

Respect.Now.Always Campaign Progress Report

SNAPSHOT STATUS

USC has made significant progress and has addressed each of the recommendations contained in the AHRC Report, *Change the Course: National Report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities* (The Report) which was released on 1 August 2017, and contained a series of recommendations for universities. The Report and the newly released UA Guidelines key points include:

- USC has implemented the *Sexual Harassment Prevention Governing Policy* and *Anti-Discrimination and Freedom from Bullying Harassment (Students)* policy to ensure there are stand-alone USC sexual assault and harassment policies - University Council approval occurred in April and October 2017 respectively;
- establishment of SafeUSC, with appropriate governance and operational structures in place and a new centrally located, highly-visible 24-hour site launched Semester 1 2019;
- delivery of consent training as well as 'Consent is Sexy' Ambassador program, *Responding to Disclosure* and *Recognising and Supporting Students in Distress* training to professional and academic staff;
- formal and informal grievance reporting of sexual assaults and harassment in place via Student Wellbeing and Grievance and Complaints officer;
- a memorandum of understanding has been signed by USC and local student accommodation providers in Sippy Downs (i.e. Varsity and Uni Central);
- formal Local Level Safety Networks across all five campuses, including QPS, Student representatives and specialist services; and
- best practice procedures between AccessAbility and Student Wellbeing to facilitate access to reasonable adjustments for students making a disclosure of sexual assault or sexual harassment.

USC'S RESPONSE TO THE UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA GUIDELINES FOR UNIVERSITY RESPONSES TO SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

At the one-year anniversary of the release of the AHRC '*Change the Course Report*', Universities Australia has released new guidelines to Australian Universities, containing 13 key points.

The first point sets out the guiding principles for policy responses and is:

Universities should be guided by the principles of compassion, providing support and assistance, protecting confidentiality and privacy, cultural competency and natural justice.

USC's implementation status against each of the remaining 12 points is summarised below. The UA guidelines are shown in bold.

1. Universities should consider creating a standalone policy to address sexual assault and sexual harassment

USC has implemented standalone [policies](#) to address sexual harassment and assault. The policies are the *Sexual Harassment Prevention Governing Policy* and the *Anti-Discrimination and Freedom from Bullying and Harassment (Students)* policies. Both were approved by USC Council in April 2017.



2. Universities should ensure the majority of staff with student-facing roles have the skills to respond to disclosures and reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment with compassion and care.

USC has delivered face-to-face training developed in conjunction with the local sexual assault service, 'Responding to Disclosures', and additionally 'Recognising and Support Students in Distress' training modules have been delivered that provide skills and awareness training for front line staff, both professional and academic on how to respond to students with compassion and care. This training is offered to all staff through the staff training calendar, and by request.

3. Universities should consider providing a specialist-trained single point of contact for students making reports to ensure processes are compassionate, consistent and robust.

Following an extensive site visit of Victorian universities, USC established a dedicated [SafeUSC](#) Unit in early 2018 to support the identification and management of students with concerning behaviour. Within this unit is a specialist trauma informed sexual assault counsellor that provides single point contact for all students who wish to make a report of sexual assault ensuring a compassionate, consistent and robust response. The Unit also provides resources, training and workshops of specialised topics to staff and students and assists with risk assessments and referrals to the Behavioural Assessment and Management team. The Unit's core objective is the safety of students, staff and community within USC, and strives for a preventative approach, within the relevant legislative frameworks.

4. Universities should minimise the number of times a student needs to recount a traumatic experience

USC supports and has adopted this approach across all USC campuses. Responses to student making disclosures are trauma informed and victim/survivor centric, ensuring that throughout the support/reporting and response stages of intervention, students are engaging with the least amount of staff as a possible. The single point trauma informed specialists case manages all reports, minimising times students must repeat their story.

5. Universities should streamline arrangements for academic special consideration.

As part of the procedures in responding to disclosures, students receive an assessment of all support requirements including the need for academic adjustments, and the provision of a Learning Access Plan (where appropriate), without the student re-presenting to multiple areas of the University. This is achieved through the single point case management approach and has been USC's business practice for several years.

6. Universities consider a data collection mechanism that captures de-identified disclosures and formal reports.

USC has developed appropriate data collection mechanism that support both de-identified and formal reports for student sexual assaults and harassment cases. The de-identified data collection mechanism was developed in consultation with the USC Student Wellbeing team and summary de-identified reports will be provided to the Vice-Chancellor and President each Semester.

