

# Respect. Now. Always. Plan

## 2017 onwards

### Overview

In August 2017, the Australian Human Rights Commission published the *Change the Course* report on the results of the *National University Student Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment*. The survey found that just over 50 per cent of university students experienced sexual harassment in 2016, and 7 per cent were sexually assaulted in 2015 or 2016.

The *Change the Course* report provided nine recommendations for universities, focused on five areas:

- Leadership and governance: visible commitment to, and transparent implementation of, recommendations
- Changing attitudes and behaviours: measures to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment
- University responses to sexual assault and sexual harassment: effective processes and policies
- Monitoring and evaluation: evaluation and improvements are made over time
- Residential colleges and university residences: cultural improvement and risk management

Recommendation 1 advises universities to develop a plan to address the recommendations in *Change the Course*. This document is ECU's action plan, overseen by the Vice Chancellor and the *Respect.Now.Always* Advisory Group.

The recommendations are summarised below, and provided in full in the relevant section.

### Recommendations by the Australian Human Rights Commission

| No. | Description  | Page |
|-----|--|------|
| 1:  | Implement an advisory body to report directly to the Vice-Chancellor, develop an action plan to address the recommendations, and report on progress.   | 2    |
| 2:  | Develop a plan to educate students and staff about behaviours that constitute sexual assault and sexual harassment, consent, respectful relationships and bystander intervention.                    | 3    |
| 3:  | Disseminate accessible information to students and staff about reporting procedures and support services, develop relationships with external services, and evaluate the actions undertaken.         | 5    |
| 4:  | Commission an independent, expert-led review of university policies and response pathways in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment. In the interim, develop and review current processes. | 7    |
| 5:  | Conduct an assessment to identify staff and students most likely to receive disclosures, and ensure they receive specialist training.  | 9    |
| 6:  | Ensure that information is collected and stored confidentially, and used for continuous process improvement, including de-identified reports to the Vice-Chancellor.                                 | 10   |
| 7:  | Conduct an audit of university counselling services to assess capacity and current levels of training, and put in place additional resources if required.  | 11   |
| 8:  | Engage an independent body to conduct a national university student survey of sexual assault and sexual harassment to track progress.  | 11   |
| 9:  | Commission an independent, expert-led review of the factors that contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in residential colleges and university residences.                               | 12   |

# Recommendation 1: Implementation body and action plan

*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 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.*

| 1   | Strategy   | Timeline                | Responsibility           | Indicator/action  |
|-----|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1.1 | Establish an advisory body with representatives as listed in the recommendation.                 | Sep 2017                | PVC(E&I)                 | Establish an advisory group.  |
|     |  | Nov 2017                | PVC(E&I)                 | Finalise the terms of reference.  |
|     |  | Dec 2017                | PVC(E&I)                 | Hold regular scheduled meetings.  |
| 1.2 | Develop an action plan to implement the recommendations.   | May 2018                | D SGSC<br>D SSC          | Seek student input to the action plan.  |
|     |  | May 2018                | D SGSC                   | Finalise the action plan.   |
|     |  | Once finalised          | D SSC<br>D SGSC          | Communicate the plan to students and staff, including a location on ECU's website.  |
| 1.3 | Share information with other universities and related organisations to facilitate best practice. | Ongoing                 | D SSC<br>D SGSC          | Seek information from, and share information with, other institutions and organisations on best practice in responding to the <i>Change the Course</i> report and <i>Respect.Now.Always</i> . |
| 1.4 | Monitor and assess progress towards the recommendations.   | Ongoing                 | Advisory Group           | Keep all stakeholders informed of progress towards the recommendations.   |
| 1.5 | Publicly report on the University's progress towards the recommendations.                        | Feb 2019, then annually | Advisory Group<br>D SGSC | Publish a report on our website based on the assessments of our progress.   |

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## Recommendation 2: Education and training programs

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.

