English

2014 Senior External Examination: Assessment report

Statistics

Year	Number of candidates	Level of achievement				
		VHA	HA	SA	LA	VLA
2014	67	3	14	30	15	5
2013	79	0	7	45	23	4
2012	106	1	13	48	36	8
2011	85	4	14	40	25	2
2010	117	0	18	70	23	6

Responding to task demands

Candidates must ensure that responses address the demands of each question. In a number of instances in 2014, candidates demonstrated an adequate knowledge of appropriateness of textual features for purpose, genre and register but their choices in selecting and synthesising relevant subject matter impacted a range of criteria. This was most evident in a lack of evidence of:

- control of the patterns and conventions of genres
- relevant argument and evidence
- interpreting, inferring from, analysing and evaluating information, ideas, argument and images
- examining how discourses in texts are shaped by language choices
- evaluating how cultural assumptions, values, beliefs, and attributes underpin texts
- evaluating representations of concepts and of the relationships and identities of individuals, groups, times and places
- analysing how readers are invited to take up positions.

Criterion 1 — Knowledge and control of texts in their contexts

Success in this criterion is achieved when candidates show an awareness of how meanings in texts are shaped by purpose, cultural context and social situation.

Candidates were rewarded for demonstrating their ability to:

- discriminate in the selection of subject matter
- exploit the conventions of genres for particular purposes
- substantiate analysis with appropriate and well-balanced evidence
- analyse texts, ideas and issues
- respond to the demands placed on them through the roles and relationships adopted when responding to particular questions.

Criterion 2 — Knowledge and control of textual features

Success in this criterion is achieved when candidates show an awareness of appropriateness of textual features for purpose, genre and register.

Candidates were rewarded for demonstrating their ability to:

- logically and cohesively organise and arrange ideas
- control spelling, punctuation and paragraphing
- use clause and sentence structures for effect
- maintain grammatical accuracy
- use a wide range of vocabulary including figurative uses.

Criterion 3 — Knowledge and application of the constructedness of texts

Success in this criterion is achieved when candidates show an awareness of the ways in which texts are selectively constructed and read.

Candidates were rewarded for demonstrating their ability to:

- make choices that invite the reader to take up intended positions
- analyse how readers are invited to take up positions
- evaluate and/or shape representations
- examine how cultural assumptions, values, beliefs and attitudes underpin texts.

Resources and required texts

Candidates are required to study a range of texts to prepare for the examination, specifically:

- expository texts, e.g. analytical, persuasive, reflective, argumentative, satirical
- two to four prose texts, including at least one novel and one work of non-fiction (such as a biography/autobiography, memoir or substantial expository or analytical text)
- one to two drama texts (in most cases one Shakespearean play), e.g. scripted drama, television and film scripts
- media texts, e.g. CDs, internet, films, documentaries, television programs. Candidates should specialise in one medium for purposes of the examination (i.e. one medium selected from print, including newspapers and/or magazines, radio, television, advertising, both print and electronic)
- 10–12 poems including a range of poetic forms, selected from lyric, narrative and dramatic poetry, across cultures and time.

Sample responses

Sample essay responses that met the A or B standard as defined in the assessment criteria have been included. They have been reproduced exactly as written and therefore include any spelling or grammatical errors made by candidates.

Paper One Part A

Question 1 — Novel: Imaginative response to literature

Topic chosen — 1A

Title — *The Great Gatsby*

Author — F Scott Fitzgerald

Thirty — the promise of a decade of loneliness. I feel that loneliness alreddy, as I stand here in silence, overlooking Gatsby's grave. My list of single men to know has diminished by one. As I feel over the breast pocket of my black suit, lightly fingering the meddle that Jay Gatsby was awarded during the Great War, from 'little Montenegro', I reflect on his triumphs and downfalls. His biggest downfall of all being that he wanted too much. Gatsby paid a high price for lingering too long on an unobtainable dream, a dream of repeating the past.

I had tossed half-sick between grotesque reality and savage, frightening dreams. To Gatsby, his dreams had seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp them. I couldn't bear to shake him of his last hope. I had known that his romantic readiness and his gift for hope would never have allowed him to listen to my advice and were dangerous in this intractably unfair society. 'Don't ask too much of her", I had warned. "You can't repeat the past". It was an attemp in vain. "Can't repeat the past?", he had cried incedulously. "Why of course you can".

Like always, I had taken an objective side on the matter, allowing him to do just that. Gatsby's greatest attribute, his gift for hope, is what led to this tragic and lonely ending.

Gatsby had believed in the green light, the orgiastic future of an upper crusty life that his golden girl, Daisy, would make him a part of. Daisy had been Gatsby's golden ticket to the pretentious world of 'old money'. To young Gatz that yaught had represented all of the beauty and glamour in the world. To an older Gatsby, Daisy had represented old money and the supreme life that the American Dream had promised. It was, after all, that voice that had held him most. I will always remember that he had pointed out that, "her voice is full of money".

Could Gatsby really be blamed though? The Jazz Age brought the promise of equality and equal opportunity. Anyone who worked hard for what they wanted was told they would get it. Careless attitudes were typical of this period of decadence and depravity. These careless attitudes were exemplified by Daisy and her husband, Tom Buchanan. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy — they tore up things and creatures.

In this time of equality and opportunity, Gatsby had been foolish to think that he could buy back the past with new money and lavish displays of wealth. Tom had to point out that he had the 'real' wealth and that Gatsby's questionably attained wealth was not equal. "We were born different", Tom had pointed out, as tension reached a fever pitch that ran parallel with the heat of that blistering summer day. With those words, Daisy was lost to Gatsby, forever. Gatsby's grasp on the enchanted green light began to slip and fall away like before, the past truly had repeated itself. Daisy vanished back into her rich house, her rich full life. Leaving Gatsby to travel alone again along the short-cut from nothing to nothing. The too obtrusive fate that had appalled her from the start.

