Australian Human Rights Commission

Implementation of recommendations from *Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities*

Recommendation no.	Action already taken or in progress
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: • the university's senior leadership • the 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 Respect Taskforce was established in 2016 and includes representatives from the university's senior leadership (academic and professional), student groups, residential colleges affiliated with the University, Wellbeing services and response units, legal services and academic experts. Additional expertise is drawn upon as required. • The Taskforce has developed a roadmap, which informs the specific actions to be taken to implement the AHRC recommendations. • The minutes and associated resources from the Taskforce meetings are publicly available on the Taskforce homepage along with annual reports on progress and actions taken • The Taskforce provides reports to the Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive and Council about progress made against the recommendations and other initiatives. • In addition to this the dedicated Respect Initiative adviser meets regularly with stakeholders from across the University (both staff and student) to discuss ongoing issues and priorities.

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.	• Additional stakeholder meetings are held as required. • There will be ongoing reporting and evaluation of actions taken. • In 2020 a Respect Community of Practice will be established to oversee and support the implementation of new actions arising from Respect Taskforce directives
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 supportive attitudes' and bystander intervention, and • identifies existing resources and communications campaigns that reinforce key messages of education programs for dissemination to staff and students.	• *Consent matters* online module provided to all students, scaffolded by information about support services, policies and the University's values and expectations. • Ongoing communication campaign including: posters; flyers; pocket brochures; postcards; social media; staff briefings; email tile, video featuring the Vice-Chancellor. This will continue to be developed and be fine-tuned to target specific groups and areas over time. • Online resource pack for staff developed and expanded as new resources are developed.

Education programs and communications should:

- target all levels of the organisation – current and future students, staff, residential colleges, 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

- be developed in consultation with university students, and

- include measures for evaluating and refining the actions taken.

- MySafety web resource (co-designed with students) developed to provide targeted information and resources for students experiencing gender-based violence, as victims, perpetrators or bystanders.

- Ongoing campaigns led by the Safer Community Program, including website with links to resources and help guides and *UniSafe* App (since 2012)

- Respect Week (since 2016)

- Student wellbeing interventions for large undergraduate orientation camps (since 2017)

- Counselling and Psychological Services service enhancements (staff training and refreshers; appointment booking process; physical location of services)

- Student Union has introduced new rules and restrictions around the provision of alcohol for union organised events.

- Alcohol and drug education training made available to camp and club leaders.

- *Active bystanding against sexist behaviours and sexual harassment - Changing social norms by directly communicating with the university population* in partnership with: Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), VicHealth: The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

	• Online resources / videos targeted at graduate students (including a subscription to the Australian Council of Graduate Research Respectful Research Training videos and support materials) • Evaluation of the initial roll out of *Consent Matters* • Investigation of ways to embed values and culture in curriculum and learning environments (in progress) • Faculty specific workshops are run for staff to provide them with information about behaviours that constitute sexual assault and sexual harassment, consent and respectful relationships, 'violence supportive attitudes' and bystander intervention. These will be evaluated and continue to be developed in an iterative fashion and aimed at reaching an ever-expanding number of staff. • Safer Sex program • Engaged in relevant research including on public transport safety for tertiary students and teaching about gender-based violence.
Recommendation 3 In order to ensure students and staff know about support services and reporting processes for sexual assault or sexual harassment, universities should:	• Information circulated to all staff • 'Always on' messaging has included a range of media over the course of the year to disseminate information.

- 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 a 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

- 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

- *Consent Matters* LMS community ensures information is readily available to all students

- Information included in 'First Year at Melbourne' meetings for commencing undergraduates.

- Safer Community Program and Counselling and Psychological Services have pre-existing and ongoing relationships with external referral services.