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.

| 2   | Strategy  | Timeline | Responsibility | Indicator/action   |
|-----|---|----------|----------------|--|
| 2.1 | Establish a working group to investigate and lead the items in this recommendation. | Dec 2017 | Advisory Group | Establish a working group to lead ECU's responses to this recommendation, comprising students, academic staff, CLT, SSC, HR, external specialists, and others as appropriate.  |
| 2.2 | Identify existing educational resources and communications at ECU.                  | May 2018 | Working Group  | Identify the strategies, resources and communications previously used at ECU, to see if these can be reused or leveraged.  |
| 2.3 | Identify educational resources outside ECU.   | May 2018 | Working Group  | Identify the external resources relevant to training of students and staff, which may be reused or adapted.  |
| 2.4 | Determine suitable education strategies for university-wide implementation.         | Jul 2018 | Working Group  | Select the most appropriate method and style for educating students, in consultation with experts and students. Consider needs of HDR students and students in diversity groups. Determine how success will be evaluated.                                    |
|     |   | Jul 2018 | Working Group  | Review the most appropriate method and style for educating staff, in consultation with experts and HR. Different 'bands' of training (levels of complexity/competency) are likely required depending on staff role. Determine how success will be evaluated. |

| 2   | Strategy                                 | Timeline                 | Responsibility | Indicator/action  |
|-----|--|--------------------------|----------------|---|
| 2.5 | Obtain/develop training resources.       | Jul 2018 onwards         | Working Group  | Customise/obtain/develop resources as required.   |
| 2.6 | Deliver education to students and staff. | After training developed | Working Group  | Deliver training to students.   |
|     |  | After training developed | Working Group  | Deliver training to staff.  |
| 2.7 | Evaluate and refine the actions taken.   | After training delivery  | Working Group  | Assess the effectiveness of the training in the short-term and the long-term, and refine as required. |

# Recommendation 3: Information provision and reporting processes

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 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 that these measures have been effective in increasing awareness among staff and students.

| 3   | Strategy   | Timeline             | Responsibility  | Indicator/action  |
|-----|--|----------------------|-----------------|---|
| 3.1 | Disseminate information about university reporting avenues, support services, and security services to students.                               | Aug 2017 and ongoing | D SSC<br>D FSC  | Provide information to students, and review the ongoing availability and accessibility of information.<br><br>Information should consider the specific needs of LGBTIQ students, students with disability, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, international students, higher degree by research students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and external/online students (within Australia). |
| 3.2 | Disseminate information detailing university reporting avenues, individual responsibilities, support services, and security services to staff. | Aug 2017 and ongoing | D HRSC<br>D FSC | Provide information to staff, and review the ongoing availability and accessibility of information.   |

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| 3   | Strategy   | Timeline | Responsibility  | Indicator/action  |
|-----|--|----------|-----------------|---|
| 3.3 | Review and improve placement/visibility of information on ECU's website.   | Dec 2017 | D SSC           | Review information on the website, including accessibility, and other related information, e.g. <a href="#">sexual health</a> web page. Ensure information is accessible to all students and staff, including people with disability and people for whom English is not their first language. |
| 3.4 | Identify/develop information for provision to students as part of orientation.   | Feb 2018 | D SSC           | Provide materials to students during orientation.   |
| 3.5 | Identify/develop information for provision to staff as part of their induction/on-boarding, including temporary and sessional staff. | Dec 2018 | D HRSC          | Review information provided to staff during induction/on-boarding. Ensure diversity (e.g. LGBTIQ, race, culture, disability) is included in training.   |
|     |  | Jun 2018 | D HRSC          | Review visibility of ALLY training.   |
| 3.6 | Review and strengthen relationships with external services to enable referral where necessary.                                       | Dec 2017 | D SSC           | Identify existing relationships between ECU, student organisations and external services and action opportunities for strengthened and new connections.   |
| 3.7 | Evaluate the activities undertaken to increase awareness, and refine as necessary.   | Ongoing  | D SSC<br>D HRSC | Evaluate the activities, and refine as necessary.   |
| 3.8 | Review information provided to ECU students travelling overseas.   | Dec 2018 | D SSC           | Review the information provided to ECU students travelling overseas on student exchange, study abroad or study tours about cultural norms in the countries they are visiting. Modify the information and/or processes if required.  |

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# Recommendation 4: Policies, response pathways and support services

*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*
- *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.*

| 4   | Strategy   | Timeline                 | Responsibility | Indicator/action   |
|-----|--|--------------------------|----------------|--|
| 4.1 | Commission an independent, expert-led review of existing ECU policies and response pathways in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment. | Jul 2018                 | D SGSC         | Commission an independent review, with opportunities for students to participate.  |
| 4.2 | Implement recommendations from independent review.   | After review             | TBA            | Implement recommendations of review.   |
| 4.3 | In the interim, develop and review processes for responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment of students.                                 | Jul 2017                 | D SSC          | Develop and review policies and processes to ensure they meet the guidelines in the recommendation.  |
|     |  | Dec 2018                 | D SSC          | Ensure workplace integrated learning (WIL) policies include references to sexual assault and sexual harassment policies and processes, as appropriate.     |
| 4.4 | Further improve and adapt policies and processes in response to Universities Australia's <i>Best Practice Guidelines</i> .                       | After documents released | D SSC          | Make any necessary adjustments in response to principles and guidelines from UA (best practice), and UA-NTEU-CAPA (postgraduate research student support). |