In my younger and more vulnerable years, my father gave me some advice that I have been turning over in my mind ever since. At twenty-nine, Jay Gatsby gave me some advice that I will be turning over in my mind from now on. "Of course you can, old sport." I remember his smile, always irresistably prejudiced in my favour. He may have been lost in the pursuit of an unworthy dream but Gatsby was truly great. He was the ultimate self-made man, the Great Gatsby. I could have tried harder to shake him but that's no matter. So I beat on, for him, my boat against the current, trying ceaselessly to channel his greatness and be borne back into the past.

Topic chosen — 1A

Title — *The Book Thief*

Author — Markus Zusak

Jesus, Mary and Joseph: It's cold in Stalingrad today! I don't know if we can take it much longer … I don't know if I can take it much longer. The cold is slowly killing us — it seems like death is inevitable now. If we don't die from the lack of food, it will be from the lack of ammunition. If we don't die from the cold, it will be from infection.

I honestly cannot stand that 'old, decrepit' excuse for a German! I don't know how my poor mother puts up with that 'Juden Maler' sometimes! It's because of non-Germans like him that our people have suffered. I bet if I was a Jew he would care though! He's always helping them, but does he help his family? Does he help Germany? No!

I just don't understand, why hasn't he joined the 'Party' yet? Us real Germans are fighting … dying, here to save Germany — 'to clean out the garbage' and 'make ourself great'. It's one thing

to ‘sit around waiting for the new world to take you with it’, but I’m not going to sit in silence watching that ‘coward’ take my family down with him. If he’s going to teach Liesl how to read then the least he can do is not indoctrinate her with ‘the trash’ of ‘their vermin race’. She should be reading great German masterpieces, like ‘Mein Kampf’! It’s because of non-Germans like him that ‘our country was taken for a proverbial ride’. That coward! He’s ‘never cared about this country’! He’s ‘never cared about The Fuhrer’! But the ‘Third Reich’ saved us — Hitler saved us … Hitler is making us great.

If my father had his way, my family, Liesl and all of Germany would go down the drain. He just wants to see Germany suffer at the hands of ‘die Juden’ and ‘their vermin race’. If he wants to throw himself out with ‘the garbage’ then he should go right ahead! He never wants to see Germany make itself great — he never wants to see ‘Deutschland Uber Alles’! That coward! I wouldn’t even be surprised if that ‘Jew-lover’ was hiding one of his beloved pieces of garbage in our basement. Not only does he make our family suffer financially, now he risks my mother and Trudy’s lives for the sake of a Jew! Jesus, Mary and Joseph! What is wrong with that ‘saubere’! He never ‘takes part’ in anything — besides helping them of course! He spends all day rolling cigarettes and playing that stupid accordion of his, whilst my poor mother has to embarrass herself by doing the laundry for all those on Grande Strasse. He is an excuse for a German — an embarrassment to ‘our master race’!

But if ‘The Fuhrer’ has forbidden the 6th Unit’s surrender, then I shall fight proudly. I will stand in arms with my fellow Germans — my true brothers. I will hold my defensive and not run away in cowardice. I will fight for the salvation and supremacy of the Western World — of the Aryan world … of our master race! If I die, I will die a hero … a German. Not a coward like my non-German, Jew-loving father. I am not a coward. I am a soldier. I am a German, and I will make ‘The Fuhrer’ proud!

Paper One Part B

Question 2 — Drama: Persuasive/reflective response to literature suitable for a public audience

Topic chosen — 2A

Title — *Hamlet*

Author — William Shakespeare

Good morning, fellow members of the Brisbane College Drama and Arts Association. Today is debate day and we will each be defending the actions of a character from William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. To start things off, I invite you to see that the way in which the play’s protagonist, Hamlet, the prince of Denmark, acts is unarguably just. Hamlet is faced with the task of exacting revenge and does so because doing so was expected of him, murdering King Claudius was necessary as a part of Hamlets duty to the state. One must not judge Hamlet’s actions too harshly for he is an accurate reflection, in many ways, of modern-day people.

In Shakespeare’s England, the justice system relied on a son to take on his masculine role and murder the man responsible for his father’s death. The cycle of violent retribution lies at the heart of all good revenge tragedies and all good post-modern century princes. Young Hamlet has his masculinity compared to that of his rival, Young Fortinbras of hot blooded and angry unimproved metal and steel who hath slayn and, is leading an army to War for land. Hamlet has to avenge his

father's death because, "If his thoughts not be bloody, they be nothing worth." As the ghost told him, he "must not let the royal bed of Denmark" become a "couch for luxury and dammed incest." It is Hamlet's personal duty to murder the new king, as punishment for his most "foul and unnatural murder."

Hamlet is motivated to exact revenge not only for personal reasons or to prove himself to be as good a man as his more 'active' counter-part, Fortinbras, but as his duty to the state dictates. Denmark, under the rule of Claudius is repeatedly associated with corruption and disease. The play's tragic ending is foregrounded on many occasions, "this bodes some strange eruption to our state", "all is not well." This "piece of work" Claudius, is presented as being the principle source of immorality and depravity that pervades Denmark; the "something rotten." Claudius, the usurper, came by the throne illegally, meaning that he is not 'vice-regent' to God and "nothing good can come" from his continued hold on the throne. It is, therefore, Hamlet's responsibility to Denmark to oust the man whose crime will cause nothing but death and destruction. In reality, the entire royal family dies as a result of the crime of one man, Claudius. If anything, Hamlet should have killed him sooner, as he is "justly served" for it is a "poison tempered himself" as Shakespeare had Laertes put it.

