

Point Blank

Issue 6 September 2018



THE SERVICE IS AND DOES, WHAT THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY WANT AND NEED

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Letter from Laverton Youth Foundation

Well guys after a short time-out, the Point Blank Youth Magazine is back! After four successful editions, I have taken over the reins and with the continued, invaluable, support of Alex Petrou and the hard work of some fantastic young writers PBYM Issue 5 is finally here!

This time, we have extended the range of the Point Blank Youth Magazine and have submissions from as far afield as Ringwood! I would like to take this time to say a huge thank you to all the young people who took the time to write some fascinating and educational articles.

Thank you also to our sponsors, Jill Hennessy, Joanne Ryan and Bendigo Bank who continue to support us to produce the magazine and provide a platform for young people's voices to be heard.

If you are environmentally conscious or haven't managed to track down your own printed copy of the Point Blank Youth Magazine, you can download a copy from www.pointblankyouthmagazine.com.au.

If you, or someone you know has a passion for story telling or journalism and are interested in writing for PBYM, get in touch at lavertonyouthfoundation@lcis.org.au for more information. Watch this space for future editions of the Point Blank Youth Magazine to include some international collaboration to showcase young talented writers from around the world.....

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The Point Blank Youth Magazine was founded in 2014 to give young people a voice and a medium through which to express their thoughts, dreams and talent. The articles and stories featured in each magazine is a presentation of the individual young people's views and opinions on issues that are important to them.

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HOMELESS

a personal insight

WRITTEN BY YASMIN POOLE

When walking the streets of Melbourne CBD, it isn't difficult to see the large homeless issue on our hands.

With The Age recently labelling it as a "homelessness crisis" reaching "emergency levels", I sat down with Sharon, 46, a formerly homeless woman to ask her insight. She earns her living on the busy Swanston Street, selling not for profit magazine The Big Issue to passers by, earning \$3.50 a copy.

A common cause of homelessness is abuse, she says. However, she warns that sleeping rough may bring its own set of problems.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BEING HOMELESS?

It's dreadful. The worst experience of my life. I got raped, people steal off you. I've heard of people getting bashed in their sleep.

I used my shoes as a pillow, so 1) they wouldn't steal my shoes and 2) because I needed a pillow! Being in a squat is so dirty and messy. You'd feel

things crawling all over you. I came from a clean environment – my mum is a nurse. I'd be half awake all night because I was scared.

There was a little 24 year old [homeless] boy that stuck by me. He'd chat away to himself all day, I'd laugh with him... cry with him. It was the age my oldest child would have been if I had had it. It made me think, "What if that was my son?"

WERE THERE ENOUGH SERVICES AVAILABLE WHEN YOU WERE HOMELESS?

"No, not to start with. We had to hunt around and get a good caseworker for our kids. They've closed a lot of the churches down; they haven't been getting the funding.

Our caseworker got sick so the manager pushed through and got us a place

to live. Without him we probably wouldn't have gotten housing. A lot of [the case workers] liked us, they could see we had genuine issues and weren't druggies. They helped us a bit more because we were genuine. My husband has intruded discs and he needs operations. I have schizophrenia and bipolar."

ARE THERE ENOUGH MENTAL SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS?

"No way. At hospitals they put us on a Community Treatment order, but some of these people don't need that treatment. They need a proper psychiatrist who they can talk to regularly. They need therapy, not just medication.

The medication they had me on was way too strong...made me way too drowsy, I couldn't function or work properly. My GP is trying to wean me off such a high dose. So I self medicate. But when I self medicate I don't sleep or eat and I get psychosis. It's a catch 22."

ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ON THE STREETS LONG-TERM DRUG ADDICTS?

"They're usually alcoholics or drug addicts. Most of them have been abused which is why they have problems. A lot have been raped."

WHEN YOU WERE HOMELESS, WOULD YOU RATHER PEOPLE GIVE YOU THEIR CHANGE OR FOOD?

"Either way it didn't matter, I was always hungry. I wouldn't have three meals a day, sometimes barely one meal a day."

BUT WHAT ABOUT PLACES THAT SERVE FREE FOOD?

They do, but only at certain times and you have to get in quick or it's all gone. It's quicker than dead. A lot of people are greedy and take more than they should. They feel like they're going to miss out."

ARE THERE MORE THE POLICE AND GOVERNMENT CAN DO?

"Definitely. They need to sort out the drug problem and get them help. There's a young girl who begs but the money all goes up her arm. I thought she stopped. It was a kick

in the gut. She gets the money but not the help to stop the addiction.

We need better supports, facilities, more housing, more counselling services. We need far more doctors that can dispense methadone (heroin withdrawal medication) and normal tablets.

They need to be more aware of why people are on the street, what caused it."