7. Universities should consult with stakeholders, including students, in the development of any relevant policy.

Stakeholder engagement with local specialist service *Laurel Place* and USC students occurred during the development of USC policies (*Sexual Harassment Prevention Governing* and the *Anti-Discrimination and Freedom from Bullying and Harassment (Students)* policies) prior to their approval by USC Council.



8. Universities should offer multiple ways to make a formal report, including through online reporting tools and safety apps.

USC offers options for students to lodge a formal report, online or in person. Examples include:

- face-to-face confidential, consultation sessions with Student Wellbeing staff;
- online via the [complaints/grievance website](#) and the incident reporting tool; and
- a [SafeZone](#) app that has been released and offers capacity for students to seek immediate support and provides contact details for telephone reporting.

9. Universities should clearly communicate the university's formal reporting process and misconduct procedures, including timeframes.

USC has clear communication plans for students on how to make reports, available through:

- USC Website
- Student newsletter
- Posters / digital media
- Training on reporting and support to student leaders / staff
- Embedded content in curriculum

In addition, specific campaigns occur at regular intervals to raise student awareness of these topics.

10. Universities should communicate to students the option to report the incident to police and respect their decision.

As per policy and subsequent communications to students, USC students are encouraged and supported to report all incidents to police. USC has developed formal links with police liaison officers, who are able to provide advice and support to students making reports.

11. Universities should offer an interpreter for students who prefer to provide information in their native language.

USC organises interpreters for students who require this support.

12. Universities should engage with colleges and residential halls — including those that are managed independently of the university — to ensure consistency in responses, reporting and investigation approaches.

USC has a Memorandum of Understanding with local private student accommodation providers relating to the disclosure of sexual assault and harassment. Additionally, the managers and director of the student accommodation are key members of USC local Safer Community Network who meet regularly to discuss collaborative initiatives to address issues presenting, including sexual harassment and assault.



DETAILS OF USC'S RESPONSE TO THE AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CHANGE THE COURSE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission has made a total of nine (9) recommendations in its *Change the Course* report; eight of which are directed to universities and another aimed specifically at university colleges. These recommendations focus on five areas of action:

1. *Leadership and governance*: A strong and visible commitment to action from university leaders, accompanied by clear and transparent implementation of these recommendations.
2. *Changing attitudes and behaviours*: Development of measures aimed at preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment.
3. *University responses to sexual assault and sexual harassment*: An independent, systematic review of university responses to sexual assault and sexual harassment and their effectiveness and the implementation of effective processes for responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment.
4. *Monitoring and evaluation*: Ensuring that steps taken to prevent and respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment are evidence-based and that improvements are made over time.
5. *Residential colleges and university residences*: A review to further examine issues and solutions to address sexual assault and sexual harassment within residential colleges and university residences.

Set out below is each of the recommendations, outlining USC's achievements and ongoing commitment against each recommendation, reporting on specific initiatives that address the recommendation areas, and identifying areas for further development.

AHRC RECOMMENDATIONS AND USC'S RESPONSES

Recommendation 1:

Vice-Chancellors should take direct responsibility for the implementation of these recommendations, including decision-making and monitoring and evaluation of actions taken.

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:

- university's senior leadership;
- student body;
- academic staff;
- residential colleges affiliated with the university;
- student services such as: counselling services, medical services and campus security; and
- frontline sexual assault services.

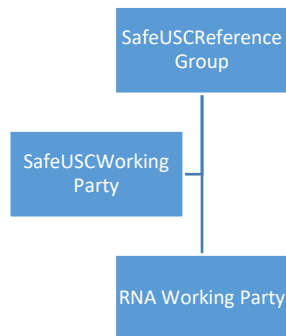


The advisory body should be responsible for developing an action plan for the implementation of these recommendations. The development of an action plan should involve broad and extensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders from the university community and, where relevant, the wider community. The advisory body should also seek independent expertise where relevant and draw on existing research and best practice.

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.

USC Response

USC supports this recommendation and proposed to Executive a SafeUSC Reference Group in November 2017 with supporting operational committees supporting the group, as shown in the diagram below.



The SafeUSC Reference Group is a new entity, which will be formally constituted to advise the Vice-Chancellor and President on the development, implementation, reporting and evaluation of initiatives aimed at ensuring all members of the University community work and study in a safe environment.

The Reference Group will advise the Vice-Chancellor and President on the development, implementation and review of the *Safer Community' Action Plan* that specifically addresses relevant standards and guidelines in the Higher Education Standards Framework that are directly concerned with student wellbeing and safety.

