
Respect. Now. Always.

Change the Course: Action Plan



BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

In February 2016, Australia's universities, through Universities Australia (UA), launched the *Respect. Now. Always.* (RNA) campaign to prevent and address sexual assault and sexual harassment across the sector, with a particular focus on students. This campaign highlights the determination of Australian universities to ensure that our universities are places of safety and respect, and builds on the work done by universities over many years.

THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign has three key aims:

- to raise awareness of sexual assault and sexual harassment and lift the visibility of support services for students;
- to obtain data to guide further improvement in university policies and services; and
- to assist universities in sharing global best practice resources across the sector (UA, 2016)¹.

Raising Awareness

A number of awareness-raising initiatives have been undertaken across the sector, and specifically at Flinders University. At Flinders, these initiatives have included the development of posters and other hard copy materials, the showing of the documentary *The Hunting Ground*, the provision of training for a number of staff and students, and the development of a new [Safety on Campus](#) website. In May 2018 a successful student led campaign [Be a better Human](#), was launched university-wide. This specifically focussed on building awareness around matters of sexual consent, rape-culture and bystander behaviour whilst encouraging respectful relationships and self-improvement behaviours.

Obtaining Data

Universities Australia commissioned the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to undertake a *National University Student Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment* in late 2016 and to provide a report with recommendations arising from the survey outcomes. A total of 30,930 students participated in the survey (representing 9.7% of the invited survey sample, and 2.9% of the total student population at that time), including 320 Flinders University students (representing 4.1% of the invited survey sample, and 1.4% of the total Flinders University student population at that time). Additionally, a large amount of qualitative information was received through 1,849 submissions to the AHRC. The resultant AHRC report entitled "*Change the Course*" was released on 1 August 2017.

Best Practice

Universities Australia has been developing best-practice guidelines in consultation with a range of stakeholders. These guidelines were released in 2018. The guidelines will focus on complaint handling of sexual assault and sexual harassment allegations.

ACTION PLAN

The first AHRC recommendation is that each Vice-Chancellor should establish an Advisory Body to develop an Action Plan for the implementation of all the AHRC recommendations. Such an Advisory Body has been established at Flinders, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Life) and currently by the Director Student Services. The Action Plan, which can be found below (see pp 3-13), maps actions against the AHRC recommendations and the 10-point Action Plan developed by UA in response to the *Change the Course* report. Regular updates are provided to the Action Plan (last updated September 2020).

¹ Universities Australia (2016). *Background to Respect. Now. Always*: <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/uni-participation-quality/students/Student-safety/Respect--Now--Always-#.Wd1K0eRIKUk>

AHRC Recommendations	UA 10-Point Action Plan	UA Themes	UA Actions & Plans	Flinders University Actions	Status of Flinders University Actions
LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE					
1. Establish an Advisory Body to develop an Action Plan for implementation of AHRC recommendations	All 10 points	Awareness & Prevention	N/A	Relationships established with external providers Yarrow Place (sexual assault and rape crisis centre), SA Police (SAPOL) and internal stakeholders, including student representatives.	Completed.
		Improving Support		Establish Advisory Body as per the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) recommendation. The Advisory Body is chaired by the Director Student Services.	Completed. Advisory Body is meeting regularly, and action plan monitored and updated.
		Reviewing Progress Colleges and Residential Halls		The Advisory Body to develop an Action Plan for implementation of the AHRC recommendations.	Completed.

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CHANGING ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOUR					
2. Education & communication to staff and students	1. Developing respectful relationships education for university students 2. Next Steps in the <i>Respect. Now. Always.</i> initiative	Awareness & Prevention	UA will develop a respectful relationships education program tailored for students in Australia's universities. UA will continue to raise awareness about sexual harassment and assault, and lift the visibility of support services available for those who experience it.	The Hunting Ground screened in 2016, including expert panel response.	Completed.
				Roll out respectful relationships education program tailored for students in Australia's universities once developed by Universities Australia (UA).	As soon as training package available from UA. In the interim Consent Matters training is available online. Compulsory training for all new Flinders Living students and club executives.
				EO Training compulsory for all new staff (both online and in person) and existing staff reminded via VC email yearly to complete refresher bi-annually.	Ongoing. New Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment online training modules compulsory for all new staff.
				Roll out new UA training modules to Flinders University staff and leaders (see Recommendation 5 for details).	Online training module "Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault: What are the drivers and how can staff respond" is now available to all staff and is mandatory for new staff.

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				Relevant educative and support materials developed and available for Orientation Weeks at the beginning of the academic year and mid-year (including posters, e-posters and postcards). Provide updated materials for O-week each year.	Completed (updates ongoing).
				Developed dedicated <i>Safety on Campus</i> website focussed on raising awareness and providing information on support services	Completed (updates ongoing).
				FUSA to develop a major, student- facing campaign, with support materials, for roll-out in 2018. FUSA will repeat the campaign <i>Be a Better Human</i> twice per year	Completed Be a Better Human Campaign developed and rolled-out. Semester 2, 2020 completed (continues to be repeated throughout the year).

