying 'I'm not telling anyone what to watch, I know true crime media is huge but if you're actually curious about the victims, my family (the Isbell's) are pissed about this show.'

It's retraumatising and for what? How many movies do we need?

'Netflix should've asked if we mind or how we felt about making it,' Isbell said. 'They didn't ask us anything. They just did it.'

'I could even understand it if they gave some of the money to the victims' children ... the victims have children and grandchildren. If the show benefited them in some way, it wouldn't feel so harsh and careless.'

It's just greed.'

The question of who benefits from depictions of real-life crimes is an important one, with large studios and streaming platforms earning millions while victims and their families are often left to bear the consequences of increased public attention.

The ethics of retelling true-crime stories without input from victims' families is controversial. There is no legal obligation to contact them – no one owns the facts and you technically can't defame the dead, so no lawsuits.

Some entertainment industries adequately and appropriately handle the incredibly sensitive topics with which they are dealing, but there are many who do not. In the entertainment industry, nothing is immune to sensationalism.

We see these documentaries that are designed to be informative, but are captioned with titles such as *'Making a Murderer'*, *'Abducted in Plain Sight'* and *'The Act'*. This content grabs for your money, attention and engagement – and not as tools to raise awareness and give back to those impacted.

Traumatic events are handled even more insensitively via social media. The most current example is fanfare surrounding Gypsy Rose Blanchard in the lead-up to her release from prison.

Gypsy Rose Blanchard – renowned for being a victim of Munchausen syndrome by proxy and her role in the murder of her mother – was released from prison in December 2023 after her conviction of second-degree murder and sentenced to 10 years. The release brought her a new surge of fame and popularity, with the Internet

taking her on as their next big thing.

One search on the popular social media app TikTok will have videos coming up with captions and content such as, 'Our queen is almost back [heart eyes emoji]', 'Things Gypsy Rose needs to do when she gets out of prison. 1. Make a TikTok account...', and 'Transforming Gypsy Rose into a Victoria's Secret Bombshell.' The hashtag 'gypsyrose' has over 147k videos posted and she herself now has over 100 million followers.

The fanfare surrounding Blanchard is strange, excessive and dehumanising.

There are many women in prison for similar reasons as Blanchard, but none received the attention in the way she did, with speculation and obsession following her. On her first day of freedom, she was tracked and followed through a shoe store with a camera. From there, she became more of a trend than a person.

The posts began as humorous claims of support but quickly grew to be at her expense. The Internet became desperate to know what she does next – what she says next in an interview, who she follows on Instagram and what she posts. They hope for it to be weird, cringe or controversial entertainment. And as quickly as the Internet thrust her to fame, it turned on her.

People rapidly woke up to the fact that she played a role in a horrific crime, and across all platforms, accused Blanchard of assisting her mother's fraudulent acts, acting in an abusive manner towards her husband and sacrificing her mother for fame.

We have a concerning casual way to share and capitalise on the traumatic and graphic experiences of others at their expense.



BOEING'S SKYTANIC FLOATS ON SHODDY CONSTRUCTION

VERA XIAO wants Boeing to answer questions about unacceptable systemic risks for passengers and crew.

Following the many issues with the Boeing 737 MAX airplane, Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun has become less transparent to the public.

Despite many pressing questions from the public and the Federal Aviation Administration, Calhoun tends to brush off the heavy questioning. He insists Boeing will 'do better' and 'will improve safety measures.' After the deaths of two whistleblowers Boeing has been unusually silent.

Many pilots, engineers and safety managers who work for Boeing have expressed their concerns about Boeing prioritising cost-cutting and payment amounts more than passenger safety and undergoing proper safety procedures.

Many of these whistleblowers were paid large annual salaries, so the fact they were willing to put their jobs on the line clearly indicates how serious this issue is with noticeable corner cutting at Boeing.

'I was finding over one hundred issues with Boeing airplanes every day,' one whistleblower claimed.

'Many were issues with the door bolts similar to the ones that came off mid-flight on the recent Alaska flight disaster.'

Clearly Boeing didn't take that disaster seriously and have continued to run the company in the same cost-cutting manner as before.

Who is to blame for all of this cost-cutting which has resulted in hundreds of innocent lives being lost?

Many have been suspecting the CEO of Boeing, Dave Calhoun, as he has had a pay

raise since the many accidents of the Boeing 737 MAX.