The Safer USC Reference Group will:

- report to the Vice Chancellor through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The Vice-Chancellor and President will have final authority on the recommendations and actions of the Reference Group;
- be transparent and consultative across the University (including students) and beyond; and
- Inform and guide the development of the "Action Plan".

The SafeUSC Working Party has been constituted to develop strategies and in the future will action the Vice-Chancellor and President approved recommendations of the Reference Group. They will provide feedback on the implementation, reporting and evaluation of initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety and responsiveness of the USC community.



Membership

- Director, Student Services and Engagement (Chair)
- Manager Student Wellbeing (Deputy Chair)
- Coordinator, SafeUSC
- Senior Legal Advisor
- Manager, AccessAbility
- Manager, Equity and Diversity
- Manager, SafeUSC
- Dean, Indigenous Engagement
- Senior Human Resources Consultant
- Manager, Support for Learning
- Manager, Student Guild
- Academic representative
- Student representatives

The Working Party has broad responsibility for implementing the SafeUSC Action Plan, and oversight of the USC RNA Response Plan. The SafeUSC Action Plan identifies pathways of support for students, availability of general and cohort-specific support and advice services, promotion and provision of a safe environment and timely and appropriate management of critical incidents.

The USC RNA Plan is embedded as part of a broader “Safer Communities” framework and is designed to inform and promote USC’s institutional response and duty of care of matters relating to sexual harassment and assault, safety and wellbeing. Further review of the plan is scheduled for 2019 to be conducted by the newly established [Sexual Violence Research and Prevention Unit](#).

USC RNA Implementation Working Group

An implementation working group, under the sponsorship of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Students,) was established to guide USC responses. The working group is being reconvened under new sponsorship to attend to the ongoing development and delivery of the Plan.

Membership

- Senior Legal Officer
- Academic Secretariat
- SafeUSC – Community team
- SafeUSC – Specialist Services
- Student Services and Engagement
- Laurel Place
- Queensland Police Service
- Manager, Student Wellbeing
- Human Resources
- Student Guild
- Sexual Violence Research and Prevention Unit
- With Respect Student Group
- Nominated Academic
- Nominated Professor Staff



Recommendation 2:

Universities develop a plan for addressing the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment that:

- provides students and staff with education about: behaviours that constitute sexual assault and sexual harassment, consent and respectful relationships, 'violence supporting attitudes' and bystander intervention, and
- identifies existing resources and communications campaigns that reinforce key messages of education programs for dissemination to staff and students.

Education programs and communications should:

- 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;
- be based on best practice and research;
- be developed and delivered by individuals and/or organisations with expertise in sexual violence prevention; and
- be developed in consultation with university students and include measures for evaluating and refining the actions taken.

USC Response

USC developed a comprehensive plan which was endorsed by University Executive and approved by the Vice-Chancellor and President in August 2017. The USC RNA Plan has four pillars:

- (1) policy and governance;
- (2) best practice education and training;
- (3) ongoing communication; and
- (4) USC RNA activities.

The [Plan](#) is being comprehensively implemented. USC has hosted/run several educational programs and awareness campaigns since the AHRC recommendation release in 2017, including the recruitment of over 70 of 'Consent is Sexy' Student Ambassadors across our various campus locations. Regular reviews of the implementation plan, informed by sector wide best practice and ongoing student consultation, has resulted in the implementation of planned mandatory consent training for students attending placement or seeking a leadership position at USC, and the review and ongoing development of misconduct procedures to ensure trauma informed, training and best practice guidelines in matters relating to sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Additionally, USC has formalised links with local specialist sexual assault services across our geographical footprint to ensure regular and ongoing consultation over education programs and initiatives.

Planned initiatives include further opportunities for staff education and training, delivery of bystander intervention training for both staff and students, and increased student leadership in the implementation of actions plans through dedicated support to student working parties and work integrated learning opportunities.



Recommendation 3:

In order to ensure students and staff know about support services and reporting processes for sexual assault or sexual harassment, universities should:

- widely disseminate information about university reporting avenues to staff and students
- 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
- ensure that information about internal and external reporting procedures and support services is displayed clearly, in logical place(s) on the university website
- 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

USC Response

Following the 2017 Report release and the subsequent targeted awareness campaigns that raised awareness of counselling and support service at USC, Student Wellbeing observed increases in students presenting for general support.

Specific sexual harassment information has been developed and the prominence and accessibility of the material has been improved through:

- updating of website material;
- print and digital media;
- communication through student newsletters;
- provision of material to local student accommodation providers;
- education and training sessions to professional and academic staff relating to reporting and support options; and
- embedded content into the curriculum.

