

## University of Sydney actions taken to implement recommendations from AHRC

### Change the course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities 2017

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

Online version [here](#)

Change the Course, AHRC report Recommendations	
Leadership and Governance	Actions University of Sydney has taken to date
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p>Vice-Chancellors should take direct responsibility for the implementation of these recommendations, including decision-making and monitoring and evaluation of actions taken.</p> <p>To assist and advise them in this respect, Vice-Chancellors should have an advisory body within their institution which has responsibility for guiding the implementation of the recommendations made in this report. The advisory body should report directly to the Vice-Chancellor of each university and include representatives from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the university's senior leadership</li> <li>• the student body</li> <li>• academic staff</li> <li>• residential colleges affiliated with the university</li> <li>• student services, such as: counselling services, medical services and campus security, and</li> <li>• frontline sexual assault services.</li> </ul> <p>The advisory body should be responsible for developing an action plan for the implementation of these recommendations. The development of an action plan should involve broad and extensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders from the university community and, where relevant, the wider community. The advisory body should also</p>	<p>In September 2016, the University established a Safer Communities Advisory Group with representation from all student organisations, as well as representatives from staff and residential colleges. The Advisory Group reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor's Student Consultative Committee and functions as a channel to consult with students on policy matters, programs and safety campaigns relating to student experience and welfare.</p> <p>The group meets bi-monthly with out of round meetings held as needed. An action plan to prevent and respond to sexual violence was presented at the 14 February 2018 meeting of the advisory group. External subject matter experts have attended and presented at advisory group meetings held in 2018.</p> <p>Public reporting on the progress is documented on the Safer Communities webpage found here: <a href="http://sydney.edu.au/about-us/vision-and-values/safer-communities.html">http://sydney.edu.au/about-us/vision-and-values/safer-communities.html</a></p> <p><b>Planned future action</b> Bimonthly meetings will continue and a 2019 action plan will be developed by the end of 2018.</p>

<p>seek independent expertise where relevant and draw on existing research and best practice.</p> <p>The advisory body should assess and publicly report on the university's progress towards implementation of these recommendations within 18 months of the release of this report. From then on, public reporting on progress should occur on an annual basis.</p>	
<p><b>Changing attitudes and behaviours</b></p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>Universities develop a plan for addressing the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides students and staff with education about: behaviours that constitute sexual assault and sexual harassment, consent and respectful relationships, 'violence supportive attitudes' and bystander intervention, and</li> <li>• identifies existing resources and communications campaigns that reinforce key messages of education programs for dissemination to staff and students.</li> </ul> <p>Education programs and communications should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• target all levels of the organisation – current and future students, staff, residential colleges, public transport to/ from university, sports clubs, student societies and student unions</li> <li>• be based on best practice and research</li> <li>• be developed and delivered by individuals and/or organisations with expertise in sexual violence prevention</li> <li>• be developed in consultation with university students, and</li> <li>• include measures for evaluating and refining the actions taken.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consent Matters rollout</b></p> <p>In Semester 2, 2017, the University adopted an online educational module as a learning tool for students to understand the nature of sexual consent. Based on recommendations by the Safer Communities Advisory Group, Epigeum's Consent Matters module was selected. During Semester 2, 2017 all current students were encouraged to complete the module</p> <p>In 2018 the module has been implemented as a compulsory requirement for all new commencing students. 20,472 students have completed the module as at 4 July 2018. The module is compulsory for other relevant cohorts of students such as student union club and society executives; and accommodation and college residents. The module is available for all continuing students to complete. The module is available for staff to complete.</p> <p><b>In-person training</b></p> <p>To complement and support the online module and to provide greater understanding of consent, ethical behaviour, respectful relationships and how to intervene as a bystander, key groups of student leaders have received in-person training provided by Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia and Griffith University. Two in-person sessions were run in 2017. In 2018 over 200 students have received in person training, with further sessions planned for the second half of the year. By the end of 2018, 650 students will have undertaken in-person training in bystander awareness.</p>

	<p>Work has commenced to develop a bespoke training program for HDR supervisors and students in consultation with an external subject matter expert.</p> <p><b>Planned future action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pilot program for HDR supervisors and students.</li> <li>- Further in-person training in bystander awareness.</li> <li>- Continued deployment of Consent Matters as compulsory requirement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>University responses to sexual assault and sexual harassment</b></p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p>	
<p>In order to ensure students and staff know about support services and reporting processes for sexual assault or sexual harassment, universities should:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• widely disseminate information about university reporting avenues to staff and students</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contact Channel</b></p> <p>The University has established a single point of contact helpline to support survivors and bystanders when an incident occurs. 1800 SYD HLP makes it easier for students to access various levels of assistance in the event of an incident; including campus security, support services, reporting channels and external 24-hour help and an anonymous call back service.</p> <p>The 1800 SYD HLP line was advertised on the back of all newly issued student cards and promoted through a poster and email campaign to the student body.</p> <p><b>Online reporting</b></p> <p>A new online reporting portal will be available on 1 August 2018 to allow confidential disclosures of sexual assault and harassment. A campaign to promote the portal to students and staff is planned for Semester 2, 2018.</p> <p><b>Enhanced staffing capability</b></p> <p>Two Student Liaison Officers (SLOs) were recruited in November 2017 to provide case management for student sexual assault survivors and to</p>