He is currently earning upwards of 33 million dollars each year.

He has recently come before the US senate to discuss the issues with Boeing. He conveniently had clever answers for each question and basically deflected any real responsibility.

It is noteworthy that one issue mentioned was the purchase of subpar titanium from a Chinese supplier that still somehow managed to continue to be used as a raw material on Boeing's assembly line.

Following the public controversy, Boeing's CEO and the board issued mixed statements. They made public announcements stating they would fix the problems.

Their actions suggested they were more focused on continuing to save money and keeping production fast and under budget.

This reluctance to address the issues thoroughly was likely due to fears of financial losses, damaging the company's reputation and potential bonus cuts for those at the top.

Despite many complaints made by employees and engineers at Boeing, there hasn't seemed to be much of a change in systems.

Those who chose to go to the federal transport authorities to report the issues, said that after bringing their concerns forward, they felt their physical safety was at risk.

Many still felt so strongly they were still willing to bring their complaints forward.

In good conscience they couldn't allow the aircraft to continue being manufactured and sold with the obvious defects and safety hazards.

The situation worsened when two of the whistleblowers were found dead under mysterious circumstances. One death was officially ruled a suicide, but many doubted this conclusion.

The second was a mysterious death of an illness. These deaths raised serious questions about whether efforts were being made to silence those who spoke out, to protect the company.

Boeing needs to be more transparent to the public.

The more they try to conceal what many believe to be a dark secret the more questions the public will have.

The US government has been more than suspicious of Boeing and is currently investigating these whistleblower concerns.

Boeing will need to properly address these and resolve them otherwise there may be serious consequences.

Do we want to board what may be a Skytanic?

It may be noteworthy the Starliner spacecraft stuck at the space station with two astronauts was also built by Boeing. Plagued with problems well before takeoff, including leaking helium, and sticky tape that may prove flammable.

The Startanic billing would be worth billions to Boeing. They would not let that go in a hurry.

GOOD GOVERNANCE GETS RANGITAHİ VOICE

ADA KIM underlines the need for youth involvement in shaping our communities.



The lack of young people's involvement with local government in New Zealand is a large issue, as crucial voices are unheard of.

For example, in the Henderson-Massey area, 20.9% are aged 15-29 years old. A total of 0 people on the local community board fit this description – the youngest member being 34. This is a common theme in local boards throughout New Zealand, despite minimum age to be voted in is 18.

The local boards make decisions on local matters, working to set annual budgets, create strategic direction, and improve their local areas.

It is absurd that despite the resounding impact of these decisions on youth, they are a marginalised group in local governance.

This does not mean our youth aren't trying – but it's incredibly difficult to be voted on to the local board as a young person. They need to go through an election process.

The voter demographic is older, and many find it hard to trust younger candidates to make decisions, so most young candidates do not get voted onto local boards. Young people find themselves alienated from politics because of this under-representation – ultimately leading to a lower number of young people voting and participating in local government.

As the average voter is less likely to vote for younger candidates there are fewer youth in local government able to raise their voices, and the cycle continues.

This detachment of youth from crucial areas of governance is a deep concern for New Zealand.

Young voices are needed in governance, we must speak up to be heard, to be voted on, and to be seen by our local government systems. Not only does the lack of engagement and candidates hinder the young, but funds are also being cut for youth councils.

This further suppresses the young perspective making it more difficult for youths

to have their say in matters which deeply affects them. This lack of youth voice is concerning.

Leadership roles for youth in areas of governance and civic engagement are crucial. They increase engagement and involvement, allow more young voices to be heard to represent a positive influence on youth.

To change the cycle of youth involvement, we need to start by changing and building upon structures that give them a voice.

Some vital opportunities for youth involvement in governance are the school boards of trustees student representative positions within schools, student councils, and youth councils. Due to a lack of access and awareness about these opportunities, many voices go unheard.

Jacinda Ardern, our former Prime Minister and former Student Representative mentioned the amount she learnt in the role.

These opportunities give voice and provide further opportunities for our youth to be part of the decision-making processes that determine the future of New Zealand.

As a student rep, I believe the opportunity to sit on the board of trustees is one of the greatest ways to learn about governance – in a way that matters.

As a member of the school body, understanding how it is governed allows insight into other systems such as community boards.

Every school has a board of trustees student representative elected by students. Pupils from any year level can run for the role. Each board has different systems for the student representative, and once elected, they join in monthly board meetings discussing the governance of the school.