Recommendation 4:

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. 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:

- secure the immediate safety and wellbeing of the individual who has experienced the sexual assault or sexual harassment are clear and accessible;
- provide individuals with control over what happens to their report;
- have the flexibility to suit individual circumstances;
- provide students with support to continue with their studies;



- provide specialist support, from someone who has specialist expertise and training in sexual assault, sexual harassment and trauma counselling of sexual assault survivors;
- accommodate the needs of students from a diverse range of backgrounds;
- 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
- develop relationships with external services (local sexual assault service, local hospital) to enable referral of students to these services where necessary.

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.

USC response

USC has implemented a stand-alone *Sexual Harassment Prevention - Governing policy* and updated the *Anti-Discrimination Freedom from Bullying and Harassment procedures*, drawing on external and internal expert advice.

- An independent assessment of USC's Misconduct policy and responses conducted by Code Black, commended USC for its approach, policy framework and practices.
- USC appointed a Risk Manager in 2017 whose remit includes risk associated with student conduct and misconduct.
- A key priority for USC has been review of the above-mentioned, and related policy such as Student General Misconduct.

Recommendation 5:

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.

USC Response

USC has provided training in responding to disclosures to sexual assault and harassment developed in conjunction with the local expert sexual assault service to a range of students and staff. Key staff and students include:

- Student Central staff
- Student Representative Council members
- Student Guild staff and executives
- Academic Staff
- Wellbeing Staff
- Student leaders
- Field Education Officers
- Human Resources
- Security and Safety Staff
- Catering Staff

Ongoing training and development is planned for existing and new staff over the next 12 months.



Recommendation 6:

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:

- details of the complaint/incident;
- steps taken to respond to the complaint/incident, i.e.: whether the individual reported to police, whether the perpetrator was moved a different lecture/tutorial;
- support or assistance received, i.e.: whether the person received counselling from university services, whether they received support from an external sexual assault service;
- time taken to respond to the report and/or refer the person to support services, and
- any feedback provided by the complainant/respondent in relation to the process.

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.

USC Response

All reports of sexual harassment and assault and stored within the Student Wellbeing records, and include a report previously provided to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) outlining the concern, the supports provided, and steps require to ensure student safety. Future reports will be directed to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

The Student Grievance Coordinator position was established in early 2017 within the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students). This position functions as the central point for monitoring university grievances, with an online lodgement process available via the USC website. The position provides formal referrals and reports to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) and will, in 2018, be publishing de-identified report/s on the USC website.

Recommendation 7:

Within six months of this release of AHRC report, but at soon as possible, universities should conduct an audit of university counselling services to assess:

- the capacity of the university counselling services to respond to students' requests for counselling in an appropriately timely manner, and
- how many university counselling staff have received training in working with sexual assault survivors.

As part of this audit, universities should collect data on:

- the average length of time student 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 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.



USC Response

USC has appointed a specialist trauma informed counsellor, and more recently, the Coordinator SafeUSC, who is also a specialist sexual assault trauma informed counsellor to respond to reports of sexual harassment. The Coordinator takes the lead in responding to all reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment, and in the coordination of support to students whilst matters are under investigation. All Student Wellbeing counsellors have received internal and external (provided by Laurel Place) training in relation to responding to disclosures of sexual harassment. Crisis appointments are available every day between 9am and 5pm. All requests for service are triaged by a counsellor to assess urgency and avoid wait periods in times of high demand. The Manager of counselling services coordinates data on all sexual harassment reports, and monitors wait times closely to ensure provision for additional services as required.

Recommendation 8:

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.

USC Response

USC supports the tracking of progress and through Universities Australia will participate in relevant discussions.

Recommendation 9:

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:

- appropriate responses by a college or university residence to reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment;
- a trauma-informed and rights-based approach in a situation in which an allegation of sexual assault has been made;
- the ways that hazing practices and college 'traditions' facilitate a culture which may increase the likelihood of sexual violence;
- the role of alcohol in facilitating a culture which may increase the likelihood of sexual violence;
- the level and nature of supervision in twenty-four-hour residential setting in which large numbers of young people are living away from home; and
- the level of adequacy of training required to equip residential advisors to serve as first responders or in response to matters of sexual assault and harassment.

USC Response

- USC does not provide, manage or have operational oversight of any student residential accommodation.
- USC had developed Memoranda of Understandings with privately managed accommodation providers adjacent to the campus regarding reporting and providing protective and supportive actions to students involved in sexual harassment and sexual assault matters.
- USC has established a local level SafeUSC network with the student accommodation providers and local police, to improve support, training, referral and reporting options for students and accommodation staff.

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