- Respect Taskforce website provides minutes and supporting documentation, links to relevant internal and external resources

- Development of consolidated web-based resources on student rights and responsibilities/ complaints and misconduct, to ensure they are accessible and better connected

- Review and upgrade of key websites, development of new websites as required

- Upgrading of research supervisor training (MCSHE) to include explicit reference to these issues (ongoing)

- Anonymous Register for Inappropriate Behaviour launched in mid-March 2019 to gather more complete data about the scope and nature of these behaviours and to develop, implement and evaluate preventative measures.

that these measures have been effective in increasing awareness among staff and students.	• There will be ongoing reviews and evaluations undertaken to support these actions and activities. • Sexual Harassment/Assault and Education (SHARE) Advisor – new position in student advocacy services
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: • ensure the immediate safety and wellbeing of the individual who has experienced the sexual assault or sexual harassment • are clear and accessible	• Processes internally reviewed pre-survey release and are have since been re- assessed vigorously against these criteria. Implementation of recommendations now in place. • CAPS include LGBTIQ specialist counsellors, as well as staff from a diverse range of backgrounds. • Confirmation of existing CAPS relationship with CASA and other external services • Internal evaluation to develop and review policies, processes for responding to sexual harassment and assault, and related information resources. • Independent, expert-led review undertaken by Lyn Walker & Associates. Awaiting final report and recommendations. • Ongoing work on improving the experience of victim-survivors when they make a report, including the provision of an anonymous register for inappropriate behaviours; an external confidential disclosure and reporting service, and investigation into an external anonymous escrow system for reporting and investigating reports.

- 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, and - accommodate the needs of students from a diverse range of backgrounds.	
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.	- Identification of staff most likely to receive disclosures (ongoing) - Training for UMSU identified student first responders (ongoing) - Training and support provided by Safer Community Program - Best training options to be implemented and evaluated (ongoing), providing both face to face and online training where possible to maximise both reach and depth of information provided (under development)

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 to a different lecture/tutorial • 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 • 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.	• Staff and students encouraged to direct student disclosures to SCP where possible, and staff disclosures to the Inappropriate Workplace Behaviour Line or HR. • Numbers of reports of sexual assault / harassment very low to date and access to data is limited to responsible parties • Where reports are received the details regarding nature of the complaint, steps taken to investigate, time taken to resolve, nature of response, feedback and support provided are all recorded confidentially. • VC is provided with regular reports • Provision of an anonymous register for inappropriate behaviours; an external confidential disclosure and reporting service, and investigation into an external anonymous escrow system for reporting and investigating reports. • The anonymous register has been provided to allow for continuous improvement even where victim-survivors or witnesses are not ready to make a formal complaint. Data collected from the register will be made available to the community on the Respect Taskforce page.

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.	• Ongoing work to improve way in which this data is recorded and stored, and investigation of ways to collect and maintain a combined repository of data.
Recommendation 7 Within six months of this report, but as soon as possible, universities should conduct an audit of university counselling services to assess: • the capacity of 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 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 counselling services are required to meet the urgent needs of	• Caseload / wait time is regularly reviewed as BAU • Additional counsellors provided from semester 2 2017. • CAPS staff have undertaken refresher training in responding to sexual assault (CASA West) • New appointment process successfully trialled by CAPS to significantly reduce wait times (same day or following day appointments as well the drop-in service) • Additional trained staff member in advocacy unit specifically to respond to issues of sexual and gender-based violence

students who have experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment. If additional counselling services are required, universities should ensure that these additional resources are in place as soon as practicable.	
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.	• Committed to participating in future surveys
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	• Streamlined incident reporting has improved ability to identify and respond where incidents affect both University and College. • Colleges have significantly increased the amount of training for staff and students • Alignment of University and affiliated Colleges policies, processes, incident management and reporting (in progress) • Led by an external expert the colleges have developed stand-alone policies and procedures for dealing with

• 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 a twenty-four-hour residential setting in which large numbers of young people are living away from home, and • 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.	sexual misconduct and; discrimination bullying and victimisation • external reviews are being undertaken in individual colleges