



WESTERN'S PROGRESS ALIGNED TO THE AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S *CHANGE THE COURSE* RECOMMENDATIONS (as of June 2021)

On 1 August 2017, the Report which was based on a sector-wide survey undertaken by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) was released to Australian universities.

The Report drew three major conclusions based on the total data set:

1. There was a concerning prevalence of both sexual harassment and sexual assault in Australian Universities, which was reflective of the experience of sexual violence in the Australian community;
2. There was considerable under-reporting of sexual harassment and sexual assault occurring within Australian Universities; and
3. Universities should be more active in their efforts to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment, to develop a culture of respect and to respond appropriately by supporting survivors and in sanctioning offenders.

WSU's results were consistent with or better than the national data in almost all areas of the study. The University continues to demonstrate its commitment to addressing sexual violence through the RNA/ Respectful Relationships project and its actions and initiatives.

At the time of the release of the Report, the AHRC, Universities Australia (UA) and the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) each released a set of recommendations including best practice actions which universities should take in responding to the report.

In early 2019, Western Sydney University was invited to be part of a Respect and Equality in Universities pilot initiative involving Universities Australia, Our Watch and the Victorian Government's Office for Women.

As a result of this work, the pilot universities (Western Sydney University, Southern Cross University, Monash University and La Trobe University) compiled the foundations of a long-term plan to prevent violence against women and LGBTIQ-identifying people at their institutions.

It is envisaged that the resources, toolkits and workplace standards developed will be implemented as part of a whole of institution model across the University sector in the future.

Western’s progress in relation to both projects is shown below:

Recommendation	Actions taken since August 2017
<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Vice-Chancellors take direct responsibility to implement recommendations, including decision-making and monitoring and evaluation of actions taken. Establish an advisory body. Develop an action plan.</i></p>	<p>The role of the Taskforce which was established in August 2017 with ongoing leadership by the Vice-Chancellor is to implement a whole-of-university response to the 9 recommendations of the AHRC Report (and encompassing the 10 UA and 19 CAPA recommendations) to promote respectful relationships and improved campus culture.</p> <p>Since the release of the <i>Change the Course</i> report, 13 meetings have been held as of June 2021. Representation on the Taskforce includes the Board of Trustees, a broad cross section of our student and staff community, including from the Counselling and Disability Service as well as external representation including three sexual assault services.</p> <p>Student representation encompasses the SRC, indigenous, international, residential, HDR, Ally Network and students with a disability. Following the University being selected in early 2019 for the <i>Respect and Equality in Universities</i> pilot, an initiative of Universities Australia (UA) and Our Watch, the Respect.Now.Always. (RNA) Taskforce became the Respectful Relationships Taskforce in June 2019.</p>

	<p>This Taskforce now has an expanded remit which considers workplace leadership, structures and culture as well as promoting gender equality with students through the development of national respectful relationships education and training programs.</p> <p>A Respect. Now. Always. Project team was established in June 2017 with a dedicated Project Officer and Project Support Assistant with the primary task of implementing initiatives.</p>
<p>2</p> <p><i>Universities develop a plan for addressing the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment that includes education programs, and identifies existing resources and communications campaigns that reinforce key messages</i></p>	<p>An action plan established in 2017 focusing on sexual assault and sexual harassment with mechanisms for regular review to guide future actions is a living document and continues to be updated with the most recent review having taken place in May 2021. Reports which highlight work undertaken during the period are provided to the Taskforce on a quarterly basis and to other relevant committees/bodies in response to request.</p> <p>Initiatives to address the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Respect. Now. Always. Student Ambassador program, with ambassadors as integral partners in the Project, assisting with planning and implementing events, co-delivering messages, developing initiatives and providing feedback. This involves a five- level engagement strategy (supporters, ambassadors, ambassador champions, interns (paid) and interns (credit). The Ambassadors are supported through face to face and online training. • Cross-campus online and face-to-face communications and awareness program enacted including digital signage, student paper editorials, brochures, social media, and presence at student-facing events across all campuses. Of particular note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation (into seven community languages) of materials aimed at international students;