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UNIVERSITY RESPONSES TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT & ASSAULT					
3. Reporting and support mechanisms appropriately communicated	4. Sexual assault and sexual harassment education and awareness training for university leaders and staff	Improving Support	UA will make new training modules available for university staff and leaders. UA will coordinate the provision of specialist training for university staff through Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia or an equivalent local provider.	Awareness and first responder training to be provided to Security, Maintenance and caretaker staff.	Completed. To be repeated now that UA online training module and Flinders specific training module available.
				First responder training to be provided to all Flinders Living (residences) leadership.	Completed and conducted yearly for new leaders.
	5. Extending first responder training to more frontline university staff			First responder training to be provided to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Council representatives. • Flinders University Student Association (FUSA) staff including student casuals. • Equal Opportunity Contact Officers. • International Student Services (ISS) Key academic staff in academic Colleges	Completed. Student Council received training by Yarrow Place. Student representatives identified as likely to receive disclosures are provided with face-to-face training. Internal university training was provided for FUSA, EO contact officers and ISS. Ongoing for key academic and professional staff. Training now available online for all staff and mandatory for all new staff.
	6. Specialist professional development for university counsellors			Responding to disclosures training provided by Yarrow Place to Health, Counselling and Disability staff.	Completed. In addition, all Counselling and Disability staff have completed online UA training module and Flinders specific training.

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	7. Development of best practice guidelines for universities		UA will make available a new training module in specialist professional development for university counsellors.	Website updated to provide clear information about reporting pathways both internal and external to University.	Completed. Safety on Campus website updated to reflect new Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure and online reporting processes.
	8. An interim national student support line		UA will develop a set of best practice guidelines on responding to reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment in a compassionate and timely way.	Relationships established with Yarrow Place and SAPOL.	Completed.
			UA will establish a 24/7 national telephone referral and support service operated by Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia to operate from 31 July 2017 until 30 November 2017.	Yarrow Place to conduct face-to-face training with University leadership.	Completed.
				Establish central register for all reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment to be logged.	Completed. New online reporting tool ensures all data captured centrally.
				Review existing policy/procedures against UA's best practice guidelines, including policies relating to student grievances and complaints, critical incidents and staff/student conduct.	Completed. New Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure launched in January 2020.

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4. Independent review of policies and response pathways within 12 months (& interim review to ensure appropriate support)	3. New principles for postgraduate student and staff interaction		UA, together with the NTEU and CAPA, will develop a code of practice to guide interaction between supervisors and postgraduate students.	Internal review of existing policies and recommendation for them to be updated in line with best practice guidelines from UA.	Review completed. New Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure launched in January 2020.
5. Staff training by experts	4. Sexual assault and sexual harassment education and awareness training for university leaders and staff	Improving Support	UA will make new training modules available for university staff and leaders.	Yarrow Place to provide training to Health, Counselling & Disability staff.	Completed. In addition, Counselling and Disability staff completed UA online training module and Flinders specific training.
			UA will coordinate the provision of specialist training for university staff through Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia or an equivalent local provider..	Roll out UA training modules to staff and leaders.	UA Module Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault: What are the drivers and how can staff respond now available online. Others will be rolled out when available from UA.

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	5. Extending first responder training to more frontline university staff			Roll out specialist face-to-face training for university staff through Yarrow Place.	Commenced: Ongoing.
	6. Specialist professional development for university counsellors		UA will make available a new training module in specialist professional development for university counsellors.	First responder training to be provided (see Recommendation 3 for details).	Commenced: Ongoing Online training for staff is now available which includes two modules, the first is the UA online training module Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault: What are the drivers and how can staff respond? And the second is a Flinders specific module on supporting and reporting disclosures.
				Roll out UA training module in specialist professional development for counsellors.	To commence as soon as training package available from UA.

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MONITORING & EVALUATION					
6. Collect data on sexual harassment and assault	N/A	Improving Support Reviewing Progress		Establish central register for reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment to be logged.	Online reporting tool launched on 1 August 2019 to ensure data is collected centrally and stored confidentially.
				A sub-group of the RNA Advisory Group established to examine data on a six-monthly basis and provide reports to the Senior Executive Team on any trends, concerns and recommended actions to improve processes.	Completed and reported to Senior Executive Team July 2020.
7. Counselling services review/audit	6. Specialist professional development for university counsellors	Improving Support	UA will make available a new training module in specialist professional development for university counsellors.	Duty/triage system established to meet demand and assess priority of cases.	Completed
				Appoint new counsellor to ensure capacity to respond in timely manner.	Completed Dedicated sexual violence counsellor appointed at the beginning of 2018
				Monitor wait times and numbers requesting a service.	Wait times are continuously monitored and any cases are provided with an immediate response.

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				Counselling audit conducted in 2019 and recommendations such as triage process, training for staff and online reporting of all reports in place to ensure data collected..	Completed.
8. Run survey again in 3 years (via an independent body)	9. A commitment to repeat the national student survey	Reviewing Progress	UA will undertake a national follow-up survey in three years.	Flinders University has committed to re-running the survey.	Survey was to be conducted in 2019, however, the survey is on hold until 2021 due to COVID-19.
COLLEGES & RESIDENTIAL HALLS					
9. Residential Colleges training and education	10. Training and education in colleges and residential halls	Colleges and Residential Halls	UA will make resources available to colleges and residential halls to assist them to prevent and address sexual harassment and assault and will work with University Colleges Australia to encourage key staff to access first responder training.	Flinders Living (residential) students to receive face-to-face training regarding consent, bystander responsibilities and support available.	Completed. (and now BAU for new residents)
				All residential student leaders to receive additional training in responding to disclosures of sexual assault and harassment.	Completed (and now BAU for new student leaders)
				Independent, expert-led review of Flinders Living to be conducted.	Completed in 2019.

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				Flinders Living to develop a <i>Protocol for Responding to Disclosures</i> .	Completed
				<i>Consent Matters</i> online training to be made compulsory for all Flinders Living (residential) students.	Completed (and now BAU for new residents)
				Trained Health, Counselling and Disability staff to provide regular face-to-face training to residential students.	Completed for 2018 and BAU
				Independent review of Flinders Living to be conducted..	Completed in 2019.