This is where they represent and advocate for the student's voice, and it provides them with a platform to make change.

Some student representatives are required

to write a report for the board, others work with student councils, and some present the board's minutes to the school.

The difference in the student reps' experience from school to school makes it much more difficult to understand the role. It results in a lack of engagement and interest – as it doesn't have the prestige prefect students have and seems tricky to undertake.

Many board reps agree there is a lack of applicants for the role. Most reps only had to run against one or even no candidates.

This stems from nobody knowing about our job – and what role we play within the complicated governance of the school. It leads to an absence of students applying, and student reps not being able to use their role to its full potential.

Being on the board allows for keen insight into school governance. Student reps can witness first-hand decisions being made and put into place. They can share in where the money goes and the initiatives the school works on. It also equips us with leadership and speaking skills, ultimately breaking down barriers of governance and allowing easier involvement with local government and civic engagement.

However, this may not be the case for all students as the role is challenging and often student reps will not be recognised in the same capacity as other representatives.

It has been a focal point in discussion lately with other student reps as they find their voices being minimised, or not really knowing what to do in their role.

This comes down to the different traditions between schools – passing down the role is often not a smooth process, and students can feel they are being left at the deep end.

We must work on these systems. Improving them invites participation and ultimately makes it easier for students to raise their voices and partake actively in school areas.

Student reps usually work closely with stu-

dent councils – if the school has one.

Student councils are more managerial and give a large range of pupils the chance to offer opinions and solutions to the problems students are facing.

When given enough power and if done correctly, it allows students to take control and speak about their issues – allowing them to be part of the system that shapes the school.

Many schools do not have a student council available for students. This further creates

disconnection from the governance of the school and the students. Involvement in student council encourages engagement among students and provides a platform for their voices – this can go further for young people, and they can get involved in youth councils. They are larger, more youth-led areas of civic and governance involvement.

Youth councils work closely with their local board and provide opinions and feedback, letting youth voices be heard. This allows and engenders direct youth involvement with local government.

Pushing and promoting these areas of youth involvement is crucial to get young people's voices heard in government, to break the cycle of silence. We need our youth to make decisions about youth. We need them to grow into people who can lead our country.

Civic knowledge and experience are crucial for our young people today, as youth can make meaningful change.

To do that, we must strengthen these systems for the voice of the students, the youth, our rangitahi.

POP CULTURE PUSHES DRUG USE

ATHRUN NAIR highlights drugs on the road to maturity.

News of someone using illicit drugs, and legal vapes and their dangers, is part of everyday life in New Zealand.

Weed, even the odd molly. We all know and care, but why? Who cares if the average Joe was able to inhale flavoured chemicals, through a USB stick the same colour as our childhood memories?

Who cares if our peers shared a joint at the latest party? What makes it so interesting? Nothing. Which is why it is everything. Drugs aren't interesting to the teenage mind. What we are most attracted to is not in the physical, but all in the atmosphere they create through our constant focus.

School life clashes with our own. Drugs are bad for you, make you cool, are this way good and this way bad. Our friends clash with our family. Drugs will corrupt you, give it one try.

Growing up in a society with ever increasing use of technology, the exposure our minds get to the fluorescent screen and its content is higher than ever before. As we grow older the consistency of our minds matching the screen is normalised. Babies watching shows for babies. Kids watching shows for kids. Teenagers watching films and shows for adults.

With this the exposure to drugs and other unhealthy substances such as alcohol are also in the upper ranges for teenagers. Teens around the world are always seeing the glorification drugs and drinking receive throughout our films and media.

The expression of drugs being prohibited and dangerous gives a thrill for teens transitioning from a child to an adult. This is seen in the theory in which children and their

young minds must experience something 'adult-like' in order to mature.

With combined exposure to other 'teens' partaking in drug culture, boosts their desire to try it. I believe almost every teen experiences this and, at least one day, will want to bend the rules.

Drugs highly popularised across pop culture, with easy accessibility and perceived minimal side effects, drug use is most likely to be a gateway to 'maturity' for teens. Most teen drama films glorify drugs and prohibited substances as part of pop culture. When you think of a party, the first thought to come to mind in this generation is alcohol.