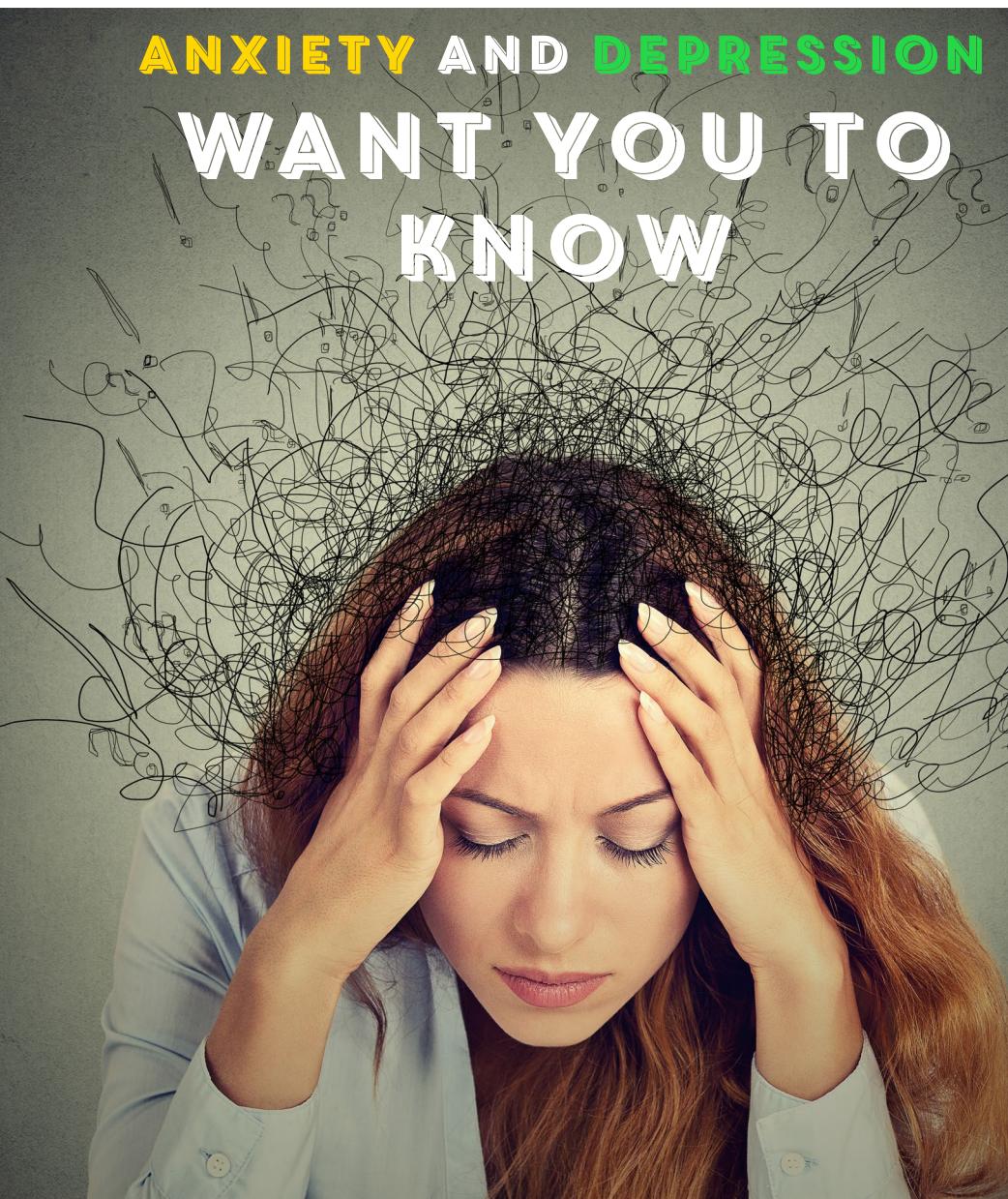
IF YOU COULD TELL YOUNG READERS ANYTHING, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM?

"If you want to [leave home], think about what your home life is like. Some kids come in for the night and play up for their parents. They think street life and drug taking are glamorous. They need to grow up."

If you're being abused I understand that. But start saving before you move out so you have money to fall back on. Have a plan of attack so you have a place to go to. Have some goals. Write it all down.

I've seen good men go under. If you get on the street you'll be in a bigger ditch then you are now."

WHAT PEOPLE WITH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION WANT YOU TO KNOW



Some days I'm scared and afraid of things but I still have to go on with my day and hold the fear in but some days I just can't. They say fresh air is good for you, but at the moment I'm deprived of it. Deprived of any air really. People around me are yelling and talking but I seem to not hear a word. My life is consumed by this demon that isn't always there but every now and then, it comes back to remind me it is here, to remind me I can't get rid of it. Nothing anyone says is going to make it better, nothing anyone does can make this better, and nothing ever can. People think they help me when I'm gasping for breath and they tell me to take deep breaths, which makes it worse. Everything people say makes it worse. If you want to help, just stay with me, stop me from going crazy because telling me to calm down and to not stress makes me feel like I am helpless, like no one is truly listening to me. My heart races like a car on the highest speed, my head pounds like a construction site, everything happening to me isn't normal. Never try to help by saying that it

is completely normal, and that everyone gets anxious. Of course everyone gets anxious but that does not mean everyone has anxiety. It is completely different and yet no one understands that sometimes this creeps up on us and attacks like a predator. This pain we feel is not masked by the fear of losing the people we love because they think we are weird or unusual. The people closest to us don't always understand why this happens to us or how we feel when it does. Some days though, I don't even know who I am, I don't want to know. I'm ashamed of myself because I'm not good enough and I never will be good enough. When people tell me to "just cheer up", how am I supposed to do that when someone I love doesn't take five minutes out of their lives to try and understand why I am so distant. They just think I am avoiding them, sometimes I do because I know that they don't understand me, they don't get why I am constantly in a state of depression. I can usually hide it but sometimes there are those days where I can't and everything gets on top of

me. Yes, I cry, like everyone. Because everyone cries, but not because they're sad, because they have been strong for too long, they can't hold it in anymore. When I sit down, staring off to space because I don't feel like talking to anyone, don't interrupt me, don't try to "bring me back down to earth", just wait because eventually I will collect myself and act like I am the elated person you all assume me to be. I am nothing like you expect me to be, I am not the person you think. I am me, someone who has too many feelings and not enough feelings, someone who never knows what to say, someone who has irrational fears that I never want to face.

by CHARLIE WESTWOOD



anxiety

BY: LUKE LITTLEJOHN

Anxiety, despite what people think, is not a simple feeling of butterflies that can be repressed by small pep-talks or motivational encouragements from other people or even oneself. No amount of

'just get over it' or 'face your fears' is going to fix said feelings and these types of things that people say when someone says that they have anxiety need to be revised at the least.

Dealing with feelings of anxiety, and even the onset of a panic attack does not, however, have to be such a scary, frightening ordeal. Although it may feel like your current plight will last forever and you may think it is your fault



and there is something wrong with you and many other fallacious thoughts, a change in mind-set towards these feelings and thoughts can bring about a surprising amount of positive change. This process takes time and isn't going to happen over-night, but it is highly beneficial and will make these feelings much easier to process.

The realization that it is just your body reacting to circumstances, which are often out of your control, can be immensely beneficial. Take the common cold for example; when you cough or sneeze you do not think 'what is wrong with me?' or any other similarly addictive and harmful thoughts. Nor do you blame your surroundings (you may blame the weather but realistically it cannot be helped and you hold no lasting disdain towards such things), you simply accept that this is the result of your body reacting to outside occurrences that are often out of control. No doubt it is clear the point that is about to be made; feelings of anxiety, and indeed of an impending panic attack, are just your body reacting to these outside stimuli in the same sort of way it

would the common cold. The conclusion that can be made here is that no one is particularly to blame, and while unpleasant, a simple acknowledgement of the feelings and an acceptance of said feelings are good ways to start to learn to effectively deal with them. Rather than letting the fear of anxiety and panic dictate the way in which you go about your life, accept that yes, you may have these feelings again and it is in fact quite likely. Instead of dwelling on and fearing this fact, realise that by accepting that this is the way your body is and although it isn't ideal, it is something that you know you can deal with and accept when it happens.

"easier said than done"

is an easy way to brush off what you have just read, but so be it. Brush it off. But if nothing else, take from this the idea that this sensory stimulation of outside circumstances that causes your body to react with anxiety and panic is not to be feared, but accepted and learned to be handled effectively over time. It is worth it.