The Bard portrays Hamlet's character as timelessly relatable. Hamlet experiences plights and emotions inherent to human life, making it easy for audiences to relate closely to him and see that his actions are ones that you, yourself probably experience. Hamlet has to make decisions, just like you. Hamlet is a good person who doesn't believe everything that ghosts tells him, just like you. Hamlet wants to distinguish Claudius's guilt before murdering him, the way that I assume you would. The prince comes from a dysfunctional family, "a little more than kin and less that kind," as he puts it. He experiences feelings of self doubt and hatred "Oh! What a rogue and peasant slave am I … Am I a coward? I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall." Allow me to defend the play's protagonist's actions by saying this: Would you not have done, or at least felt the same?

Hamlet's actions were just. Men whose fathers were murdered had the personal responsibility of avenging their father's deaths. Claudius did not legally hold the mandate to rule. In order to save Denmark from depravity, Claudius had to be ousted. Hamlet is just a man that exhibits flaws, motives and feelings inherent to that of men in contemporary society. You may love him not, but you must not judge him for merely doing what was asked of him, what was right, and what, undoubtably, you would have done too. Thank you.

Topic chosen — 2B

Title — *Blackrock*

Author — Nick Enright

Over the course of the past twenty years, Australia has undergone significant cultural change in its value and treatment of women. However, despite there being noticeable improvement in the treatment of women at macro-social level, sexually exploitative imagery, gender inequality, and domestic violence still remain ubiquitous within societal ideologies and media campains.
A recently conducted nation-wide survey by 'VicHealth', evidences the still existing need for societal reform — with one in six believing that when a woman says "no" they actually mean "yes", and a disturbing number of Australians who are prepared to justify the actions of rapists and shift the blame on to the victims. Such norms are clearly evident in the depiction of females in Nick Enright's play, and subsequent film, "Blackrock".

"Blackrock" explores a depraved teenage subculture that is influenced by pervasive chauvinistic ideologies, which are exhibited within their community. This is shown through the community's

response to the brutal gang rape and murder of a 15 year old girl, Tracey Warner. Rather than apportioning blame to the rapists themselves, the small coastal town holds Tracey responsible for her own assault, and ultimately her murder. The play reflects a society defined by male hegemonic beliefs and female objectification, in which females are reduced to the objects of male desire, pleasure and demand. In such a society, female self and social worth is exclusively based on their physical appearance and or readiness to provide sexual favours.

The play typifies a misogynistic culture, in which young men are instilled with notions of hyper-masculinity, reinforcing the notion that male gender identity is based on physical aggression, emotional repression and sexual dominance. “Blackrock” has a carefully constructed script in both the play and film, that contains complex characters that are representative of motivations valued in recent history. This is most evident in the character of Tracey’s grief-stricken best friend, Cherie, whose atypical actions — in her refusal to accept female’s traditional subservience, obedience and passivity — come to represent one of the scripts’ main subplots.

The opening scene between male protagonist, Jared Kirby, and his cousin, Cherie, sets the tone for the play’s exploration of male dominance and female subjection. Cherie expresses interest in learning how to surf, to which Jared derisively responds with “Girls can’t do it. Wrong centre of gravity.” The script’s central issues ensue following a beach party filled with alcohol-fuelled revelry that culminates in Tracey’s death. From the outset of both works, Enright positions the audience to view Cherie as an outlier, although initially participating in sexually provocative behaviour, she is the only girl who is emblematically styled in a relatively masculinised way. This is most evident in the cinematic depiction of Cherie, where prior to the party, her and her friends are shown getting ready on a bridge — Cherie arrives wearing a gender-neutral outfit but then reveals a provocatively short dress underneath. Although this was inherently done to elude her mother, it is clear that she still wishes to ‘fit in’ and be accepted like the rest of her female class group. The play similarly depicts Cherie’s divergent nature in Scene Six, when one of the boys attempts to dance with her, but she declines rather choosing to dance with her friends. The boy’s response demonstrates that men in the community view women in one of two ways; those who comply with their societal ‘role’ as sexual subjects are often hypocritically branded a “slut”, whilst those like Cherie, who defy their expected submissive ‘role’ are labelled a “lezzo”.

A pivotal point in Enright’s character portrayal of Cherie is in Scene Twelve, where Cherie lies at Tracey’s gravesite. It is the culminating point in which Cherie decidedly states ‘this is wrong’, implying that she is no longer prepared to conform to the societal role of females that is stipulated by the community. Enright positions the audience to sympathise with Tracey through the character of Cherie; motivated to avenge Tracey’s death Cherie challenges the chauvinistic ideologies that pervade the Blackrock community.

Cherie is idiosyncratic in her rationality, responsibility, loyalty and strong sense of morality. She refuses to yield to the controlling nature and social demands of the men in her community, and is similarly defiant of her mother’s notions of her traditional female role. However it would be incorrect to assume that these patriarchal principals are limited to the male population, this is typified when Cherie’s mother, Glenys, says (in reference to Cherie): “She’s got to learn the way the world works … ”.

Enright gives us an insight into the highly polarised society of Blackrock, which sees violence and female objectification as acceptable. However Enright rejects the idea that women are just passive, sexual objects through the character of Cherie — who constantly challenges the core ideals of the Blackrock community. The nexus between subservience and dominion are what directly allow such cultures to persist, this is particularly relevant in today’s society, where the socio direction of mass media serves to perpetuate harmful ideologies. In accordance with

'VicHealth's' report, young men aged 16–25 are statistically most likely to condone and trivialise sexual dominance and violence towards women. Therefore Australia must acknowledge the still existing inequality among genders, and set upon such need for societal reform, in order to secure a truly egalitarian future.