	<p>support delivery of the Safer Communities initiatives. The SLOs have met with and provided information on their role and reporting options to the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff and students at University accommodation facilities</li> <li>- Staff and students at colleges</li> <li>- Faculty staff</li> <li>- Campuses outside of Sydney</li> <li>- Student orientation sessions</li> </ul> <p><b>Planned future action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safer communities survey in September 2018 to gather information about students experiences with and perceptions of existing institutional procedures for reporting.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• widely disseminate information about internal and external services to staff and students, including: university counselling and medical services, campus security, local sexual assault services, police, medical centres, hospitals, counselling services and anti-discrimination agencies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Students</b></p> <p>In Semester 2, 2017 the student website was updated with a new sexual assault page which includes definitions of what is sexual assault, support services and responding to an incident. See the page here: <a href="http://sydney.edu.au/students/sexual-assault.html">http://sydney.edu.au/students/sexual-assault.html</a></p> <p>Links to this website have been included in a series of student emails and Student News items in Semester 2, 2017 and Semester 1, 2018.</p> <p>Orientation and welcome information for 2018 includes information about support services.</p> <p><b>Staff</b></p> <p>The staff intranet includes a video about how to help a student in distress after an unwanted sexual experience, a specialist guide for staff in how to support students in difficult circumstances, and a factsheet on how to assist student survivors.</p> <p>This information is promoted to staff in face-to-face departmental and faculty briefings, online staff communication channels and all staff emails.</p>

	<p><b>Planned future action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continued promotion of the information through regular channels.</li> <li>- Updates to be sent to students and staff as new information and processes are developed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that information about internal and external reporting procedures and support services is displayed clearly, in a logical place(s) on the university website</li> </ul>	<p>See here: <a href="http://sydney.edu.au/students/sexual-assault.html">http://sydney.edu.au/students/sexual-assault.html</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that information about internal and external reporting procedures and support services is provided to students as part of their orientation into university and to new staff as part of their human resources induction/ on-boarding.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1800 SYD HLP line is promoted in orientation activities.</li> <li>- Confidential portal to be included in orientation activities</li> <li>- Reporting options are included in the factsheet available on webpage. <a href="#">Sexual Assault   Support for student survivors</a></li> </ul> <p>The Student Transition and Retention team (STaR) present at multiple faculty and residential college orientations about Student Support Services which includes information on; Counselling and Psychological Services (CaPS), the University Health Service, Security Services, Student Liaison Officers, 1800 SYD HLP phone number and expectations around student conduct and safety. The Student Liaison Officers attend to talk further about their roles as case managers for survivors and the online sexual consent education module <i>Consent Matters</i>.</p> <p>As part of orientation the STaR team also run an <i>Accessing Healthcare in Australia</i> session for International Students. This sessions involves presentations about university health and counselling services, sexual and community health. Student Liaison officers provide information on what to do case of a sexual assault. This session involves a panel discussion where students are able to ask questions</p> <p><b>Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information has been included as in induction milestone for new staff and</li> </ul>

	the Consent Matters module is a key component for each of the Associate Dean – Student Life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that information about internal and external reporting procedures and support services is accessible to all students and staff, including: people with disability, people from CALD backgrounds, and</li> </ul>	All student communications are written in plain English and information on website is accessible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop relationships with external services (local sexual assault service, local hospital) to enable referral of students to these services where necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>Close collaboration with the NSW Rape Crisis Centre to assist with training staff and to establish the Centre as a key contact point for assistance with out-of-hours access.</p> <p>Routine collegiate meeting between RPA counsellors and University Counselling and Psychological Services.</p> <p>On campus RPA outreach clinic.</p>
Universities should evaluate the activities undertaken to increase awareness of support services and reporting processes to ensure that these measures have been effective in increasing awareness among staff and students.	The University will be undertaking a point in time repeat the 2015 Safer Communities survey with the same core questions amended to reflect the change that has happened across the sector. Survey to take place in September 2018 will gather information about student experiences of sexual harassment and assault on campus, as well as their experiences with and perceptions of existing institutional procedures for reporting.
<b>Recommendation 4</b>	
In order to ensure that actions taken by universities to prevent and respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment are appropriate, within a year of the release of this report, universities should commission an independent, expert led review of existing university policies and response pathways in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment. This review should assess the effectiveness of existing university policies and pathways and make specific recommendations to universities about best practice responses to sexual assault and sexual harassment.	As above, the University will be repeating the 2015 survey with the same core questions amended to reflect the change that has happened across the sector. Survey to take place in September 2018. Survey outcomes will assess the effectiveness of existing University policies and pathways and make recommendations about best practice response to sexual assault and harassment.
In the interim, and at an institutional level, universities should draw on sexual violence counselling expertise to develop and review processes for responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment of students to ensure that they:	The University has reviewed how we respond to formal complaints (including reporting incidents of sexual violence) and investigations. The Student Discipline Rule was instituted in March 2017 and updates were made to complaints policy/procedures so as to allow us to undertake