HOW TO SOLVE THE EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION

BY: EMMA MUSCATELLO

Forcible displacement has become one of the 21st century's most defining and important issues. In 2015 the UNHCR documented 1.2 million applications for European Asylum, the majority of migrants originated from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.

Forcible displacement in the Middle East is rampant, with destabilisation of Syria under caliphate and civil war -- many residents have fled the oppressive and dangerously violent region -- with dreams of living in a country not in the midst of an intercontinental conflict, commandeered by extremist jihadist groups. The Schengen area is made up of 26 EU member states, which have abolished national border checks -- and

replaced them with an external system of border control. The EU initiative is arguably ineffective and unsystematic. I believe that a policy which calls for the co-ordinated implementation of internal border control wouldn't only be more effective in organising the mass influx of migrants but would be beneficial regulation of immigration between EU borders.

Under the Schengen Convention's Article 26 -- the EU member state an asylum seeker first enters is responsible. The policy is damaging to countries located on the outskirts of the Schengen region, most notably Italy, Greece and Hungary. All of which are still dealing with the momentous fallout of the

GFC.

With a high concentration of migrants in debt ridden countries, who are unable to deal with their own monetary ailments, and don't have the resources to accommodate asylum seekers -- the 'Carrier's responsibility' policy have proven itself to be both fiscally and politically damaging. The distribution of migrants should be decided on the accessibility of resources, fiscal diligence, willingness and capability of a state to accommodate, rather than placement being determined by geographical positioning. An amendment to the current regulation would be both beneficial to the individual in need and the nations which are

unable to afford the outputs required to house an excess of 1 million asylum seekers per year.

Most importantly, however, to help resolve the immigration crisis I propose governments and those concerned avert their attentions from the draconian fears of unsustainable immigration to Europe and an increase in Western terrorism in the next decade, -- and focus their attentions on the heart of the issue, to initiate the prevention of foreseeable European societal and economic instability.

Why are there more people seeking asylum than ever before in history? The root of the crisis lies in the civil conflicts, inter-continental disputes and authoritarian leaderships. There's no denying the illiberal caliphate and conflict in the Middle East is not complex and uneasy to solve. Since civil war began 2011, 5 million people have fled Syria, in fact during the summer of 2015, 4000 refugees crossed the Mediterranean Sea every day.

The Syrian people risk everything for a dream of a better life in Europe. In

an SBS documentary titled 'Our journey to Europe', it was said by one migrant on his way to Athens that if he were able to stay in his home country he would have. Ezra, a young girl on board a dinghy headed to Greece, fleeing Syria after her home had been bombed, commented "no one wants to leave their home country, and risk dying at sea".

Their accounts speak to the complexity and severity of the situation in Syria and surrounding countries. In 2014 the caliphate, made up of 15 jihadist groups -- took the lives of 10,000 innocent Syrian civilians. As of 2016 1 million people are living under siege in Aleppo and Duma.

As evident by these accounts the government's point of convergence should be discussing how resolve the civil conflicts and the pervasive force of the caliphate in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, which have caused not only mass forcible displacement, but 470,000 deaths in Syria alone this year. Engaging in 'direct diplomacy', direct discussion and negotiation with

leaders, President Ghani (Afghanistan), President al-Assad (Syria), Supreme leader Khomeini (Iran) and President Masum (Iraq), -- is paramount to the stabilisation of the Middle East, and imperatively the immobilisation of caliphate. A round table Western-Middle Eastern caucus being arguably more effective than any increase in the NATO - American military presence in the region.

The undeniable truth is that Europe cannot sustain the continual influx of approximately 1 million Middle Eastern refugees per year. For the benefit of those who have been afflicted by perpetual conflict and slaughter that threatens to tear their lives apart, we must recognise that this international humanitarian crisis can be solved, through governmental bi-partisanship and initiative the resolution of the EU immigration crisis is synonymous with the systematic design to disarm and debilitate incendiary forces who are determined to subvert stability in both the Middle East and Europe.

'Britain must stay in the European single market'

WHY IT IS IMPERATIVE THE UK KEEP A FOOT IN THE EU'S DOOR.

BY: EMMA MUSCATELLO



It was the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, who presented a plan for comprehensive European cooperation almost 67 years ago. Since then not only have the six founding fathers (Germany, France, Luxembourg, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium) run their industries under a common institution, but have headed a multilateral encompassing 28 nations. The European Union became a common magnate which not only grew to represent the genesis of continental partnership, but multilat-

eral economic and political success. In 1957, in acknowledgement of the success of the 1951 Coal and Steel Treaty, the Treaty of Rome was enacted. The legislation allowed the six Member States to expand their collaboration to various other economic sectors. Thus, inciting the creation of the European Economic Community, now known as the European Union. This accord allowed goods and services to move freely across the borders of the Member States, in what would become known

as the European Single Market. It wasn't until 1973 that Britain became a member of the Common Market, contributions thereafter were however profound. Great Britain became instrumental in the formation of the EEC's fiscal management branch, the European Commission -- to which the United Kingdom's monetary and legislative contributions were vital.

In Westminster today we observe the debate over whether Britain should remain in the

European single market, following July's Brexit vote. A pragmatic discussion on the reality of such a vital decision should be rife in the minds of young people across the world. The UK's unequivocal separation from the European Union and all its respective economic branches will effect the world market indefinitely. As such, we must evaluate what the future of what Europe and Britain look like as separate bodies.

The European Single market allows the UK access to a variant of established lucrative global markets

in combination with economic leverage. To eradicate all existing tariff-free trade deals, protocol, export and import negotiations - cultivated in the Single Market is argu-

able fiscally and politically irresponsible. With 52% of British citizens voting (in a poll) to stay in the Single Market, it seems likely the motion would pass in a parliamentary vote. Aversions to this contention seem to neglect the fact that reality of a proposed EU-UK economic disconnect would subvert the continuation of successful trade deals established with Canada, Japan, India and North America, not to mention the 28 Member State bloc.

Remaining in the Single Market would not only conserve the 44 year old political, economic and social ties between many core European States, but would benefit the 4.8 million self employed who suffered a 4.9% increase in unemployment rates from May to July of 2016, as a direct result of Brexit. In remaining, the UK is allowed access to a market worth an excess of £9 trillion (\$15.2 trillion AUD), 500 million customers, and key markets in the European Economic Area.

Instead of humouring suggestions of complete segregation from the EU. British parliamentarians

should recognise without equivocation, that isolationism only hinders modern economies, in our globalist-digital age, connectivity among the UK's 50 million and the EU's 500 million is exponentially lucrative and would provide a greater sense of national business confidence in Britain.