Parties were originally created to hold a large gathering. Now it's normalised a party must have alcohol. The cheap red cup, people bringing their own booze. It's completely embedded in our minds a party will have alcohol; a popular trend among young people globally. It's the perfect place to rebel and imbibe the liquid.

Others are most likely going to be doing it as well. There won't be any judgment.

Alcohol intake holds a large portion of the screen time a youthful mind would most likely view, greatly increasing the chance they would like to try it for themselves.

Marijuana, on the other hand, is completely different. Weed is considered a hallucinogen and depressant to help 'mellow' people out. It's extreme popularity comes from positive effects and the slim to no side effects.

Transitioning from youth to adulthood can be a stressful process along with all other stresses that come from being in school. Many seek weed as a gateway to halting the

stress even for a small amount of time.

Weed is constantly in pop culture films revolving around drugs and popular with young teens and adults. It is seen often by minds looking to rebel without negative aspects being seen, including teenagers having to pay a lot of money for it.

They need to know the side effects without a constant negative about using it, which increases the appeal. More discussion around negative effects of weed is perhaps a good idea as teens see it as a harmless drug with little to no side effects. It's seen as a valid way to rebel and may help them manage life while believing the side effects will be no worry.

A large number of drugs are popularised through pop culture. The extent of effects from the portrayal of drugs through the screen is hard to measure.

Those who want to watch or participate in the use of alcohol and drugs need a solid understanding of the wider effects. More whānau around NZ need to be able to educate one another about the types of things their children are most likely going to be exposed to.

I hope we can regulate the desire and need for young people to join in on the act. As I have witnessed growing up in Auckland it is a struggle for those who start, to stop.

Best to deal with the appeal first. Those who seek drugs and/or alcohol don't do it to be popular, they do to cope with many things that may surround them in life.

Drug and alcohol use may fill the screen, but they need to know there are other healthy things they could be doing.



ONLINE MINEFIELD NEEDS SWEEPING

KRIS BHONSLE sets age limits for online activity.

What would you think if your 9 year old began to use an 18+ site for entertainment?

That's exactly what's happening now.

In 2017, 39% of social media users got their profiles when they were aged between 10-12. Imagine where that number will be in seven years, when they grow up, imagine their reliance on social media.

I've had people tell me they have friends who use social media sites, e.g. Facebook over search engines such as Google.

I am focusing on websites like TikTok where content is sent to everybody else and there are age limits.

You may be wondering, how these kids get accounts? Simple, they lie about their age, most social media sites have no restrictions.

Sure, there are smart people using techniques such as asking about kid's birthdays, a pause means they're underage, afterwards they can report them.

But there are also silent kids who don't talk, there's basically no solution now.

Why do they use social media? A few big reasons are they use it for contact, getting updates about stuff like games and following passions, but this can go wrong quickly.

Your kid could be biggest bully at school and becomes that hostile guy online, but might aggravate other people who may retaliate, which could lead to consequences like depression and addiction.

Let's say an underage social media kid sees a really funny meme and watches it. It tells the algorithm they like really funny memes, so it sends those memes. This creates a feed-back loop and could cause addiction, with consequences like prolonged screen time. If a parent or teacher attempts to intervene, this might make kid even more addicted because they will get it less often.

Social media toxicity can be hostile, but it's not just big bullies that do this, other kids can be too.

Some 40 year old guy makes an offensive comment about kids and why they're stupid, the kid won't like it, so the kid could start arguing with the adult, But who's going to win? The adult, plus the kid risks

giving hints they're underage which could lead them to getting reported and banned.

If that kid is also addicted, this could cause problems such as anxiety, paranoia, disorientation and seizures.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS PARENTS & TEACHERS COULD DO:

- Age verification – how are you supposed to lie now?
- Conversation, talk about why social media has age limits.
- Check the kids' phones while they're doing chores.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO MAKE IT SAFER:

- Use parental control apps, you can see what apps are best by reading some articles and asking others.
- Watch your children digitally using a spy account or maybe your own, then check every now and then to see what your kids do on social media.



IN MEMORIAM: THE DEATH OF THE CORNER SHOP

A poignant memory has been chased off the corner, laments FINN LLOYD

When I decided to investigate the recent spike in retail crime affecting our local dairies, a memory came to me.

Being only seven or so, watching the evening news, where I noticed a familiar scene: the dairy down the road. But it wasn't quite right. On the television was the owner, a man I rarely saw, describing the horrors of a ram-raid attack on his shop.