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-developed poster series and safety cards aimed at changing the behaviour of social media perpetrators of sexual harassment; and • Pop-up stalls at each campus during Open days and campus orientations, expos, fairs and International Student Safety Sessions, Me Too Early Career Researchers event and Gender Unlimited events. • Establishing a First Responder Network communications platform with information on self-care and support resources. • Releasing tailored, themed communications through the RNA newsletter and social media channels on a monthly basis. • <i>Take Action</i> effective bystander campaign – a week-long R U OK-linked campaign in partnership with Student Engagement involving communications, resource sharing and a workshop. • <i>16 Days</i> campaign aligned with the United Nations International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women. • Promotion of OurWatch’s <i>Doing Nothing Does Harm/Do Something</i> bystander campaign (new phase launched on 19 April 2021) including provision of information on the University’s digital screens. • Weekly RNA Instagram posts promoting Western Fair, Respect@Western call out for students and staff, March Newsletter and the Statement of Support for the Rights of Sexuality and Gender Diverse People. • Adverse Behaviours social media carousel, six factsheets on how make a report on the social media channel, and development of a Qualtrics interactive form. • In conjunction with the Office of Equity and Diversity, worked with Sexualities and Gender Research to create and promote tailored Mardi Gras resources for 2021 with a focus on prevention. • <i>A Respect@Western</i> project, funded by the Vice-Chancellor’s Gender Equality Fund which will use communications as a primary prevention approach to address the gendered drivers of sexual assault and |
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	<p>sexual harassment in the University context using a number of different mediums including social media, video and online magazine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke education initiatives embedded in the broader University’s calendar and are facilitated in conjunction with a range of University Schools and Units. Each initiative includes networking, training, resource-sharing and related elements. Specific examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respectful and Responsible online training module for students, developed by the team at Monash University, was customised for the purposes of WSU. Roll-out of the training commenced in January 2019, initially with all (800+) residential students and Residential Assistants as well as UniSports leaders and athletes and other key student mentor audiences including Ask Us Assistants and PASS Facilitators. • Working with the Sydney City Campus/Navitas Respectful Relationships Committee to enable SIBT students to access the Respectful and Responsible module. • Facilitating respectful relationship training sessions for Higher Degree Research (HDR) students. These are based around a series of training videos on respectful research training produced by the Australian Council of Graduate Research. Respectful relationship training sessions have also been incorporated into HDR supervisor modules and reviews. • Collaboration with the Lead, Engage, Aspire and Develop (LEAD) program to relaunch the Student Leadership Training vUWS portal to induct, train, motivate and manage RNA Ambassadors. This training includes a module on Consent and the Respectful & Responsible module. • Delivery of LEAD training “LEADing with empathy” to undergraduate and postgraduate students from a range of Schools. • Delivering presentations to Student Services and Human Resources teams and The College’s First Year Experience Co-ordinators. • Co-delivery of tutorials for the School of Science and Health in the Public Health unit.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conversations on Consent</i> - an open inquiry into consent in its various contexts and manifestations as part of Diversity Fest 2020 under the <i>Communications</i> theme. • <i>Responding to Disclosures</i> - pilot Zoom delivery of adapted training. • Implementation of the OurWatch <i>Upskilling Preservice Professionals</i> (UPP) pilot, in partnership with School Deans, DAPs, Unit Coordinators and the Office of Equity and Diversity, for the School of Health Sciences/Occupational Therapy and School of Social Sciences/Criminology. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External relationships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Health - Sexual Assault Service (three sexual assault services represented on the Taskforce) • Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia • NSW Police • Mt Druitt Women’s Health Centre (WASH House) • Men’s Health Week • Lifeline Macarthur • Other universities undertaking similar projects. <p>Completion of a self-assessment tool which scored the University’s levers, being, values and behaviours, structure and policies and culture and norms, against each of the five domains in the Respect and Equality in University model developed by Our Watch.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p><i>Universities should ensure students and staff know about support services</i></p>	<p>An online Sexual Offences Reporting portal to enable reports of issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment at any time was launched in early 2020.</p> <p>https://offencereport.westernsydney.edu.au/</p>

<p><i>and reporting processes for sexual assault or sexual harassment</i></p>	<p>In conjunction with the Corporate and Student Communication Unit, commenced a University-wide promotions campaign to increase knowledge of support services and report options available internally and externally to coincide with the launch of the Sexual Offences Reporting Portal. This has also included promotion using RNA Instagram, Western Life, and official Western social media).</p> <p>Development of a 30-second video (including Auslan translation) to coincide with the launch of the Portal featuring 12 RNA Student Ambassadors.</p> <p>Counsellors within the University’s Counselling Service trained in best-practice trauma-informed care by the Full Stop Foundation (NSW RDVSA) and by the Gendered Violence Research Network (GVRN).</p>
<p>4</p> <p><i>Within a year, universities should commission an independent, expert led review of existing university policies and response pathways in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment, to assess effectiveness and make specific recommendations to universities about best practice responses.</i></p>	<p>Development of Sexual Offences Response Policy and Procedures which involved wide internal and external stakeholder input, including input from the Gendered Violence Research Network (GVRN) and specialist local sexual assault agencies.</p> <p>An independent review of all of the University’s existing policies, procedures and protocols in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment was undertaken by GVRN in March 2019. Responses and actions to the review were implemented to address areas of improvement highlighted including a review of the University’s Sexual Offences Response Policy and Procedures and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy.</p> <p>A mapping exercise was undertaken to identify developments and relationships across the University and externally of the activities of the RNA Project Team (e.g. SAGE, Gender Unlimited, Ally Network, Me Too! And Bystander Anti-Racism Project).</p>