The May Government must ensure that the architecture of Brexit provides a platform for the United Kingdom and Europe.

In which the most advantageous economic outcome can be achieved; remaining a member of the European Economic Area, in the context of being part of the European Free Trade Association and the Single Market.

Miss Bertier

Chapter One: No Fair Wendy!

BY: GRACE ROUNDHILL

At times like this I wish I could be a 'Wendy' they always get picked by the most extraordinary guys like Peter Pan and Casper, oh what I would pay to find the love of my life... But like that will ever happen. Instead my mother named me Ryan after her celebrity crush Ryan Gosling. Reasoning behind this is because my mother and my dad both thought I was a guy before I was born and had planned to call me Ryan from the moment they knew they were expecting... too bad I turned out to be a blonde headed, hazel eyed baby girl. Sucks for them I guess.

"Ryan, get your butt down here this instant!"

The calls from my desperately lazy mother beckon me from downstairs. Before you get ahead of yourself no this is not another Cinderella spin off and no prince charming will not be waiting at the bottom of the stairs but what do await me are a long list of detentions and a lifetime of groundings.

"What is this!?" My mother half yells, half shrieks.

"And what is that?" I query innocently, it's not like I'm going to get away with it but might as well lessen the load.

"You've been given a detention 3 times a week

for a month now all from different teachers. What the hell is happening? Why the sudden change in attitude?" She pushes. I knew this day was coming; the day she found out her little goody two shoes angel was secretly a delinquent. And who's to blame me? My little buddy high school and I have never missed since day one, our relationships like chocolate and anchovies, dirt and casserole - you get where I'm heading right? "They provoked me mom. I can't stand it when teachers take the other kids side just because I throw the first punch."

"That's no excuse,

In fact that's worse than an excuse!" she spat "What exactly are you getting out of this?"

"I don't know...suspension, maybe even expulsion." I replied seriously. The day I actually enjoy school, would be the day hell freezes over.

"Well, guess what you get the exact opposite." She grins wickedly "I'm giving you a time limit if by the end of this semester you are not improving, I will not hesitate in the slightest to kick you out of this house and send you to South Korea to live with your Aunt Gale. And you know how strict she can get when it comes to...well everything."

Wow, my mother blackmailing me to go to school never thought I'd see the

day. Is it weird that I'm actually loving this punishment? It's probably the most attention she's given me since scoring a job as a female lead role in some popular drama.

"Fine."

"I'm glad you didn't put up more of a fight," she laughed evilly before turning on her heels and walking towards my dad's office. I guess he's home, it's either that or she's snooping around as per usual.

I heaved a sigh before trudging back to my room and crashing onto my king sized bed covered in a white duvet letting out a breath of air as I do so. I wish I had someone to tell all my problems to, but I being myself doesn't really help the fact that I'm friendless as hell. I did have one friend but I lost her and I could never get her back... I turn on my side and grab out the book I've currently been reading and lose myself in a world that is not my own tragedy.

Whilst I was reading my book I must've fallen asleep. The sky which was once pale blue has turned into a beautiful black canvas with specks of silver and dark clouds lingering on it.

I sighed in delight as I swung my legs over the edge of the bed and placed my book back onto my bedside table. I walked towards my door and headed for the stairs, the smell of food filled my nostrils and my lips suddenly quirked into a broad smile. Hey I may be skinny but I eat like a pig.

"Hey Maria, what's cooking good looking?" I question our housemaid as I rounded the corner that led to the kitchen.

When no one replied, I felt a bit weirded out. She should be in the kitchen. I look around at my surroundings and I could

clearly see that the stoves were still ignited and the oven was still on, so where the hell was Maria?

I searched the entire premises for her presence but I couldn't find her. In fact I couldn't find anyone. It's as though they all disappeared into thin air. But then again that's humanly impossible...isn't it? Nope I'm sure it definitely is impossible. Oh god here you go again, Ryan, talking to yourself like some crazy person when your entire household has been abandoned, you along with it.

My heart begins to pound in my chest as I run outside, the cold winter air slapping me across the face. I never knew wind could hurt, but hell yeah it does. I begin looking both ways before my eye's landed on the empty driveway. Oh god I'm stupid, they just went out. I mentally

slap myself at my stupidity.

After that was dealt with I looked down at my clothes, which consisted of some short pyjama shorts and an ordinary singlet. And that's when the winter air decides to engulf me. I freeze up like an ice sculpture; I didn't even have any shoes on so I had a big chance of getting frostbite.

I quickly scurried into the house and grabbed my phone sending a text message to Maria asking where she was. Why hadn't I thought of that first before running outside like the idiot I was?

I shivered on the spot whilst standing in front of the heater waiting for Maria's reply and thankfully she did.

I laughed at my overly dramatic nature. Of course I had to be over dramatic, I wouldn't be Ryan Bertier if I weren't.

I smiled happily to myself, as I remained planted to my spot next to the heater seeking its warmth. Something grasped my attention in the corner of my eye as I stood there shivering like a cow, it was a mirror that my mother had probably placed perfectly on the wall opposite of me. As I glanced into it I could see my reflection glancing back at me. My skin was a pale white but it was slowly gaining some sort of tan, not a very noticeable one but at least I was darkening from my previous ghostly skin colour. My blonde hair had its own birds nest going on and if I wasn't lazy I would have gone and fixed it. My eyes were a dull yet light brown and my lips were thin. But still with all these flaws of mine I still couldn't give a flying fudge about comparing myself

to these girls who thought 'perfection' is everything. I'm fine the way I am, even with this horrible boys' name looming over me.

School's its average torture, but today I actually have to put effort into the classes I'm attending. You hear that, Ryan Bertier actually trying in class! God this is like the most hilarious thing that's ever happened to me since grade 5 when Stacy Davidson was stuck upside down on a tree branch crying her butt off because she didn't know how to get down.

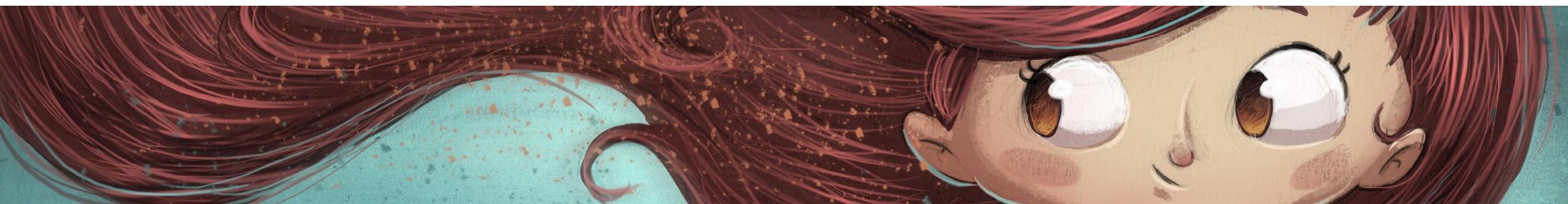
I sat down in math, this time at the front of class instead of the back, which earned me a few weird glances from fellow pupils and a very concerned look from my math teacher, Mr Raj. They were looking at me like I had aliens dancing on my head, is me

sitting in the front of the class really that strange?

