

**University of Melbourne
Respect Taskforce
Meeting 3/2019**

CONFIRMED MINUTES

A meeting was held from 3.00 pm to 4:30 pm, Wednesday 18 September
Level 7 Meeting Room, Raymond Priestley Building

Members present: Pip Nicholson (chair), Archit Agrawal, Hannah Buchan, Amanda Davis, Tessa Gould, Evan Kritikakos, Jenny Morgan, Laura Tarzia, Debra Tegoni, Bruce Tobin, Margie Welsford.

BUSINESS

A. Formal Matters

A1 Welcome and Apologies

Welcome:

- Archit Agrawal, President, UMSU International
- Tessa Gould, GSA Women's Officer
- Joanne Ligouris, Executive Director Student & Scholarly Services & Academic Registrar
- Laura Tarzia, Senior Research Fellow Domestic Violence Research
- Margie Welsford, Acting Principal Janet Clarke Hall

Apologies received: Sally Eastoe, Cathy Humphreys, Joanne Ligouris, Daniel Persaud.

In attendance: Tim Brabazon (for Joanne Ligouris), Seán Hogan (for Sally Eastoe)

Thanks: Jonas Larsen, Maddy McMaster, Zimo Wang

A2 Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 22 May 2019 were confirmed as accurate.

A3 Action items

A3.1 'Always on' communication strategy (Bruce Tobin)

As previously instructed, the 'always on' communication has begun work on tailoring resources for the groups identified as being most at risk of sexual harm in the AHRC report. This has included ensuring that the materials developed reach all of the University's campuses, working with the Melbourne Disability Institute (people with a disability), the intercollegiate committee (residential colleges), human resources (casual staff) and ongoing discussions with student groups. In addition to this, the Respect information is being included in the staff onboarding process, the Respect posters have been adapted to be used as screen savers (most notably on the library computers) the Respect message was included in the Open Day material and other communications from the Vice-Chancellor.

Action: Nominee of Executive Director Marketing & Communications to provide an update on what is happening with working with student groups meeting 4, 2019.

A3.2 Anonymous register for inappropriate behaviour

The Director, Student Services provided a verbal report on the submissions to the anonymous register for the period 1 May – 21 August 2019. There were 51 submissions during this period, of which 34 related to controlling or coercive behaviour (continuing the previous trend). Just under half of the submissions described an ongoing incident or behaviour. There was also an even split between those who planned to (or had) make a formal report and those who did not. The main reasons for using the anonymous register were a fear of retaliation by the perpetrator and a fear that the reporter would not be believed. The majority of perpetrators were male, and the majority of those affected by the inappropriate behaviour were female. The dates of the incidents were spread fairly evenly between the last week, last month, last year and over a year ago.

The Safer Community Program are continuing to work with the Service Now team to improve the reporting process, and to ensure the ongoing integrity of the data. It is expected that the content and structure of the register form may need to be adjusted to refine the nature of the data collected. The Director, Students and Learning will keep the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Undergraduate) apprised of changes in this space. Written reports will be provided to the Taskforce in future as part of the quarterly reporting process. It was noted that the Safer Community Program may need expert assistance in the preparing of the written report. This was encouraged, with new member Laura Tarzia generously indicating she might assist or be able to recommend expert assistance. The written report needs to be developed to inform strategies and practices targetting the reduction of harm.

A3.3 Terms of reference for external review

Lyn Walker has been engaged to undertake the University's external review of policies and processes relating to sexual harm. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Undergraduate) has worked with Walker to refine and finalise the terms of reference, resulting in ones which were necessarily reduced from those developed by the Taskforce. The most significant change was removing the benchmarking component which Walker considered to be out of scope for an initial review (noting that recommending benchmarking on particular aspects of the work was a probable outcome of the review).

The first stage of the review has begun this week, with the University preparing material for Walker and colleagues to undertake a desktop review ahead of meeting with key stakeholders in early October. Walker is currently aiming to complete the report by the end of January, and this will be considered at meeting 1, 2020 of the Respect Taskforce.

Action: Director, Students and Learning to clarify with Walker as to how 'staff' is being defined (i.e. ongoing, fixed term, casual, honorary, independent contractor).

A3.4 Empowering bystanders to act on sexist and sexually harassing behaviours in universities project with Vic Health and Behavioural Insights Team

In 2018 as part of a project funded by VicHealth, staff and students at the University of Melbourne co-designed a light touch email-based intervention to encourage bystander action against sexist and sexually harassing behaviours. This was under the guidance of the Behavioural Insights Team

(BIT), a global organisation that uses behavioural insights to inform policy change. Concurrently an intensive online bystander training developed by Victoria University was enhanced using behavioural insights. The UoM intervention was tested in semester 1, 2019 in the Faculties of Fine Arts and Music, Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences and Science, with emails being sent out to just under 30,000 staff and students in a four-strand randomised control trial. The project was evaluated through a follow up survey for which there were 2,557 responses (8.7%).

Key findings from the University of Melbourne trial

1. The majority social norms emails drove the greatest increase in active bystanding against sexual harassment.
2. The majority social norms emails also increased bystander action against sexism among women but were not effective in encouraging action against sexism among men.
3. Assessing behaviours rather than intentions or engagement is critical to understanding what works to encourage bystander actions.

Additional findings

- Only 187 (0.85 per cent) participants opted out of receiving the emails.
- Around 80 per cent of all groups reported that they were happy to receive communications about sensitive topics from the university
- Treatment one (knowhow only) had the highest level of engagement but did not lead to changes in behaviour.

Recommendations from the combined trials

- Roll out light touch messaging about bystander action, emphasising that taking action is the norm.
- Use more intensive training approaches to further engage and build skills among already motivated individuals.
- Evaluate and measure changes in bystander action, not just intentions, attitudes and engagement.
- Design approaches specifically targeting men, especially if focussed on sexist behaviours.
- Shift the physical environment to make active bystanding normal and easy.