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• secure the immediate safety and wellbeing of the individual who has experienced the sexual assault or sexual harassment</li> <li>• are clear and accessible</li> <li>• provide individuals with control over what happens to their report</li> <li>• have the flexibility to suit individual circumstances</li> <li>• provide students with support to continue with their studies</li> <li>• provide specialist support, from someone who has specialist expertise and training in sexual assault, sexual harassment and trauma counselling of sexual assault survivors, and accommodate the needs of students from a diverse range of backgrounds.</li> </ul>	<p>investigations in a much more timely fashion, while preserving the principles of due process and procedural fairness.</p> <p>We've placed the needs of student survivors of sexual assault at the forefront of our revised processes, implementing a new complaints handling system that allows the University to be far more transparent about the process, how long it might take, key milestones, and what to expect. Specially trained case managers prioritise complaints about an unwanted sexual experience, and contact the complainant within 24 hours.</p> <p><b>Student response system</b></p> <p>Other improvements include the establishment of a 'call-back' mechanism for students and the introduction of multiple reporting channels, including via 1800 SYD HLP, online submission, the University app and a direct phone call. There are also facilities for online reports to be made by a member of staff who is assisting a student.</p> <p><b>Enhanced specific staff capability</b></p> <p>Two Student Liaison officers are on staff to provide case management to survivors of sexual assault. They provide one-on-one services tailored to each student's needs to ensure they are getting the appropriate support. This includes meeting with students to work out exactly what kind of support they need and then liaising with other services within the University to provide practical solutions.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p>	
<p>Universities should conduct an assessment to identify staff members and student representatives within their institution most likely to receive disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Universities should ensure that these staff members and student representatives receive training in responding to disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment, delivered by an organisation with specialist expertise in this area.</p>	<p>Rape and Domestic Violence Services, Australia have been contracted to deliver the 2 hour training session <i>Responding with Compassion</i>. The training requirement is embedded in induction processes for frontline staff.</p> <p>Staff who received the training include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campus Security</li> <li>- Student Affairs Unit</li> <li>- Accommodation facility staff</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residential Advisors</li> <li>- Associate Deans (Student Life)</li> <li>- Counsellors</li> <li>- Staff in remote campuses (Lismore, Broken Hill, Orange, Dubbo and Camden).</li> <li>- Placement coordinators</li> <li>- Other key frontline staff eg Library staff as requested or directed</li> </ul> <p>Student leaders receiving the training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- USU C&amp;S executives</li> <li>- Residential Advisors</li> </ul> <p>250 staff completed <i>Responding with Compassion</i> training in 2017. 170 staff completed the training to date in 2018.</p>
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	
<b>Recommendation 6</b>	
<p>Universities should ensure that information about individual disclosures and reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment is collected and stored confidentially and used for continuous improvement of processes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details of the complaint/incident</li> <li>• steps taken to respond to the complaint/incident, i.e.: whether the individual reported to police, whether the perpetrator was moved to a different lecture/tutorial</li> <li>• support or assistance received, i.e.: whether the person received counselling from university services, whether they reported to police, whether they received support from an external sexual assault service</li> <li>• time taken to respond to the report and/or refer the person to support services, and</li> <li>• any feedback provided by the complainant/respondent in relation to the process.</li> </ul>	<p>The University's TRIM workflow for Complaints &amp; Misconduct Handling is a secure web based program that links to enrolment data, as well as staff and TRIM databases.</p> <p>Implemented in early March 2017, it retrieves the details of a complainant (or a nominee where a complainant wishes to remain anonymous). Appropriate referrals are standardised business processes for police reporting through the Office of General Counsel (OGC), as well as security and liaison with counselling staff and departmental/administrative units for student attendance management.</p> <p>Serious and high level incidents are actioned immediately upon receipt of a complaint and appropriate responses and reports are generated to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Registrar) on the same day. Support and referrals to appropriate internal and external agencies for counselling are provided.</p>