Paper One Part B

Question 3 — Non-fiction prose: Persuasive/reflective response to literature suitable for the mass media or for speaking and/or presenting to an audience, specific or general

Topic chosen — 3A

Title — *My Place*

Author — Sally Morgan

Dear readers,

Since the Fremantle Arts Centre published my book, *My Place*, in 1987, I have successfully sold over five hundred thousand copies. Pioneering in tracing and publicising a personal history of Aboriginal Australia, I have recieved an overwhelmingly positive reaction from the public. However, some maintain that my book emphasises white guilt or 'lays blame'. As I said during my recent interview with television host Peter Ross, my book is not an angry book or a bitter book. I develop a powerful argument for recognition, racial tolerance and pride in Aboriginal history by speeking the truth ("Can't put no lies in a book" — Nan) and allowing my cross-generational family to recount their lives in their own words.

In part, the invited reading that Aboriginal history is a part of Australia's history, that should be recognised, comes from my most pertenant theme, the need to belong. As I discover my place and my family's secrets, I discover my people's rightful place in history and the nation's secrets. "I have a right to know my history", I had expressed. Since the pastoral industry was built on the back of slave labour — the slaves being Aborigines — my people have a right to be a part of their own history. My mother, Gladys, told me that she had been made to feel that "it was as if the Aborigines were the one race on Earth with nothing to offer." It is important that we show Australia that this is not the case. "Don't let anyone say the blackfella never done anything good for this country", both Arthur and Nan had told me. By allowing my relatives to speak for themselves, and tell it how it is, idiosyncracies and all, a nation is shown that Aboriginal people are people to be proud of. "If we keep saying we're proud to be Aboriginal, other Australians will see that we are a people to be proud of". In discovering my place, I discovered my people's place in history, without which, our country would survive by not as a whole people.

My message would not have gotten across so successfully if it weren't for my careful selection and arrangement of subject matter. The first twenty-six chapters are a skillful balance of light and shade; comedy and pathos. This is necessary. I chose not to burden the reader with too many sombre stories of suffering. While I could have done so, I chose instead to deploy from the "telling the white what it's like to be black view" and show my family as the normal and close group that we are. The Autobiography changes direction once I discover that my past was not as simply as I'd been ignorant enough to believe. The book becomes alike a detective mystery, with all of the vital clues being witheld by my stubbornly secretive Grandmother, Daisy. She had alway been frightened … too frightened to speak out". And, she planned on "taking (her) secrets to (her)

grave." I write from my point of view at the time so that the reader's thirst to know what happens next coincides with my ability to find out for myself.

My reasons for writing were not to lay blame. I simply want my people's history told so that my children will not grow up as ignorant as I was, and so that the nation will not remain ignorant as to the achievements that the strong and resilient Indigenous Australians were at the heart of. I achieve this by allowing my family to speak for themselves and by arranging and selecting subject matter in a way that keeps readers interested and involved. The issue that I hope to tackle in my lifetime is racial intolerance and the silence of Aboriginal history in Australia. *My* Place was the first step.

Thank you for reading,
Sally Morgan

Topic chosen — 3A

Title — *The Crossroad*

Author — Mark Donaldson

It has recently been brought to my attention that an invited reading of my non-fiction text "The Crossroad" has been subject to a great deal of criticism in this literary magazine. I have received a number of comments from readers, criticising my actions, claiming that I represent and glorify recklessness rather than valour. As a winner of the Victoria Cross ("VC"), I am celebrated as a 'national hero' and am apparently idolised by many of today's young men. Thus it has been stated that my risk-taking and impetuous behaviour, merely reinforces the societal representation of 'reckless irresponsibility' being intrinsic to masculinity and heroism. I trust that after reading my explanation you will have a greater understanding of my motivations for writing the book, and I am able to refute many of these criticisms.

I chose to provide the reader with a greater depth of understanding for who I am, beyond my military achievements. I believe that in order for you to understand the true nature of my actions, you have to understand who I am as a person. Part of that is my past, which in many respects has "defined who I am today". As truly honoured as I am to have been decorated with the highest military award for conspicuous valour, at the end of the day I am still Mark Donaldson — a father, a husband and a soldier. For this reason I was extremely selective in the events I chose to write about. Although I appreciate the acclaim, I do not wish to be portrayed as something I am not. My actions of September 2009 have undoubtedly "changed my life forever", but it was important to me that my readers understand that even though my actions may have been 'heroic' this is not to say that I am without flaws or mistakes. It would have been completely inaccurate and dishonest for me to not have acknowledged my (many) past mistakes, which have shaped and ultimately led me to make the decisions that I did on that day.

Growing up in small town Dorrigo, I was a rebellious and adventure-seeking kid, who loved anything and everything that pushed the limits. The death of my 'Vietnam-vet' father was "merely an accelerant" to my already "self-destructive wild streak". As I stated in my prologue, it was very important to me that I remain authentic and honest — "I didn't want to make it seem like anything other than what it was". I did not wish to "romanticise" or exalt either myself or warfare in any way, which is why I chose to include army acronyms, colloquialisms and explicit language occassionally. I wanted to impart a sense of honesty.

As a self-proclaimed “professional dirtbag” well on my way to either “ending up dead or in jail”. I very quickly realised “the fragility of life” and chose to turn my life around — “to become something bigger and better”. I did this through joining the Special Air Service Regiment (“SAS”/”The Regiment”) — it was my salvation. One of the major factors that first motivated me to write the book was my realisation and belief that my story and personal journey could help inspire young people. I hope that I am credible proof that you can “make something of yourself” irrespective of your own personal failings or the hardships you face in life.

Some may argue that my ‘recklessness’ is evident in my love of adventure sports (surfing, snowboarding etc.) and my joining The Regiment — the most elite tactical unit in the military. However, I believe that my ‘daredevil nature’ is the very thing that makes me good at my job. As is so often the case in life, where one’s greatest strengths are paradoxically also one’s greatest weaknesses. Whilst some deem my emotional detachment in the face of extreme danger as professionalism and bravery, others will conversley claim that these same actions represent my ‘negligent nature’ and ‘reckless disregard for life’.

