

## Yard Monitor : a grass-root view

Melbourne University's garbage may not pose a serious threat to the world's environment but it is an issue for **Sarah Russell**.

There are many threats to our world's environment. You do not need to be a genius, or even a geographer, to realise this. I just happen to be the latter (certainly not the former) and, as such, have been empowered by Farrago to speak with some authority on the topic of 'The World' and 'The Environment'.

Many of us realise that we are rapidly reaching the point beyond which we can pollute and devastate no further. We often hear about the depletion of forests, the erosion of our soil, the improper handling of toxic substance, air pollution, freshwater mismanagement, acid rain...The list is endless. Yet it is clear that many of us do not really give a damn. I'm not just talking about the multinational companies or governments; we all know that they do not give a damn. Nothing so grand. No, my diatribe today is about the way we here at Melbourne University treat our local environment; our university campus.

We've had our fair share of sunny days lately. Perhaps these climatic niceties have been caused by the accumulation of greenhouse gases. Or perhaps we have just been lucky. Cause aside for the moment, the effect is what I really want to dwell on: the fact that many people have taken their lunch outdoors (hopefully with their factor 15 on, because we haven't got much UV protection from the ozone layer anymore). What they don't eat they just seem to leave behind. Perhaps they think that the birds or some impoverished student will be grateful for the leftovers.

By 2pm our campus looks like the local tip used to look. Remember? Before we filled them up with so much garbage that we had to close most of them down. Just try wandering around campus after lunch with your eyes opened. Perhaps you, too, will be reminded of your x-local tip.

It's bad enough that we consumers have to endure all this ridiculous plastic packaging without having to see it strewn all over the South Lawns. And then there's the problem of trying to encourage people to reuse and recycle. Who can be bothered walking to the union building with each can/bottle? Who even thinks about reusing their gladwrap? Not many it seems.

If I could draw, and I can't, I would draw a cartoon of a group of Melbourne Uni students with their heads tilted upwards towards the sky as they pondered the BIG issues of our global mismanagement. At their feet I would draw a pile of used plastic containers, Nestle's product wrappers and empty Coke cans.

Melbourne University's garbage may not pose a serious threat to the world's environment but it certainly seems an OK place to begin our attempt to clean up this mess our planet is in. Today the South Lawns, tomorrow the Amazon.