In the background, the shop front had turned concave as a truck ploughed straight through, in search of cigarettes, vapes and cash. I can remember being there in the wake of smaller crimes and theft, but the place never quite felt the same after that.

Soon, for sale signs appeared on the facade of the building – the poor man and his wife simply couldn't take it anymore. The dairy continues where it always was – not quite on the corner (it never was), but it never really was the same.

Even now, as I have moved away, and haven't visited the place in a few years now, this memory still shocks me. And this attack – shocking as it was – seems to have joined the ranks of the many others like it.

For it is not just my local that suffered – across the country, seventeen retail crimes are reported EVERY HOUR. An absolutely staggering figure – one need only think of the unreported crimes and unseen crimes to fall back in their seat.

Suddenly, the demise of the classic Kiwi corner shop becomes inevitable.

As a centre of the community, it is often news that spreads, and places these communities in a similar state of shock. And for such valued institutions – a memory shared by all New Zealanders, young and old – to be treated in such a way elicits feelings of disgust, anger, sickness.

From the smallest of towns to the big smoke, the dairy retains all its basic functions – from when a bowtie was demanded, and the confectioner's wares, ice-cream's treats, and all the basics were catered for, what's changed?

A more open-collar style (if at all). And yet, regrettably, the rise in petty crimes – and the more serious among them – has made its impact as well. And so, it's no surprise that six attacks a day occur in which the re-

tail worker is assaulted – another horribly staggering figure.

As a part of this story, I thought it would be best to hear from a dairy owner/worker themselves – and so I walked around Central, West and South Auckland in search of a retailer to speak to.

Almost 40 dairies – not one willing to speak. The fear these attacks have wreaked is real – it is devastating on these people's lives. And the fact no-one was willing to speak only made me realise further the harm and damage that these attacks have done.

And so, as the classic corner shop is put to rest, a time of reflection is encouraged. I am among the younger of those in this country, and even I can remember a time where the local dairy felt safe – the way it should always be.

But remembering my local – your local – corner shop, the loss of this fixture as we know it becomes ever sadder. While the scars remain, in the forms of bollards, metal grating, smashed glass and the rest.

Remember your local store.



DIGITAL BABYSITTER PRESENTS NEURO DILEMMA

JOSH BENOZA reveals the underlying issues of children's media.

It is with great displeasure I announce the next generation of grubby kids.

A generation of rowdy children with eye sockets glued to dirtied glass tablets and attention spans lesser than that of a goldfish.

Technology has rapidly advanced. Its uses in day-to-day life arguably followed suit.

It is noteworthy to mention the rise in phone parenting, as I call it, a trend in which children from all ages are given devices to either help them learn or help parents to get that sweet rest.

Children's media has skyrocketed in recent times, especially during the outbreak of COVID, where the rise of a certain shark family song took the world by storm.

At the same time, it seems as if society has begun to socially accept raising children through gadgets and devices from ages who use years, to ages who use months. Now more than ever, devices such as tablets and smartphones are regularly seen grasped in hands smaller than small rocks. It is time to take a better look at this new phenomenon, and the effects it may have on the next generation.

YouTube stands as the revolution for parenting in the modern age with its plethora of kids' content made for educational purposes. Since COVID, both the app and its number of users increased dramatically.

Lullaby and educational kindergarten content consistently garners tens of millions of views, and spans hours of content. Like most things, there are always issues needing to be considered. This is especially true for this type of content.

An article by *Psychology Today* found that overstimulation can lead to problems with attention and focus, making it harder for children to engage in sustained activities or follow through with tasks. This overstimulation is prevalent in major channels such as *Cocomelon*, which can lead to detrimental effects on the growth and mindset of young children, especially more impres-

sionable children under the age of 5.

Content such as nursery rhymes, often depict extremely a multitude of transitions, in terms of movement between locations and scenes. While this may not seem negative in concept, the problems start to surface when we begin to examine the effect this has on the growth of children.

According to a study shown in Springer Link, a host of scientific books and materials, fast moving content can be directly linked to adverse effects on neurodevelopment, learning, memory, and mental health, especially through long exposure.

Overstimulation for children under the age of five is even more of an issue due to the way the brain develops in younger children, as overstimulation in children can cause irritability, difficulty in calming down, and issues with sleep.