"Morning, Mr. Raj" I greeted in the most obnoxious tone. I smiled in his direction as he hesitantly let his lips rise on either side.

"Morning, Ryan" he replied taking his seat in the front of the class. The bell rung at the exact moment he sat down. If I wasn't being forced to learn I would have entered 15 minutes after that bell and he really wouldn't have minded, so seeing me in his class early and in the very front row must have been slightly suspicious. He wasn't alone though, I think the whole class was on the same page.

Wow this is going to be a long day, and yet again lucky Wendy didn't have to suffer this kind of torture!





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Chapter Two: Damn I'm Good

I'm finally halfway through this nightmare aka school, and I can almost taste the freedom.

All I have left is lunch, and 2 more periods. Yep, I'm actually still in Wilson High after 3rd period isn't that a pip. Yeah I quoted in the night garden what's it to you?

I cautiously walk to the cafeteria, in truth I had absolutely no idea where it was so I just followed the swarm of people walking in the same direction and followed them mindlessly. I continued to trail behind the dead group of zombies with aching legs. I can't believe how slow this day has been. How am I supposed to survive this hell hole for another 2 years?

I stop pondering over my tragic life as I bump into a stupid brick pillar.

"Mother Huffer!" I curse as I rub my throbbing head "See this is why I hate school." I muttered to no one in particular, as I rose

to my feet. Who in their right mind built a solid pillar in the middle of the hallway anyway?

I punch the solid object harshly only for it to react with an 'oomph'!

"What the hell?!" The pole continues, damn I must be going crazy... my face pales as I look to see that I didn't actually run into a pole and that the idiots who actually built this school weren't total idiots after all. This makes me look somewhat stupid.

Ryan Carter stands before me in all his glory as he glares at me angrily. How was I supposed to know the stupid pole was Wilson High's most feared yet popular as all hell student?

"Your fault for standing there," I state as I make a move to walk past him only for him to grab my wrist roughly. I wince at the force but return to my unfazed facade.

"So you're not going

to apologize?" He asks baffled by my audacity.

"Ryan Bertier, doesn't apologize," I warn in a low voice.

"Well you're going to learn how to today," He spits with an intimidating bite.

"I don't think so, Carter" I put an emphasis on his last name.

"I don't hit girls Bertier, but I'll make an exception for you!" He says through gritted teeth.

"Ngaw, you don't have to do that. I don't deserve the special treatment." I fluttered my eyes in his direction as I spoke in a sickly sweet voice.

"Don't think so highly of yourself!" He pushes me away forcefully.

"That's rich coming from you Carter, haven't you ever heard the phrase 'Practice what you preach?'" I speak as I regain my balance. I look around to see a crowd gathered around the two

of us enclosing us within a circle.

"Well, at least I'm not failing in every class, you unintelligent hag!" He bites back. Did I mention we knew each other already? Well we do, we have known each other since we were in diapers in fact that douche's lovely mother aka Aunty Margaret also named him after Ryan Gosling, total coincidence...Not! it was planned days before our due dates sadly he came out a week before me making me the 'younger' one.

"Low blow dude, low blow." I lower my head in fake sadness; he didn't have to know that though.

"Cherry, I didn't me-" He begins to speak but I place my hand up in an act to shut him up. I look up to face him tears begin to form as I stare at him.

"Don't you dare speak, you self-obsessed prick." I say in a heartbroken tone as I turn to walk away from him, leaving him engulfed in guilt. I place my fist in my mouth as I turn away from him trying to muffle my laughter. Goddamn he's so gullible; I deserve a Grammy for that

performance. I definitely

received my acting skills from my mother's side of the family. But wait a minute...did he just call me 'Cherry'? I haven't heard him say that since the start of freshman year. Oh well it was probably just a slip of the tongue.

I walked to the front yard of our school and made my way to the old oak tree. I wipe my hand across the body of the tree as I reminisce over the last time I sat here. Tears threatened to fall as I thought about Lakyn, I really missed her presence, and without her I was nothing but a mere useless being in this large world of deceit. I needed her, now more than ever...

"Hey, you're Ryan right?"

I turn around to see a blonde headed beauty standing before me, if he was a pony I would definitely ride him-can you hear yourself right now

Ryan? Why do you have to be so perverted? -If you didn't know already I'm not very appealing to the human eye in terms of looks, but my personality could possibly be alright... I said 'could'.

"What Ryan exactly? There are 37 Ryan's

attending this school as of last week." I queried him as I tilted my head to the side in confusion, why was he talking to me out of all people. And how the hell did I know that stupid fact?

"Bertier." He said in a tone of finality.

"Well you've come to the right tree, how you doing sweet cheeks?" I winked in his direction, leaning against the tree in an act of coolness. I'm nervous all right, people just aren't my thing.

"I'm doing alright babe," He joked "Well I have to give you this book, you dropped it during math's. I don't think you want people reading it." He smiled kindly. Did my heart just stop? I could've sworn it had, like God dammit he's so fine!

"I'm in love," I say out loud on impulse, I furiously slapped my hand against my mouth realizing the words I had just openly spat out.

"I get that a lot," He chuckled; it was such a heavenly sound. I looked down at his outstretched hand and instantly noticed the book that was in it.

"My Diary?!" I squealed

as I snatched the book from his grabbers. I wrapped my arms around his neck and hugged him close to me unknowingly. The excitement just got to me, I've been looking for it everywhere. I noticed his figure stiffen underneath my hold and quickly released him.

"Sorry," I apologized as I blushed furiously.

"I-it's fine" He rubbed the back of his neck nervously his muscles flexed as he did so. Mhm, don't mind if I do. It was only then that I noticed he was blushing too and I laughed.

"Why you got to
be so cute for?" I
asked in a baby
tone as I squeezed
his strangely mus-
cular cheeks.

"S-stop it" He
chuckled as he play-
fully slapped my hands
away from his face.

"Well I have another class to get to, wouldn't want to get a tutor now, would I?" I stated as I started to walk back into the school. I came to a stop when I realized something.

"I didn't catch your name!" I yelled at the undeniably hot guy who was still in the same spot I left him in.