<p>Access to this information should be limited to staff members with responsibility for responding to disclosures and reports and those responsible for improving university responses to disclosures and reports.</p>	<p>Access to complainant and respondent information is limited to the Student Affairs Unit, key staff within Workplace Relations and the Office of General Counsel.</p> <p>Review and improvements to this process includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bi-annual reviews of 1800 SYD HLP statistics and monitoring;</li> <li>- Website improvements, more detailed advice provided for complaints and misconduct reporting, with provision for anonymous and direct reports via phone, email and web-form;</li> <li>- Weekly internal evaluation and monitoring of complaints/misconduct processing;</li> <li>- Statistical reports in relation to penalties provided to Academic Board/Senate consistent with policy requirements;</li> <li>- Same day reporting to Registrar in relation to sexual assault and indictable criminal matters.</li> </ul>
<p>On a regular basis – at least every six months – Vice-Chancellors should be provided with de-identified reports of this data, including any trends or identifiable concerns which arise, along with recommendations for any necessary improvements to processes.</p>	<p>Information in relation to complaints is provided to the DVC Registrar on a monthly basis. Follow up advice is then provided to the Vice-Chancellor by the DVC</p> <p>Same day reporting to Registrar in relation to sexual assault and indictable criminal matters.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p>	
<p>Within six months of this report, but as soon as possible, universities should conduct an audit of university counselling services to assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the capacity of university counselling services to respond to students’ requests for counselling in an appropriately timely manner, and</li> <li>• how many university counselling staff have received training in working with sexual assault survivors.</li> </ul> <p>As part of this audit, universities should collect data on: the average length of time students are required to wait to see a university counsellor, and the number of urgent/crisis requests for counselling received. This data should be assessed to determine whether additional</p>	<p>Expanded capacity with Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One day per week Rape Crisis Centre staff housed within CAPS funded by the University.</li> <li>- All CAPS staff have received training.</li> <li>-</li> </ul> <p>Currently the University:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertakes ongoing monitoring of number of days to next available booked appointment</li> <li>- Ensures daily urgent counselling timeslots are available</li> <li>- Provides continuous training for counselling staff</li> <li>- Ensures all counsellors have undertaken Responding with Compassion training.</li> </ul>

<p>counselling services are required to meet the urgent needs of students who have experienced sexual assault or harassment. If additional counselling services are required, universities should ensure that these additional resources are in place as soon as practicable.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 8</b></p>	
<p>Universities should engage an independent body to conduct the National university student survey of sexual assault and sexual harassment at three yearly intervals to track progress in reducing the prevalence of these incidents at a sector-wide level.</p>	<p>VC via UA</p>
<p><b>Residential colleges and university residences</b></p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 9</b></p>	
<p>In addition to considering the implementation of the university recommendations made in this report, residential colleges and university residences should commission an independent, expert-led review of the factors which contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in their settings. This review should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate responses by a college or university residence to reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment</li> <li>• a trauma-informed and rights-based approach in a situation in which an allegation of sexual assault has been made</li> <li>• the ways that hazing practices and college ‘traditions’ facilitate a culture which may increase the likelihood of sexual violence</li> <li>• the role of alcohol in facilitating a culture which may increase the likelihood of sexual violence</li> <li>• the level and nature of supervision in a twenty-four hour residential setting in which large numbers of young people are living away from home, and</li> <li>• the level and adequacy of training required to equip residential advisors to serve as first responders or in response to matters of sexual assault and harassment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Independent Review</b></p> <p>In 2016 the University commissioned business and social change leader Liz Broderick to work with the University's affiliated residential colleges and the University on a far-reaching program of cultural reflection and change. We have also made refinements to reporting and escalation protocols at all University-owned accommodation.</p> <p>The Broderick report was released in late November 2017. The University is working closely with the Colleges to support them in implementation of the recommendations.</p> <p>All residential colleges have a key group of senior staff and students dedicated to implementing cultural change and the Broderick Recommendations. Good progress is being made, particularly in implementing those recommendations relating to staff and student leadership, workshops and training, orientation activities and hierarchy.</p> <p>Constructive discussions continue on key priorities like alcohol, sexual misconduct and increased female participation and representation in leadership positions.</p>

	<p>Colleges have agreed to participate in a workshop with Elizabeth Broderick to develop a set of common responses to issues identified in the Broderick reports, including, hazing, alcohol and sexual misconduct.</p> <p><b>University activity</b> The Student Liaison Officers have met with all the colleges and will continue to have ongoing engagement with both the staff and students of the residential colleges throughout 2018 to disseminate information around reporting options.</p> <p>All residential life staff and residential assistants on duty at University owned housing have undertaken Responding with Compassion training.</p>
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