	Finalised review of the Gender Equity (GE) Plan in May 2021 in conjunction with the Office of Equity and Diversity, against the Educating for Equality prevention toolkit (Our Watch) to broaden the scope of the GE strategy to include prevention and the whole university/student lifecycle and identified gaps to inform the development of the new GE Plan.
<p>5</p> <p><i>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 and ensure those identified receive appropriate training.</i></p>	<p>Completed a First Responder gap analysis with a plan established to target staff and students most likely to receive disclosures.</p> <p>A First Responder Network established with representation from the majority of Schools. A First Responder training module developed in collaboration with the Sexualities and Genders Research Network.</p> <p>Undertook a literature review of best practice in relation to addressing Gender-Based Violence in Universities.</p> <p>Rolled out a series of training videos produced by the Australian Council of Graduate Research by the Graduate Research School on respectful research training which will complement training sessions for 2019 Higher Degree Research students.</p> <p>Delivery of tutorials for the School of Public Health / Social determinants of health / Gender as a determinant of health with positive student and staff feedback.</p> <p>Contributed to the development of an online module by Our Watch through the conduct of student focus groups.</p>
<p>6</p> <p><i>Universities should ensure that information about</i></p>	<p>Activation of a Sexual Offences Reporting Portal which involved collaboration with the University's Complaints Resolution Unit, Office of General Counsel, academics and student services to enable all students to report issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment at any time. This includes an introductory video</p>

<p><i>individual disclosures and reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment is collected and stored confidentially and used for continuous improvement of processes.</i></p>	<p>solely featuring students with accessibility features including captioning and Auslan translation.</p> <p>This complements the work undertaken by the Complaints Resolution Unit which receives, and registers reports on sexual offences. Parameters regarding collecting information were established with the Office of General Counsel, the Counselling Service and Campus Safety and Security, consistent with AHRC guidelines. De-identified data about individual disclosures and reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment, including trends or identifiable concerns which arise, along with recommendations for any necessary improvements to processes and information on complainants' satisfaction with outcomes and process are shared with the Taskforce at each meeting with detailed reports provided to the Vice-Chancellor on a six-monthly basis.</p> <p>The University continues to work closely the NSW Health Sexual Assault Service and NSW Police to ensure incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment are responded to appropriately and to strengthen reporting protocols.</p>
<p>7</p> <p><i>Within six months of this report, universities should conduct an audit of university counselling services to assess adequacy of capacity and training and undertake data collection.</i></p>	<p>Independent audit of the University's Student Counselling Services completed by Macquarie University with an assessment of responsiveness of service, training received by University counselling staff and the number of urgent/crisis requests for counselling received.</p> <p>Request for Proposal drafted to commission an independent expert to undertake a formal audit of the University's Counselling Service with specific reference to the capacity of the Service to support students who have been affected by sexual assault and sexual harassment (delayed due to COVID-19).</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>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.</i></p>	<p>Western Sydney University and its Board of Trustees have always indicated their commitment to participating in the next national university student survey of sexual assault and sexual harassment.</p> <p>On behalf of the sector, Universities Australia has committed to conducting the survey at three yearly intervals. Universities Australia has announced that the second national student survey on sexual assault and sexual harassment will be undertaken in 2021 (deferred from 2020 due to COVID 19). The survey instrument will be piloted by the Australian National University and Charles Sturt University prior to broader release in September 2021.</p> <p>In preparation for the National Student Safety Survey, reviewed and populated checklist from Universities Australia in May 2021.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Residential colleges and university residences should consider implementing report recommendations, and commission an independent, expert-led review of the factors which contribute to sexual</i></p>	<p>Independent expert-led review conducted by Senate SJ for Campus Living Villages with resulting proposals for change.</p> <p>Workshops facilitated for Campus Living Village (CLV) residents and Residential Assistants on respectful relationships, consent and positive intervention.</p> <p>From January 2019, an online pre-arrival induction has been undertaken by all residents which includes a compulsory consent module</p>

<p><i>assault and sexual harassment in their settings.</i></p>	<p>Creation of a non-student platform for CLV residents as a result of collaboration between the RNA Project Team and CLV with 100% completion of Respectful & Responsible module by all current non-student residents at all Western campuses within a 2-week period.</p> <p>Paper prepared on Gender Inclusive Housing and room selection and associated staff communications, testing and training undertaken. CLV have confirmed this is a first in UK, US and ANZ operations. Update of the CLV Portal with students able to make room selections in line with the work on gender inclusive housing from early 2021.</p>
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