My job and reality is one that is difficult to understand without having personally experienced it, which is why I chose to foreground the ‘VC Scene’ in the book’s opening, so I could contextualise and clarify my actions to readers in the remainder of the book. I am a soldier — by nature and by choice. For some, their passion in life is helping others, for me it is knowing that I am fighting each day to “make the world my children live in a marginally safer and more secure place”.

In writing about that historic day in 2009, it was important to me that I paint an accurate picture and emphasise that it was not a result of only my individual efforts — “my mates fought exceptionally well” and deserve equal credit for their efforts. My decision to “deliberately draw enemy fire allowing for wounded comrades to be withdrawn” and rescuing “an afghan ‘terp lying face down in the dust” has been criticised as negligent and reckless; my mate Bruce would undoutedly agree he still says “it’s the stupidest thing [he’s] ever seen in combat”. But in that moment I believe I performed my duty — I did what I was trained to do — “no man is left behind”.

I will continue to do what is expected of me, whether that is regarded as reckless or not. “I am a soldier, I am trained to be a soldier and I am trained to fight” — “It’s what we do, it’s instinctive, it’s natural, and it’s what we did on that day”. I hope that now after reading my statement you have a greater understanding of the nature of my actions and what led me to arrive at that crossroad in 2009.

Paper Two Part A

Question 1 — Imaginative and reflective writing

Topic chosen — 1B

Good evening fellow students and distinguished guests. We are here tonight to congratulate our graduating students. Our numbers have dwindled since the beginning of the year and so I congratulate the few of you who have stuck it out until the end despite the overwhelming urge we have all felt to just give up. As I look around the room, I see a group of people that are strong and resilient. We have all completed our studies in the face of adversity and have been made stronger because of it. You would all be familiar with the great, Walt Disney, as we recently watched his adaptation of The Lion King in class. He once said, “All my troubles and obstacles, have strengthened me … You may not realise it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you.” The truly extraordinary people are those, like you and I, who have

achieved success despite being faced with many an obstacle. You see, failure leads to success when channelled appropriately. It is the difficult path that makes you stronger.

We should all be proud of ourselves for achieving our well deserved success. I say well deserved because most of us are here after being told that we couldn't do it. American politician, Elenor Roosevelt holds firmly that, "no one can make you feel inferior without your consent." This is true, and while ignorance is bliss, I emplore you to allow anything negative that people may say to become fuel for your fire. Our hardships and unfortunate backgrounds are what make our success all the more incredible. Many marginalised people have changed the world because they saw their position as a strength to encourage them instead of a discouraging weakness.

We are no strangers to failure but we have not failed ourselves, or used our failures as an excuse not to try. It is a common theme in contemporary society, without which, we would not have progressed as far as we have. Why, we would be hosting this graduation by candlelight if Thomas Edison had succumb to his downfalls. "I know a thousand ways not to make a lightbulb" is how he described it. It is a common expression: "when you fall off the horse you get back on again" and "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Script writer and actor Sylvestor Stylone describes success as the "control and culmination of failure." The reason we are so familiar with this concept is because of the truth that it holds. Baseball player, Babe Ruth taught me "never to let the fear of striking out keep (me) from playing the game." It's the sum of our failures that equate to our success. When we know a thousand ways not to do something we're far more likely to work out how to do something. When the odds are stacked against you, they are increased only by conducting more trials.

The easier your life is, the weaker you are. By comparison, the more difficult your life is, the stronger you are. It is through suffering that greatness is born. The more troubles you endure, the better! Yes, "a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you." If you swim with the current, your arms will not tire, but they will not grow either. Swimming against the current is the real work out. That's what we have done and that is what makes us unstoppable.

Our studies have been completed successfully despite the challenges that our lives have thrown at us. We should be proud because we obtained the unobtainable, making it all the more amazing. Like the inventor of the lightbulb, we rose above our downfalls by using them to our advantage. We are all better off now because we let our kicks in the teeth empower us. Let's keep this up in our futures. Thank you and congratulations.

Topic chosen — 1B

Title — *Dare Yourself — Make the Change!*

A brilliant person once said "All the adversity in my life, all my troubles and obstacles, have strengthened me …". Good morning students and faculty, and welcome to UQ's Annual Sustainability Week. My name is ——, and this quote is one which has undoubtedly changed my life — providing me with courage and inspiration when I had none. I am an environmental activist, UQ graduate, soon-to-be lawyer, animal liberationist and a happy and healthy vegetarian. I am here today to hopefully inform you, guide you and inspire you. Adversity often forces you to go outside your comfort zone — and daring to venture beyond that zone, is daring to become extraordinary!

As we all know the biggest personal impact we can have towards achieving a sustainable future is through changing our diet. However it is not just an environmental impact that dietary change can have, Vegetarianism greatly affects both the welfare of animals and your own personal

health. Some of the greatest issues currently facing our planet — starvation, poverty, slavery, exploitation, environmental destruction, pollution, water contamination and shortage to name but a few — could all be reduced just by each one of you daring to take the challenge — the challenge of making change.

So here's the deal life for animals on modern-day factory farms isn't pretty. Forget those idyllic barnyards and pastures portrayed to you in children's books — they haven't existed since your grandparents were children themselves. Every year over eight billion animals are confined to windowless sheds, tiny barren crates and filthy wire cages. The vast majority of these 'food animals' live and die in suffering — they are malnourished, mutilated without painkillers, denied veterinary care and are ultimately slaughtered. Sadly they have little to no legal protections and simply put, life for them is a hell you wouldn't wish upon your worst enemy. So do it for the animals — take the challenge — become extraordinary!