"That's because I didn't throw it to you!" He retorted, I smiled at this but put on a childish act.

"Be that way." I huffed and stomped my feet dramatically as I trudged my way back into the hallway of the dead.

"I'm joking, the names Bond, James Bond!" He called back making me stop in my tracks.



"You're lying right?" I queried as I turned on my foot to look at him with a

*Hang in there
Bertier.*

"Nope, my dad's last name is bond and my mum's grandfather was James put two and two together and you get my un-

original name.” He smiled; he was slowly making his way towards me so that we didn’t need to yell at each other from a far.

"That's just too cliché for my liking, but you're lucky your extraordinarily hot." I smiled. I wonder where the nervous me went to because I was seriously rocking this confident Ryan.

"You better get to class Ryan." James suggested as he nodded towards the school doors. Oh shivers I totally forgot!

I quickly sped towards the hall of the dead and towards my locker to retrieve my sketch book for art. The day is almost complete, and I am already drained both physically and

SOME TUNES bring back the wrong kind of **MEMORIES STORY**

BY BLANCA PADROS QUINTANA

Some tunes bring back the wrong kind of memories... what if I told you that the song 'Sk8r boi' by Avril Lavigne is very relatable to my love experience this year... just changing the "boy" to a girl. The song came on the radio about an hour ago; and it got me thinking...

To explain this story, I'll take you to the end of last year. I met Erik sometime in October, and I instantly had a crush on him; only based on looks though. Stereotypical and pretty much cliché, right? Well; cliché doesn't even start to explain it. Erik got his best friend with him that day to go to the place we met up. It turns out that his friend Harry was the one who at the end of the day told Erik that I was hot. Now THAT'S cliché! (love triangle alert) ...

Both Erik and Harry are in another year level; only

one higher than me. After the summer holidays my best friend Natalie and I met up with the boys again on the Friday of the first week of school. After a really cool and fun hang out Harry and Erik invited Nat and I to hang out with them on the weekend. We went to the park on the Saturday and on the way back to Harry's house we went for a pizza and some things to eat.

After we had some fun dancing around at Harry's house Erik had to leave and Natalie and I decided to stay and have a talk with Harry. We then decided to meet up early in the morning the next day, to go to the beach because the weather was amazing.

After we left Harry's house Nat and I went back home and I was obsessing over the fact that I was going on a beach day with Erik... what I did not know

is that at the same time Erik and Harry were having their own little conversation over the phone. Basically Erik saw that day an opportunity for Harry to ask me out.

Beach day... oh yeah; a lot of fun. Nat, Erik and I met up at her house in the morning and went to go pick Harry up and go to the beach. When we got there it was really, really hot so the boys decided to

go straight into the water. Natalie and I stayed in the beach tent until the boys came back to us. We all decided to jump from the peer and we had a lot of fun playing a version if piggy-in-the-middle with a tennis ball and other games.

A bit later we got hungry so we decided to go buy fish and chips for lunch. Nat and Harry went to the shops and Erik and I stayed in the beach. What

I didn't know is that Erik was trying to get me with Harry and in the contrary Natalie was trying to get me with Erik... (back at it again with the cliché right...?)

On the Monday after the beach day in recess, Harry unsuccessfully attempted to ask me out; I said "no". Weirdly enough Natalie arranged a walk in the park with Erik and myself. She basically told Erik that I needed to tell him something; while she also told me that Erik had to tell me something. Okay so we got to the park and after a bit Nat disappeared and left us alone, (side note to this: Erik and I are the stubbornest people I know), so Erik wanted to hear what I wanted to tell him but at the same time I wanted him to tell me what he wanted to say.

After 2 hours and a half of stubborn pointless arguing we both had to go home because both of us were really late. Erik then made a joke of "well Melanie; if you're not going to tell me I need to go..." and started drifting away from me. After he saw the reaction on my face he came back laughing and stayed quiet for a few minutes. "look Erik I'm really late for my curfew, if you're not going to say anything I'm leaving

now...". I started to walk off and Erik held me back and said "nah please don't go...". I looked at him, but said nothing. "look; I'll just say it straightforward... do you want to go out?". There. Just like that. Wow. This was the first time I actually got what I wanted... the guy I had a crush on had asked me out...

The next few weeks felt like a fairy tale, always hanging out with our common friends; having fun and walking having deep talks about issues and problems... I learned a lot because I barely knew about computers -let alone knowing how to type on my laptop! And he showed me about his

I looked at it as an opportunity to deal with my depression issues and said

YES.

wait... "are you joking??" that's all I could say. Oh my god... Mel you're an idiot. "naah its totally a joke" I looked at him thinking 'whaaat???'... Erik laughed "nah I'm kidding so yes or no?". I just stared laughing because it is what I usually do when I'm completely nervous. Anyway; he ended up hugging me and I said yes (of course I did!!!).

games and little tricks and shortcuts on computers ... and he showed me all these things, he got me out of my depression and I basically forgot about it all... but all good things must come to an end.

Sadly, Erik broke up with me after 2 months and a half. He was peer pressured into doing so and when I found out I snapped at all of our

friends. I mean they had made 'Melik' break up... And this is where the cliché kicks in a lot: I got gradually closer to Harry that same week because it was a safe option; resulting on him asking me out by the end of the week.

While we were dating at the beginning Erik got really mad at me for going with someone else so quickly and he got mad at his best friend for asking me out. He was jealous about the fact that he never got to do the fun stuff I was doing with Harry. All the kind of things confused teenagers go through... About 3 months into Harry's and my relationship, Erik started to come back to me as friends. I kept on repeating to myself that some pieces of the puzzle of life needed to fall apart at some point to fall back together

at the right time...

As soon as that song finished I started to think about writing this story; which is technically an anecdote... but yeah sometimes a song can stir up feelings and then this happens. As I said before; this song is very relatable at the moment.

At some points I would have liked to have friends to talk to about all this confusing chain of events; but at the end of the day, this story results as a part of the rollercoaster that teenagers go through in life. You have a group of friends and everything is so cool... then some people in that group fall in love and the group starts falling apart if that relationship goes wrong. And then a lot of factors go into that group tearing up; things like misunderstandings and betrayals are the

most common... after all this the most important things to take into account are that things will happen if they need to; and things will fall apart and fall back together with time... you really cannot force these things to happen.

Relationships and friendships play a large role in every teenagers' life. So if you're stuck in some really confusing argument with a friend, or if you are in a relationship you don't want to be in because of one factor or another... just know that you're not the only one and that you're definitely not alone; everyone makes mistakes and everyone goes through depression and think that it's never going to end. But it does; you get through it, with the help of supportive friends and by talking about it.



