

Change the Course – National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities

Recommendations

The following Recommendations summarise the more comprehensive Recommendations contained within the *Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities*.

The Western Sydney University response outlined below is a high-level excerpt from the University's comprehensive plan to address the Recommendations.

Recommendation 1

Establishment of the required governance structures and ensuring the leadership of Vice-Chancellors in the timely and comprehensive implementation of the Report's recommendations

Western Sydney University Response

Alongside the engagement with students, staff and other stakeholders from University's Respect.Now.Always. (RNA) Project which was established in February 2016, the RNA Working Party will evolve to become the RNA Advisory Group.

Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) to be Chair of the RNA Advisory Group. Inclusion of Campus Living Village and NSW Sexual Assault Service members

RNA Advisory Group to develop an action plan in relation to the recommendations made by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC).

Recommendation 2

Develop a plan for addressing the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment accompanied by an education program and communications

Western Sydney University Response

Continuation of commitment to the already established cultural change program in relation to zero tolerance for sexual assault and sexual harassment throughout the University driven by the University's Senior Executive Group

Continued development and review of the existing Western Sydney University Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault plan with a focus on regular review of the gap analysis to guide future action. For example:

- Further development of Consent Matters vUWS site with training module to be made compulsory for all students to complete

- Implementation of an awareness campaign (including involvement of Student Ambassadors) in relation to what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual assault
- Implementation of an awareness campaign regarding support services available
- Targeted training to continue with high risk groups
- Further development of culturally sensitive, targeted information provided to international students during international student orientation

Recommendation 3

Take action to ensure information about reporting avenues and support services is widely disseminated and easily accessible. Evaluate actions to ensure activities have increased awareness

Western Sydney University Response

Disseminate information about university reporting avenues and internal and external support services to staff and students. For example:

- Implementation of University wide Communications Plan
- Posters developed by Student Ambassadors to be displayed on all campuses
- Editorial in the student newspaper (W'SUP) to raising awareness of sexual assault and sexual harassment, how to report and the supports available following the release of the results of the National Survey
- Updates to the web in relation to reporting process
- Wallet size resource developed for international students (safety information regarding sexual harassment and sexual assault presented with cultural sensitivity to be translated into a variety of languages)
- Information about internal and external reporting procedures and support services provided to students as part of their University orientation
- Recruitment of a RNA Project Officer and Project Support Assistant role with responsibility for ensuring a preventative approach to sexual harassment and sexual assault as well as developing appropriate responses and support mechanisms to disclosures of sexual harassment and sexual assault by students and staff and organising awareness raising events across the University respectively.

Recommendation 4

Universities must take steps to ensure that students who experience sexual assault or sexual harassment have access to specialist support, from a service provider with the required expertise and training in this area

Within a year of the release of this report, the University should commission an independent, expert-led review of existing university policies and response pathways in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment

Western Sydney University Response

In 2016, the University consulted with (independent expert-led review) NSW Police International, NSW Police Sex Crimes Squad and NSW Health Sexual Assault Service to assist with the development of the Guidelines for Staff in Responding to Sexual Offences.

Advice available to staff via the *Sexual Offences – Staff Response Procedures* which includes a flow chart on appropriate response by staff was approved in February 2017. This complements the *Sexual Harassment Prevention* policy.

Prior to August 2018, the University will conduct an independent expert-led review of existing University policies and response pathways to determine best practice and survivor-centric policies and guidelines for responding to disclosures of sexual offences.

Recommendation 5

Universities should conduct an assessment to identify staff and student representatives most likely to receive disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment and ensure these staff members and student representatives receive training

Western Sydney University Response

Conduct an assessment to identify staff members and student representatives most likely to receive disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Student Support Services (Counselling, Disability and Welfare staff), Badanami staff, Chaplaincy Coordinators, Student Representation and Participation staff and PASS Program Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator and Student Central staff will complete training in Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Offences.

Student Support Services staff have completed the 'Sex, Safety and Respect' training and are now assisting with the delivery of the 'Sex, Safety and Respect training' across the University and with Campus Living Villages.

Student Ambassadors, Student Leaders and Women's Officers will be offered First Responder Training, to ensure they are provided with education on how to respond and support someone who has disclosed. This training will also be provided to University staff who may find themselves in the role of first responders.

Staff including representatives from Campus Safety & Security, Welfare Officers, Residential Assistants, Campus Life staff, Chaplain Coordinators and Counsellors will also attend the First Responder training.

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

At least every six months, Vice-Chancellors should be provided with de-identified reports of this data, including trends or identifiable concerns which arise, along with recommendations for any necessary improvements to processes

Western Sydney University Response

The Complaints Resolution Unit receives and registers reports of sexual offences on the Complaints Handling System and will provide de-identified reports and recommendations to the Vice Chancellor on a six monthly basis

Recommendation 7

Within six months of the release of the national report, but as soon as possible, universities should conduct an audit of university counselling services, with a particular focus on the ability to support students who have been affected by sexual assault or sexual harassment

Western Sydney University Response

University Counselling staff have completed trauma based telephone counselling training, complex trauma and vicarious trauma training.

All Counselling staff will complete the first responder training and additional training in trauma informed clinical interventions.

The University Counselling Service has implemented 'same day' counselling appointments with each Counsellor having one appointment available each day. Additional appointments to be scheduled in response to demand.

A 1800 hotline initiated by Universities Australia will be available to all students from 1st August 2017.

By early 2018, the University will conduct an audit of university counselling services.

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.

Western Sydney University Response

Universities Australia has committed to repeating the survey and Western Sydney University will again commit its support to this.

Recommendation 9

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.

Western Sydney University Response

Discussions to be held with the Campus Living Village Board regarding this requirement.