So often young people take their health for granted, but please, make no mistake — your health is your wealth. The leading cause of death in Australia is a ruthless and indiscriminate killer. Also known as Cardiovascular Disease, this killer is directly linked to what you're putting on your plate. With studies showing switching to a plant-based diet may reduce your risk of heart disease by up to 32%, why wouldn't you chuck out the steak knife. The reality for factory-farmed animals — and their by-product, meat — is that they spend their lives being pumped full of chemicals, stimulants, antibiotics and growth hormones — all so that they can end up on your plate sooner. However this inherently means that those same toxins will ultimately end up being consumed by you as well. Still feeling tempted by those ribs? Take the challenge … try a fork instead, and see … feel the benefits.

But if these facts aren't motivation enough, then I presume your presence here today means you care about the planet and its future. So I'd like to share with you one of the major factors that first motivated me to become vegetarian. In my first year of uni, we were given an assingnment that required us to calculate our own personal carbon footprint. By the end of the project, I realised that just through changing my diet alone, I could help reduce the impact of Climate Change, environmental destruction and pollution. In fact, raising animals for food is one of the most inefficient industries on earth — producing more greenhouse gas emissions than all the cars, planes and other forms of transport combined. Dare yourself … ditch the knives!

These facts are what first sparked my journey of activism and vegetarianism. And as cliched as it sounds, what led me out of the darkness and into the light … a lighter body, a lighter mind, and a lighter carbon footprint. My body is no longer a graveyard for the corpses of my fellow sentient beings. As compassionate people, in order to participate in such industries and distinguish between lives, we have to 'switch off' a part of ourselves and silence our conscience. So I hope these facts have helped to turn your own personal 'lights' on, and inspire you to make a change. Know that if you dare nothing, at the end of the day nothing is all that you will have gained. Even just as one person, your actions can have a profound effect on the world we live in.

I would like to leave you with a quote from Jonathan Safran Foer, author of "Eating Animals"; Just how destructive does a culinary practice have to be before we decide to eat something else? If contributing to the suffering of billions of animals isn't motivation enough, then what is? If contributing to the greatest threat currently facing our planet isn't enough, then what is? And if you are tempted to put these questions of conscience off, to say "not now", then when? Every dollar we spend costs a vote for the world we want to live in tommorrow. Every time we sit down to eat; we make a choice. So please make that choice one which doesn't contribute to death. Make that choice one that promotes life. Do it for the animals. Do it for your health. And do it for the planet.

Paper Two Part B

Question 2 — Media: Analytical exposition

Title — *The Last Man Hanged*

Documentary is an increasingly popular genre film and television media because there are no neutral texts. The aim of documentary is not only to entertain and educate but to persuade audiences to accept a particular view on the issue presented. *The Last Man Hanged* (1993) exploits the genre perfectly. Filmmaker, Lewis Fitz-gerald documents the events surrounding the 1967 hanging of Ronald Ryan, using foregrounding and specific film techniques to achieve his purpose. Fitz-gerald successfully invites readers to accept his view, that capital punishment is wrong, by positioning the audience to see that capital punishment goes against their values.

Specific film techniques are employed in order to present Ronald Ryan as a man that embodies the characteristics that the targe demographic value in a person. Archival photographs of Ronald Ryan with his family show the audience that a family man, a father and husband has been taken away from the place that he is needed. Interviewees are carefully selected so that Ryan is spoken of positively, with testaments given such as, “Ron was a marvellous father,” “He was a man you could easily like” and, “he felt very badly that he couldn’t see his daughters.” His lawyer whom by proffession, had a duty to keep his distance, proves to be valuable in privileging the invited reading that Ryan was a good man when he says, “the rule at the bar is that you don’t get too attached to a client, but I couldn’t help liking him.” Religious symbolism concurs with this depiction of Ryan, with superimposed images of praying angels on his cell wall silently informing audiences of Ryan’s deservance of being watched over.

The films target viewers, the Australian public, generally value life and condemn murder. For this reason, Fitz-gerald arranges his subject matter to depict the state as the ‘real’ murderers. The callousness of capital punishment is foregrounded in the opening scene. The process of preparing for a hanging is described in detail, step by step, by voice over. This is accompanied by chillingly complementing visuals in the form of re-enactment. The sombre mood and depressing atmosphere is enhanced by an “eerie” blue aura and macabre soundtrack. The process is later described as “eerie”, “cold-blooded” and, “the murder of a man by the community of his fellows.” This portrayal of capital punishment is necessary in achieving the invited reading because the audiences sees murder as wrong. Logically, when capital punishment is shown as murder … the audience condemns it.

Another aspect of Australian society that is valued is the legal system protecting the innocent. Lewis Fitz-gerald skilfully shows audiences that capital punishment is detrimental to the innocent. Those closest to Ryan, such as his wife and children, have their interviews taken in a different direction. Each interviewee, climatically breaks down in tears as they explain the psychological damage that the hanging has caused, even decades after the event. This is done with the intent of privileging the concept that the death penalty is more of a punishment for the ‘innocent’ than the crimanal. The justice system is supposed to protect, not damage.

The film does not concern itself too deeply with the question of guilt or innocence but the idea that Ryan does not deserve to be hanged is presented subtly through evidence such as an original document describing Ryan’s criminal history as “small time” and a graphical representation of an impossible “elevated gun-shot,” through an animated skeleton, to show that Ryan ‘may’ have been innocent and cannot be pardoned post-humously. The audience is more likely to emphasise with a man undeserving of his punishment.

The target demographic value good people, family, life and a well working justice system that protects the innocent. *The Last Man Hanged* presents its subject matter to show that capital punishment is not something worthy of their support.