'Elsagate' content remains as one of the largest examples of inappropriate content in children's media (specifically YouTube), to date, and continues to exist as a prevalent reminder of the issues presented by the YouTube Kids phenomenon.

Elsagate is a blanket term to describe seemingly child-friendly content containing inappropriate themes not suitable for children. Elsa Gate-esque videos usually depicted popular characters in relationships with other characters, only to reveal certain unsuitable themes for kids, including injections, pregnancy and other fixations.

The biggest issue of this content stems from the initial childlike nature of these videos. The veil they hide behind masks their true colours, which in turn allows many children to be subject to that content, as it is deemed suitable for kids.

This ultimately allows extremely young children to be exposed to inappropriate content at such a young age.

When *The Guardian*, a well-known British newspaper made an article on Elsagate content in 2017, many more news agencies

picked up on more channels featuring this content, including *The New York Times*. The publicity led to the ultimate crackdown on Elsagate-esque content, until its resurgence in 2020.

Even now, Elsagate content is easily accessible online through YouTube and YouTube Kids, as found in the estimated hundred channels that have gained a cult-like following. Gaining thousands, if not millions of followers with a majority likely stemming from an extremely younger audience.

It is no stranger to say inappropriate content has no place in the faces of young impressionable children. Especially due to issues such as desensitisation to certain content leading to overstimulation by these mediums. Such as YouTube Kids, still prevalent in our society often playing a role as the virtual nanny for parents. It seems to be doing the job as well.

While the popularity of Elsa Gate-esque content has lowered over the past few years, it is still important to highlight the continuous regurgitation of this content and the effect it can have on youth during prime years of their mental development.

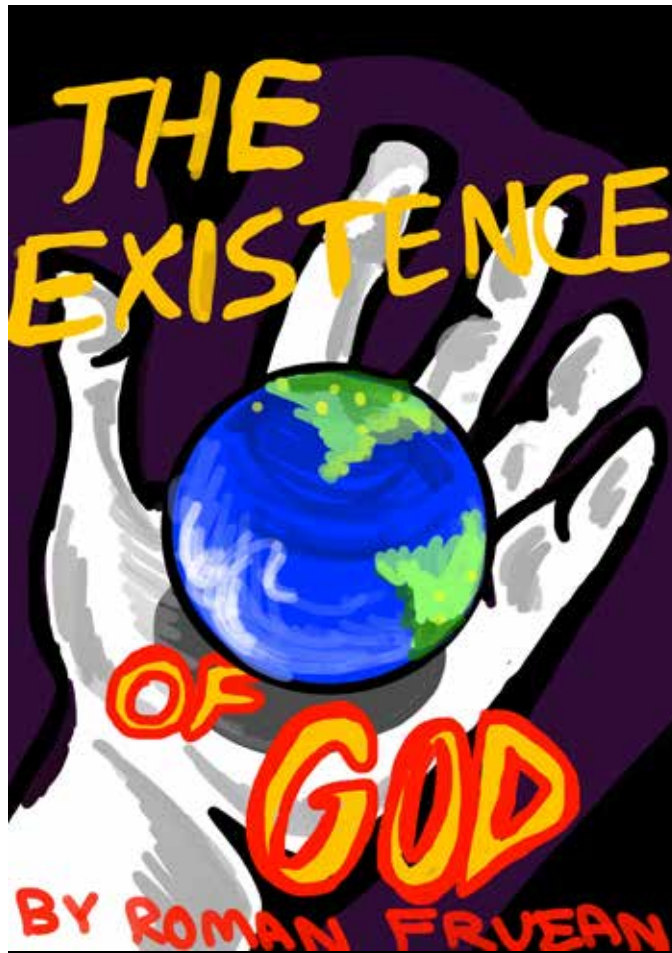
Therefore, it is only fair to raise the final question, what now?

Now more than ever, parents head to YouTube and other apps to babysit their children. A choice which reveals the trust we put in content we expose ourselves to.

As the internet becomes even more widespread, spanning every generation, it is vital that we understand the effect content can have, especially for parents in terms of what they expose their children to.

Overstimulation and unsuitable content are major issues which lack proper understanding, and proper examination.

Phone parenting is a phenomenon likely to stand the test of time, and in a period of constant interactions and reforms in this digital age, it's essential we stay informed, for both our sake, and for those we care for.