A YOUNG PERSON. STUDYING YOUNG PEOPLE

By: Emily Hynes

My name is Emily and I have recently completed my studies and graduated from a Bachelor of Youth Work at Victoria University. For those of you who don't know, Youth Work specifically studies and works with, young people aged between 12-25 years old. When I first started my bachelor, I was fresh out of the stresses of year 12 and quickly became a motivated 18 year old about to start the big bad world of University! The next 3 years flew by and before I knew it, I was 22 and graduating.

The journey of being a young person, while studying young people and how to work with them, was a tricky one but so interesting. It was diverse, as a number of mature students were studying youth work but there was still a wide range of ages, a lot fitting into the 12-25 year old category. My experience may have been different to other young people, but it was really beneficial for me to learn while experiencing it myself and through people I know (I personally found it a lot easier than taking notes off a power-point). You'd be learning about risk taking behaviour and have little giggles because

you had just experienced your friends doing that on the weekend. In saying that though, it made me more aware of the consequences and what the long term effects could be of different behaviours that young people show and activities they take part in. It was almost like I had a sneak peek into my own life and got to see how my own brain and all other young people's brains were working. I'd find myself becoming more understanding to my own thoughts and my friends and what they were going through. There was a class that we had attended that was purely based on how

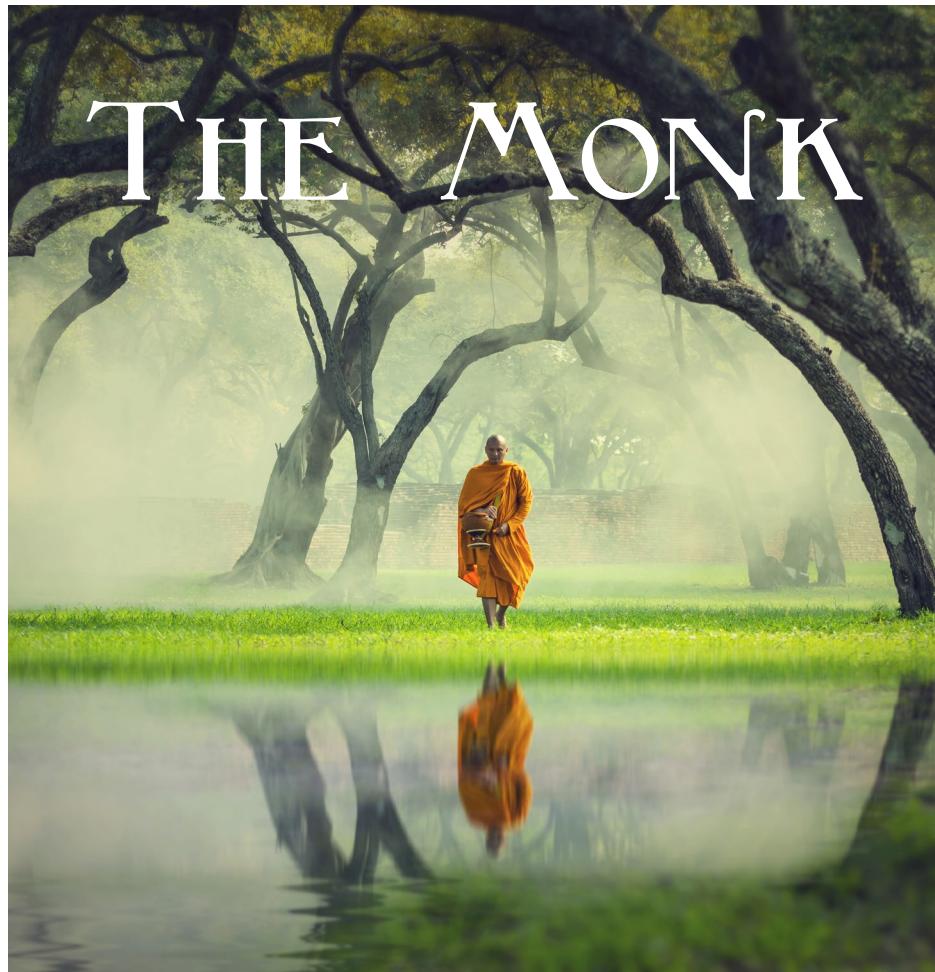
to talk to young people, strategies and sentences to use when they come to see Youth Workers. I became very aware of how I was talking to everyone and even started using those strategies in my own life to my friends. It's a difficult balance, but it was such a fun unit to study. Like any university experience, you meet so many great people but something stood out to me about the students who were studying youth work. They are an amazing group of people who share a common interest in helping young people, which I found the most incredible thing about studying Youth Work.

During my last year, I applied to work at Youth Services here in Hobsons Bay. Growing up in Hobsons Bay and being a young person, it made sense to start my career in the place I call home. Luckily enough, I got the position and soon understood why I loved studying so much. Studying youth work was so great, I enjoyed going to all my classes and actually paid attention (I know, how crazy!), but there was something that just pulled me in and once I became a Youth Worker I soon knew why. The best way I describe my job to anyone is with the saying "Choose a job you love and you'll never work a day in your life", and it is seriously how I feel. You get to meet some incredible young people with such ambitious life goals and groups of young people who will do whatever they can to change the world just that little bit. Now being 22, and still a young person, I found it really beneficial to use my age as a tool. I will generally understand what

young people like, or what they do on the weekends, because it's what I like to do. For some young people, being the same age has eliminated the authority vibe that they may feel when they first meet you. It's also allowed me to get to know young people and engage them in a relaxed environment such as our Battle of the Bands night, drop in centres, camps and many other activities.

Being at Hobsons Bay Youth Services has been such a journey. We have recently moved into a new building, the Newport Community Hub, which is an exciting time for Youth Services as we finally have our own space. So what better to do with a new Youth Services space, than to fill it with a PlayStation, Xbox's, vintage arcade games and table tennis! Stuff that we know us young people love. So, now that I've got your attention feel free to come visit and have a look around. Now, that I'm famous and in a magazine you are more than welcome to

ask for me at reception. In all seriousness, Youth Services is a great place. The people are incredible and lovely, the space is so welcoming and we provide so much for Young People. We have the Youth Lounge open every day, study spaces, groups that you can join such as our Westside FReeZA Committee who put on music events for Hobsons Bay and young people. There is also the Leaders of Today group, who work together with staff to plan events or activities to advocate of behalf of other young people in Hobsons Bay. If you are interested in anything we do, please don't hesitate to call us at 9932 4000 or come down to the Newport Community Hub at 13 Mason St, Newport. We are more than happy to help with anything you need. If you are interested in studying Youth Work and would like any of your questions answered you can contact me directly on 9932 4024 or email at ehynes@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au



The monk walked with measured steps down the heavily vegetated stray path that led to the blood soaked valley, which in turn, cut through the sharp and deadly rocky hills that promised him water in turn for the arduous journey still ahead.