VicHealth will be adding the 'Take action: Empowering the bystanders to act on sexist and sexually harassing behaviours' resources to their [active bystander page](#). Based on the project's success, the Victorian Government will now provide \$145,000 to VicHealth to pilot bystander intervention methods in workplaces.

The Respect Taskforce queried whether it would be possible to access more granular data about where the emails influenced behaviour. The Taskforce also supported the use of this intervention across the University and welcomes an operational report on how this would work.

Action: Explore whether it is possible to access data that indicates where email had influence on behaviour.

Action: Indicate to the DVC (A&U) that the Task Force hopes that an operational report on how the email-based intervention to encourage bystander action against sexist and sexually harassing behaviours might be more broadly used.

A3.5 Second national survey on sexual assault and sexual harassment in Australian universities

Australian universities have commissioned and funded the second national student survey of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The next survey will be conducted by the Social Research Centre (SRC) in partnership with leading violence prevention expert Dr Anastasia Powell of RMIT and will draw on an advisory group of organisations and experts (including Laura Tarzia, one of the new members of the Respect Taskforce). The SRC conduct the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS) with Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS). The new survey will be piloted at ANU and Charles Sturt, ahead of the full national survey in 2020 and will take into consideration complaints and concerns raised about the content and delivery of the first national survey.

A4 Experts and upcoming events

- [Respect. Prevent. Respond. Conference](#). Deakin Downtown on 13–14 February 2020. Working with Diversity and Intersectionality in the Tertiary Education Sector.
- Publication of University of Melbourne Master of Journalism student [Jane Gilmore's](#) 'Fixed it. Violence and representation of women in the media'.

A5 Report from the Chair

In late May of this year, Neil Cobb (Manchester) gave a presentation to a subsection of the Taskforce on 'Student sexual misconduct – a view from England', which provided a fascinating comparison between the UK and Australian responses to the issue of sexual harm in universities. Of particular interest was the background on why the UK has experienced increasing parliamentary pressure on self-regulation (Cobb was surprised by the lack of a government intervention via a unifying group in Australia), and the range of different attitudes and practices around disciplinary proceedings across the UK institutions. Cobb also raised the issue of due diligence around employing staff.

B1

Topic	Due diligence inquiries prior to making academic and professional staff appointments
Presenters	Debra Tegoni
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As noted above, Cobb's presentation in May raised the question of what the University's due diligence requirements are when making new staff appointments, with a particular focus on prior allegations of sexual misconduct or abuse of power.• Similarly, if the University is aware of an offender who leaves the University, is there a duty of care involved in not facilitating a move which would entail a high likelihood of harm befalling others?• Some sectors have stringent probity checks as part of the employment process (for example casinos). This may include police checks as well as statutory declarations about prior complaints made (or upheld).• While these checks provide a level of employment hygiene, there needs to be a dedicated expert responsible for evaluating and making a judgement call regarding the content of the checks. This also needs to be supported

	<p>by clearly defined escalation pathways and processes. There are also serious issues around confidentiality and privacy laws.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is consistent with the University's current process for working with children checks. The process for this could potentially be expanded for particular roles and responsibilities. • It was noted that at present there is a huge variation in the way that employment of new staff is managed at the University – particularly with regard to what, if any, training staff receive about managing reference checks, or undertaking social media/IT checks.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chair to flag concerns regarding current employment process (and training provided for those making offers of employment) with DVC (A & U); prior to a discussion with HR (Chancellery).</i>

B2

Topic	Universities UK - Tackling Online Harassment
Presenters	Pip Nicholson
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2016 UUK produced guidelines for UK universities on tackling sexual harassment and hate crime (Changing the Culture) • Noted then that there was a growing problem with online harassment, and the difficulties of managing this (especially as it further blurs the borders between 'personal' and 'university' time and location) • This new guidance offers a set of principles and recommendations to UK universities to help ensure that students have a positive experience of technology – including understanding how to stay safe online, and how to recognise and report offensive content and behaviour. • The issue of online harassment is one that has arisen previously at the Taskforce and is included as one of the special focus areas for the communication plan. • With MSPACE and FlexAp the University has an escalating formal engagement with the online environment, but the informal social media space is also increasingly referenced in complaints. • The University's policies do not specifically address the online space, and there are constraints on what is actionable under these policies. These are not well understood by students. • There is little in the way of guidance or support around online misconduct at present on the UoM staff or student pages.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chair to discuss with Provost and DVC(A&U) what the current situation is, proposals for the future and recommendation for working group to determine what good university practice would look like.</i>

C. Items for noting

C1. National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse 2018-2027 (opt in by June 30, 2020).

Action: Chair to follow up with DVC(A) on current UoM position

C2. Universities Australia and Australian Psychological Association are close to finalising three staff training modules which will be provided free of charge to all Australian universities. One for:

- all staff, educating them about the drivers of violence against women (with input from Our Watch, DVRCV and Northern CASA forum) and the basics of a compassionate first response
- senior leaders
- counsellors

C3. A new 2-year SSAF funded position in Advocacy (the Sexual Harassment/Assault Resource and Education (SHARE) Advisor) has been established. Dr Patrick Tidmarsh is the inaugural appointee. Dr Tidmarsh has been asked to report to the Taskforce on their findings and recommendations.

C4. AFR Higher Education Awards: The University of Melbourne won an award in the Community Engagement category for its Well-Being Profiler program (developed by the Centre for Positive Psychology) which is currently being used with thousands of students across schools and youth organisations nationally and internationally.

C5. The Victorian Police have launched an online assistance line for reporting non-urgent crimes or events <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/palolr>