I was once with a friend of mine at school and the topic of God was brought up at some point. I was really confident and wanted to try and sort of "preach" to him because he was an atheist. But he asked me one question that really struck me:

"Why do you believe?" I was getting ready to give my answer, but that question began to sink in deep. Why do I believe in God? Because my family taught me to? Besides that, what was the actual reason for my belief? I had not experienced anything supernatural, so what was the explanation? He could tell I was clueless and left because the bell had rang. It wasn't even a minute and the topic had already been dismissed. Months pass by, and that same question is still in my head.

I told everybody I believed there was a God, but on the inside I wasn't sure if there was anymore...

1



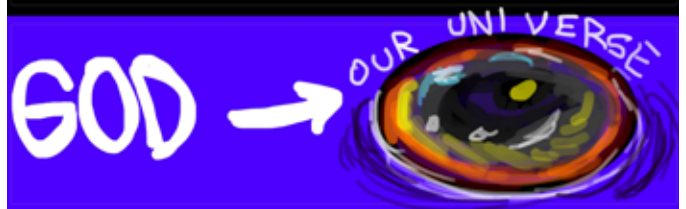
Everytime I went to church, all I could think about was that question. And I thought that science has disproved God many times because of the "contradictions" that they have. But then I decided to look further into it and take matters into my own hands. For many weeks I had spent a lot of time researching the existence of God using both science and religion, and realized that neither of these can be an impediment to each other, just as each cannot be an impediment to TRUTH.



And today I can finally be honest with myself and confirm that there is indeed a God out there, and will be explaining why that is the case from a scientific and philosophical perspective (I must also make it clear that I do not make this as a sort of attack towards non-believers), starting off with...

2

THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT



The cosmological argument is the argument which explains that the universe must have an explanation for its existence, an explanation that involves a necessary being. More specifically, a God. Anything that exists has an explanation for its existence in either the necessity of its own nature or in an external explanation.



Everything that exists must have a purpose because if not, that would undermine the very notion of science. Some will object that the universe is necessary in itself as its own foundation for its existence. In order for the universe to be necessary, it must be eternal and changeless. But this is not the case, which can be explained using an acronym called SURGE:

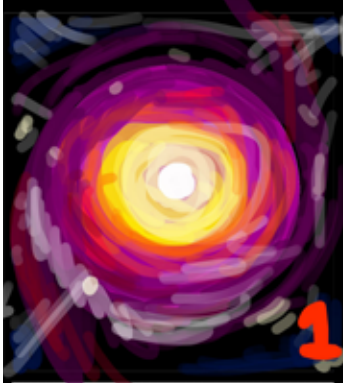

3

CARTOONS

	The S stands for the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics, which explains that we would have no energy left by now if the universe were eternal.
	The U stands for the universe is expanding. American astronomer Edwin Hubble detected this in 1929, providing us with the first observational evidence of the universe being finite, meaning it had a beginning.
	R stands for the radiation afterglow, which serves as more evidence for the universe being finite, which was discovered by two astronomers Arno Allan Penzias and Robert Woodrow Wilson in 1965.
	The G stands for the great galaxy seeds which allowed galaxies to form into an early universe.
	And finally E stands for Einstein's theory of general relativity, which states that space, time and matter are co-relative and that they all had a beginning together.

4

So we know that the universe cannot itself be necessary as its own explanation for its existence, but why should it appeal to a necessary being? Why couldn't have been a necessary substance since it is also necessary. We have two options...

The first option is a necessary being, which is a non-physical and necessary mind which bears intelligence and the ability / power to create things.

And the second option is a necessary substance, an existing material that has to be able to do something to create itself, so it'd have to be conscious. It'd also have to be non-physical because that would mean that it is made up of contingent substances. And we also know that space, time and matter are finite, so it would be independent of space-time. And finally, it must be intelligent to know how to create things, and must also bear the power to do so.

But this description of a necessary substance sounds equivalent to that of a necessary being, so they are basically the same thing.

5



Okay, so we know that the universe has an explanation for its existence, which is most likely a necessary being (not itself because the universe is finite). Here's another thing about our universe.



The overall existence of the universe (with everything in it), comes down to around 20-30 numbers which physicists refer to as the physical constants. These numbers are fixed numbers of a fundamental physical condition we find in our universe. And say all these numbers are dials. If you switch any of these dials the SLIGHTEST bit in any direction...



The universe would cease to exist. This is referred to as...