Title — *Dead Drunk: Lights out in the Cross?*

Filmed on April 5th 2014 in Kings Cross ("The Cross") NSW, the documentary "Dead Drunk: Lights out in the Cross?" was written and directed by film maker Marc Radomsky. It was developed and produced in assosciation with the ABC, and was largely engendered by the recent legislative reform to the licensing laws implemented in Sydney's Entertainment Precinct. In light of the recent media scrutiny surrounding king-hit assaults, these measures were introduced in an attempt to decrease such acts of alcohol-related violence. Throughout the documentary, there is consisnt reference to the legislative reform, namely the 1.30 am lockout and the 3 am cessation of all liquor sales. The documentary invites viewers to explore the issue of Australia's drinking culture and the violence that so often ensues. In the opening scene, two main questions are posed:

a) "Will restricting alcohol sales stop late night violence?";

AND

b) "Why do some get so hammered that others end up hurt or dead?"

Whilst the first question is implicitly addressed, the second is hardly referred to at all. However, one should acknowledge that the documentary was produced with the principle purpose of raising awareness about the issue of Australia's drinking culture and its assosciated violence.

The documentary is structured by introducing a sense of story through the four separate party-going groups, and through the use of various cinematographic techniques, the audience's connection and awareness of the issues is significantly strengthened. Radomsky's inclusion of different viewpoints results in an overall comprehensive, effective, and balanced exploration of the subject matter. This is clearly evident when analysing the depiction of the four main stake holders in the programme: the partygoers; the mother of three; the local youth worker and academic researcher; the police; and the local business owners and licensees.

In the documentary's opening scenes of alcohol-fuelled revelry and violence are coupled with ominous music and a narration of the issues to be explored. This is an effective technique that contextualises the subject matter and instantly captures the viewer's attention. In addition, the four participating party-going groups observed during the night are given evocative 'tag-lines' to enhance the audience's involvement: such as "The Blue Mountain Boys" and "The First Timers". By creating character personas for the various groups, the audience's connection to 'their storyline' is significantly enhanced, subsequently affecting their cognition and awareness of the issues being raised.

The balanced nature of the documentary is clearly evident in Radomsky's construction of the participants viewpoints. All stakeholders with divergent views are shown in succession, as exemplified by the introductory footage of 'The Blue Mountain Boys' "pre loading", which is immediately followed by local resident, Claudia Bowman, bathing her children. This use of juxtaposition heightens the viewer's response to both respective views as well as works effectively to maintain the audiences awareness. Every stakeholder is given the oppurtunity to express their opinion, resulting in an overall comprehensive and balanced exploration of the subject matter.

The issue of Australia's drinking culture is effectively conveyed through the use of cinematography. Footage of street-violence, partygoers walking, and closeups of Rob (a 'First Timer') vomiting are coupled with electronic party music to augment the subject matter. By foregrounding visuals of alcohol-related violence, public drunkeness, and police commentary in the outset of the documentary, the audience is positioned to view the issue with a distinctly negative skew. However, in order to maintain an objective and balanced portrayal, these scenes are then contrasted by interviews with local youth worker, Matt Noffs, and academic researcher Peter Miller.

Interviews with local business owners and licensees have been constructed in such a way that their content either poses a question or 'answers' one that has been posed by a different stakeholder in the preceding clip. A prime example of this is the footage in which venue licensee Tal Chalak, claims of a select few who have perpetrated acts of violence. This is subsequently followed by a 'response' from Assistant Commissioner, Karyn McCarthy; who emphasises that the harsher legislative measures were necessitated by high assault rates and their implementation was inherently to reduce such sets of alcohol related violence from occurring in the Cross, not to target local business owners.

It is essential to acknowledge that the documentary is not trying to resolve the issue, it is merely attempting to raise awareness about the questions posed in its opening. Furthermore, it would be entirely impossible to expect a documentary to remedy socio-cultural issues of such magnitude and prevalence. Although the latter of the aforementioned questions is not explicitly addressed in the documentary itself, it should be noted that it is further explored in the documentary's forum "Dead Drunk: After Hours with Tom Tilley". All stakeholders are given adequate screen time resulting in an overall comprehensive and balanced representation of their respective viewpoints. By the end of the documentary, the audience has been presented with a multitude of views, ultimately allowing them to come to their own conclusion about "Australia's love affair with booze".

Paper Two Part B

Question 3 — Poetry: Analytical exposition

Topic chosen — 3B

Poem — *Last of his Tribe*
Poet — Oodgeroo Noonuccal

Poem — *Metho Drinker*
Poet — Judith Wright

Poetry is an artistic written medium that allows poets to offer meaningful messages in as little as just a few lines. Australian poets often write to depict aspects of Australia. Two Australian women that do just that are Oodgeroo Noonuccal in her poem "Last of his Tribe" and Judith Wright in her poem "Metho Drinker." Both present aspects of Australia using poetic devices, privileging, foregrounding, gaps and silences.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal opens her free verse poem, "Last of his Tribe", by foregrounding the idea that one thing is being lost and replaced with another, using vocabulary that expresses hopeless finality: "Change *is* the law. The new *must* oust the old." The old that "must" be ousted is then identified as the "Old pinnaroo" (Aboriginal for 'leader'). The old pinnaroo's plight is described using alliteration. He is "lonely", "lost" and "last".

Juxtaposition is used to evoke sympathy in the reader. The “old ways” are described in detail with positive adjectives such as “gay” and “happy”. Suddenly this elated mood is crushed by the harsh repetiton of “All gone, all gone.” Aural imagery creates the sound of the “soft vowelly tongue” in the reader’s mind. Assonance in the form of “no more for ever” brings the reader back to the frightening reality, the truth, the present. The reader feels the “sudden sting” of dissapointment at the loss of such a rich culture that the subject feels everyday. Effectively inviting them to experience his plight.