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| 4   | Strategy  | Timeline | Responsibility | Indicator/action  |
|-----|---|----------|----------------|---|
| 4.5 | Investigate establishing a dedicated support service for students who have experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment. | Jul 2018 | D SSC<br>MCE   | Investigate feasibility, including demand and resourcing, for a dedicated support service (e.g. reporting, case management, advocacy) for students who have experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment, perhaps in Counselling Services, or similar to the Student Equity, Diversity and Disability Service. |



# Recommendation 5: Training for staff and students likely to receive disclosures

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.

| 5   | Strategy   | Timeline   | Responsibility                                    | Indicator/action   |
|-----|--|--|---|--|
| 5.1 | Identify staff members and student representatives most likely to receive disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment. | Dec 2017<br>(FSC and SSC staff & students)<br><br>Dec 2018<br>(school staff) | D SSC<br>D HRSC<br>D FSC                          | Identify staff members and students likely to receive disclosures.   |
| 5.2 | Arrange training for the staff and students identified above, to be delivered by experts.                                      | Dec 2017<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Dec 2018                     | D SSC<br>D HRSC<br><br><br><br><br><br><br>D HRSC | Arrange training for staff and students identified above.<br><br>Training should also consider the needs and issues specific to LGBTIQ students, international students, HDR students, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and students with disability.<br><br>Review ways to encourage or mandate completion of <i>LGBTI Awareness Session</i> training (or equivalent) for all frontline staff. |

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## Recommendation 6: Information storage

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.

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.

| 6   | Strategy  | Timeline         | Responsibility                     | Indicator/action   |
|-----|---|------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 6.1 | Review collection processes and storage of data.  | Jul 2018         | D SSC<br>D HRSC<br>D FSC<br>D SGSC | Ensure the details recommended above are recorded by ECU, and that the data is stored securely and confidentially. |
| 6.2 | Provide de-identified reports of the data collected to the Vice-Chancellor, including trends and recommendations. | Every six months | D SGSC                             | Provide reports to the Vice-Chancellor.  |

## Recommendation 7: Capacity and training of counselling services

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 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.

| 7   | Strategy   | Timeline | Responsibility | Indicator/action   |
|-----|--|----------|----------------|--|
| 7.1 | Commission an audit of ECU Counselling Services.     | Dec 2017 | SDVC<br>D SSC  | Audit ECU Counselling Services to assess capacity to respond to students in a timely manner (wait time) and staff training in working with sexual assault survivors. |
| 7.2 | Implement any recommendations from the above review. | Apr 2018 | D SSC          | Action any recommendations.  |

## Recommendation 8: Student surveys

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.

| 8   | Strategy   | Timeline          | Responsibility | Indicator/action                       |
|-----|--|-------------------|----------------|--|
| 8.1 | Support UA survey of students in three-yearly intervals. | Every three years | D SGSC         | Facilitate survey process as required. |

## Recommendation 9: Student accommodation and campus facilities

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 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.

| 9   | Strategy   | Timeline     | Responsibility | Indicator/action   |
|-----|--|--------------|----------------|--|
| 9.1 | Commission an independent, expert-led review of on-campus accommodation. | TBA          | D FSC          | Commission an independent review, particularly of the items suggested in the recommendation (e.g. hazing, alcohol, supervision, training). |
| 9.2 | Implement any recommendations from the review above.                     | After review | D FSC          | Action any recommendations.  |
| 9.3 | Review physical campus security measures.                                | TBA          | D FSC          | Review physical campus security measures.  |
| 9.4 | Implement any improvements identified in the review above.               | After review | D FSC          | Action any improvements identified.  |
| 9.5 | Review approachability of Security and Traffic Services.                 | Dec 2017     | D FSC          | Review ways to improve perceived 'friendliness' and accessibility.   |
| 9.6 | Implement any improvements identified in the review above.               | TBA          | D FSC          | Action any improvements identified.  |