6

THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT



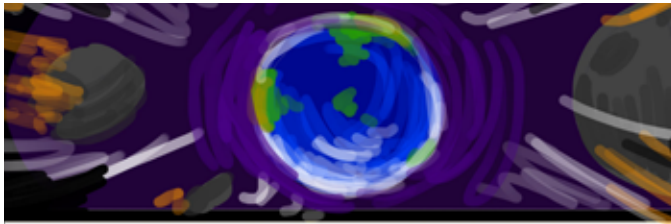
Also known as the fine-tuning argument. It basically explains that the universe is so fine-tuned and could not have come here by accident, but rather the result of design by an intelligent being. Now back to the physical constants. These numbers are positioned so precisely, so balanced with one another, that if any of them moved the slightest microscopic bit in any direction, it would ultimately result in no life and no universe.



For example, if the expansion rate of the universe was by one part in a thousand, million, million a second after the Big Bang, the universe would have collapsed back on itself or never developed galaxies (stated by Stephen Hawking). Or if the gravitational force was changed by 1 part in 10 to the power of 40 in any direction, stars would cease to exist, therefore we would not be here. If the electromagnetic force were just a hair stronger or weaker, atoms could not form into molecules and the entire universe would just be a giant cloud of subatomic particles.

7

CARTOONS



Same thing with our solar system too. If Jupiter wasn't in its current orbit by a tiny bit in any direction, earth would be bombarded with meteors and asteroids. If you didn't know, the planet Jupiter serves as a cosmic vacuum cleaner, with its gravitational pull (being stronger than Earth's) attracting all the space junk instead of letting them go directly towards us (Thank God).



We've taken a look at the universe as evidence for the existence of God. Let's take a look at ourselves. More specifically, our morality...

So to most scientists and physicists, it seems that the universe sprang into existence with incredible precision for one specific purpose: LIFE, which leads us to believe that this fine tuning is actually the result of an intelligent designer. And then atheists come up with the possibility that it all came here just by chance. I think it would be unreasonable that the universe and all these specific values landed here by accident. Chance doesn't cause anything, chance is a word we use to describe mathematical possibilities. Sometimes when scientists use the word chance, they really mean: "We don't know." Either these values were designed or it wasn't. And I think we all know which one sounds more reasonable and makes more sense. 8

Modern philosophers have had many difficulties trying to ground these facts and duties into something, or at least something that is natural, and is considered to be a crisis in contemporary Western debate about ethical foundations as British scholar of ancient philosophy John Rist has stated. You see morality is deciphered in reasoning. If we see someone hurting another, we cannot know how we ought to act and instead have to reason why you shouldn't act that certain way.



And these moral facts / duties could not be grounded in a human source due to the multiple moral disagreements and issues made among humans. We are not morally perfect, we are contingent beings and we repeatedly perform moral duties wrongly. So this means the moral facts and duties must be grounded in something necessary and unchanging, something that is rational (because non-sentient objects cannot be rational). Using all this information provide I do not suggest this source as a big man in the clouds who changes their mind and decides what's right and wrong but rather a conscious, rational and necessary entity as the source of moral knowledge and one we would look to for moral guidance. 10



Let's start off with what morality is. Objective morality is basically the idea that right and wrong exist factually, without any importance of opinion. And then there's objective moral facts, which are moral standards that are true of what one feels, and are not subject to biases / preferences. According to these facts / duties, some actions are considered good, while others are considered bad. No problem about that, except one: If they exist, they have to be grounded in something, like how the universe is meant to be grounded in a necessary being. So where do these standards come from?



GREEN IS RIGHT BUT WHY?

9

CONCLUSION

We've finally reached the end of this presentation. To finish it off, let's summarize everything we've gone across. The universe was not created by accident. The universe must have an explanation for its existence in either the necessity of its nature or an external explanation. Its existence wouldn't be the very explanation, because if the universe were necessary, it would have to be eternal. This is not the case, because the universe is finite, which was proved by Edwin Hubble, showing that the universe is expanding from a single point. This means that the universe had a beginning. And it sprang into existence with such incredible precision that made it suitable for life. We can conclude that the universe was indeed designed by a necessary being that bears intelligence and power to create things, is non-physical, is conscious, is rational and is not bound by space, time and matter. This being would also have to be the source of moral knowledge (humans couldn't be because of the many moral disagreements and issues made amongst us). And what we have described, my friends, is what we call...



11