The “old pinnaroo", “leader once in the corroboree” becomes “Willie Mackenzie” in the Salvation Army Home. His situation is presented by the use of paradox:

> “Displaced person in your own country,
> Lonely in teeming city crowds.”

How this loss of culture has occurred and what the “new” that ousted it is, is silenced, because the Australian public are familiar now with the way in which Aboriginal people were dispossessed of their land and their culture.

Judith Wright’s, “Metho Drinker” invites audiences to experience the struggles that a homeless man in Australia faces. In the first stanza death as an escape from pain is foregrounded. The first line informs readers that the man lies “Under the death of winter’s leaves” and the last line describes him as “safe” where “he lies”. Judith Wright equates death with safety in order to foreground the actions that the subject takes in the second stanza.

The pain that is to be escaped from is the “weight and waterfall” (alliteration) of “Time”, the metaphorical “knives of light” that he cannot get away from and the most painful of all, the personified “eyes that dare not touch nor pity.”

In the second stanza, the reader makes a connection with the title “Metho Drinker” to see that his “burning girl”, his “woman of fire” is the toxic spirits that he takes “for death”. The personified outlet’s affect is detailed using tactile imagery, she “melts away the flesh that hides the bone” and he “winces from the acid”. The issue of self-harm and suicide amongst the too often ignored homeless population of Australia is privileged to get Wright’s message across.

In their respective poems, “Last of his Tribe” and “Metho Drinker”, Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Judith Wright go where others “dare not touch nor pity” so that the readers can have the opportunity to experience the plights of a dispossessed man and a homeless man, who are often ignored but are an aspect of the Australian identity. The underlying message presented is that something must be done before the Aboriginal culture and the “flesh that hides the bone” is “All gone, all gone”.

Topic chosen — 3B

Title — *My Country*

Poet — Dorothea Mackellor

Title — *Aboriginal Australia*

Poet — Jack Davis

Diversity is evident in all aspects of Australia, particularly its distinctive natural environment and multicultural society. In their respective poems, “My Country” (1905) and “Aboriginal Australia” (1978), authors Dorothea Mackellor and Jack Davis each foreground varying aspects of this diversity. Although intrinsically differing in subject matter — Mackellor priveledges Australia’s biodiversity, whilst Davis foregrounds its cultural and historical past. In the former, Mackellor describes and identifies with Australian’s natural landscape. Maintaining a positive and patriotic tone throughout, Mackellor utilises a number of poetic devices to further express her love and appreciation of Australia. Whereas in contrast, Davis’s stance in the latter piece is far more hostile and antagonistic, foregrounding the destruction of Indigenous Australians and their cultural identity by ‘white’ colonial settlers. The poet employs the use of emotive language, historical scenes, and a strong ‘ABAB’ rhyming pattern to chronicle the ‘white man’s’ “brutish” treatchery that ultimately caused the near-extinction of the Aboriginal community.

In “My Country”, Mackellor employs the use of numerous poetic devices — such as description, repetition and personification — that are effective in inviting the reader to share her authentic love and identification with Australia. Mackellor conveys a strong sense of patriotism and appreciation for Australia’s natural landscape that is furthered through the use of personification — “I love her [Australia’s] jewel sea … the wide brown land for me.” The author effectively employs the use of juxtaposition in the poems opening to foreground the physical features of Australia’s terrain — contrasting England’s “green and shaded lanes” with the arid “sunburnt” landscape of Australia. One should acknowledge that despite maintaining a positive tone, the poet does not silence the relatively negative aspects of the country — namely its harsh climatic conditions — as evidenced in the second and fifth stanza:

> “ … Of droughts and flooding rains.”
> “For flood and fire and famine,
> She pays us back three-fold.”

In acknowledging the country’s environmental downfalls, Mackellor effectively provides a realistic and accurate representation of Australia’s natural identity. However, it should be noted that although “My Country” provides a realistic portrayal of Australia’s natural landscape, it fails to depict the diversity of Australia as a whole — silencing the existence of the land’s native inhabitants entirely.

Written by Indigenous-rights activist, Jack Davis, in 1978 “Aboriginal Australia” is a protest poem, which maintains an inherently aggressive and accusatory tone throughout its duration. Davis’s adept use of emotive language (“murdered”, “massacred” etc) combines with a strong iambic rythym to catalogue the crimes of the murderous colonists, working effectively to emphatically and accurately convey the “brutish” treachery historically committed. In the context of this piece the accusatory nature of the word “you” — in reference to the colonial settlers — coupled with Davis’s use of factual scenes (“You murdered me with rope, with gun”, “You buried me deep on McLarty’s run”) is effective in plainly conveying to the readers the true degree of suffering caused by the colonists. As evidenced in the poet’s appropriately disdainful assertion in the final stanza:

> “Now you primly say you’re justified,
> And sing of a nation’s glory
> But I think of a people crucified —
> The real Australian story.

The simplicity and factuality of the text, coupled with Davis’s use of poetic devices and historical scenes, works effectively to provide a realistic and accurate representation of Aboriginal Australia.

Despite the use of often differing poetic devices and subject matter, both authors provide a divergent yet still authentic representation of Australia and its residents. However neither poet singularly conveys an accurate depiction of Australia’s innate complexity. In “My Country”, Mackellor essentially exemplifies the main contention of Davis’s text by silencing the lands native peoples whereas, Davis conversely overlooks the integral role that Australia’s natural environment plays in its identity. Due to the extensive and diverse nature of Australia, and subsequently its inhabitants, all aspects of Australian life are similarly complex. Therefore, only when combined do Dorothea Mackellor and Jack Davis provide a more holistic and comprehensive representation of Australia’s multiculturalism and natural diversity.