Many days past for the young monk. His feet, swollen and cracked from the journey.

After what felt like an eternity, the ever faithful monk reached the river of truth.

The monk, who had been living on the bare

minimum of food and water, rushed towards the rushing current of the glistening river.

The monk, thirsty and tired from his journey, un-hesitantly took a sip of the sacred water.

The monk rose, he observed the wilderness

around him to look for signs from his god.

But alas, no such signals were to be found.

Willingly, the inexperienced monk sat down on a nearby log to gather his wits.

In the middle of his meditation, the foolish monk heard a whisper.

The monk, clearly thrown by the noise, stood up and looked around hastily.

Alas, the source of the noise was unknown to him.

He sat down again and ignored the strange voice.

A few minutes later, he heard it again, this time, louder. With each time he ignored it, it became louder and louder and clearer to the point that a single sentence could be made out

"Doth thou know thyself well?" An eerie laugh followed soon after.

The monk, blinded by fear, rushed towards the trees in which he sort out cover.

As darkness fell upon the forest, the red of the lunar eclipse bathed the shrubbery in a dense and heavy crimson.

The lifeless trees, their shadows, took on a life of their own, free from their routines that had entangled them in a ritual that

was performed every day since the trees birth.

The shadows danced around their masters as the wildlife cower in fear for what the moon had in store for the quiet forest.

The monk, oblivious to the moon, wandered further into the fearful woods.

As he walked deeper, he felt the sensation of being watched.

The monk, overcome with fear, broke his vow of silence and spoke for the first time in over a year.

"Prey thee, who be there!?" he shouted

At that moment he covered his mouth as he heard the words of his god.

His once yellow robes now stained with the crimson of his master's blood as the heavens boomed "speak no evil, hear no evil, see no evil".

The ground shook with the tremors of his god.

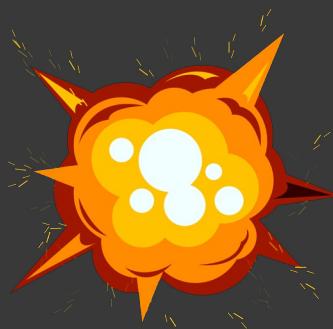
Buddha, carved from granite and limestone, rose from the grief stricken forest to confront the sinner.

The monk, fearful of what his god will do to him, dropped to the floor and began to pray.

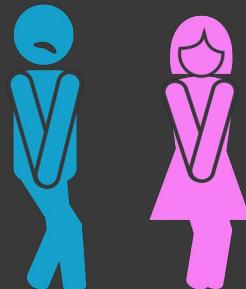
**JACKSON
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DID YOU KNOW?



4. If the Sun were to explode, we would not know for approximately 8 minutes.



12. There are no public toilets in Peru.



6. An ostrich egg would take four hours to boil.



5. August 13th has been celebrated as 'Left-Handers Day' since 1996.



3. Polar bears eat as many as 86 penguins in one sitting.



2. A flock of crows is called a murder.



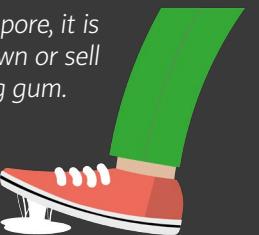
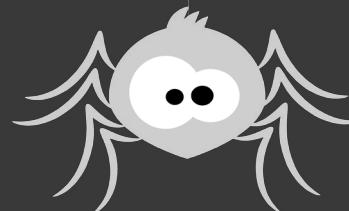
1. The average person walks the equivalent of five times around the world in their lifetime.



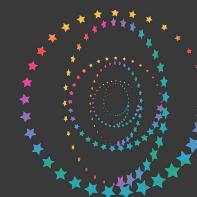
11. All polar bears are left handed.



10. Pepsi-Cola was originally called 'Brad's Drink'.



7. In Singapore, it is illegal to own or sell chewing gum.



13. Neutron stars can spin at a rate of 600 rotations per second.

8. Everyday more money is printed for Monopoly than the U.S. Treasury prints.



9. Fried spiders have been said to taste like nuts.



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would like to invite you to take part in a Learn to Sail Scholarship over the winter school holidays. This **free** event is open to 7– 18 year olds who can swim. Bring along brothers, sisters & friends to join in the fun on & off the water.

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JOANNE RYAN MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR LALOR

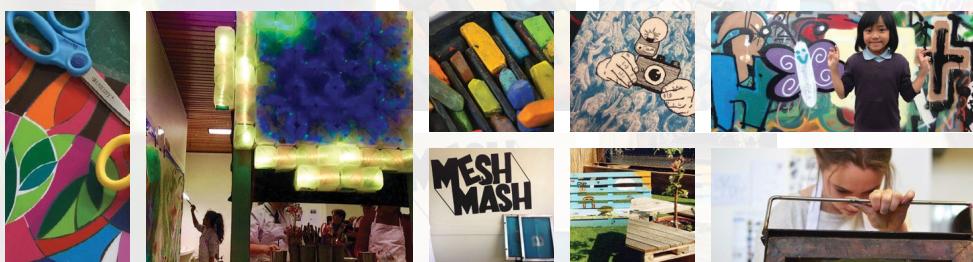
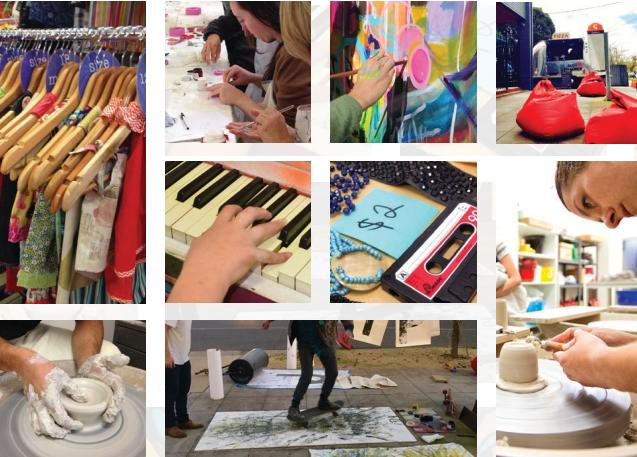
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As a former school principal I know local young adults as motivated and engaged. Sometimes you may need assistance with federal matters, such as workplace issues, queries about Centrelink and housing support. Don't hesitate to contact my office with any queries.



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