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

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| **University Name: SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY** | | |
| **Recommendation no.** | **Action taken since last milestone report in February 2019** | **Planned/future action** |
| **1**  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. | The Vice Chancellor personally approved the program of work and allocation of resources to address the Change the Course recommendations, including: Partnering with Our Watch, safety audits at campuses and student residences, policy research and development, student focus groups and the HumanKind project.  A Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee, Co-chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) and Director Human Resources reports to the Vice-Chancellor regularly. The committee has a broader Student Safety Scope but retains focus on addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment. Membership on the committee includes University staff across the three main campuses (including representatives with links to campus Living Residential Services) and student representation. | The recommendations from the ‘Change the course’ report, and the SCU Action Plan will be regularly updated, evaluated and reported to the Vice-Chancellor and Executive.  Associated actions and initiatives arising from the Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee will be reported to the Vice-Chancellor and Executive regularly and to the University’s Council annually.  Southern Cross University will participate in the follow-up 2021 Universities Australia national survey. |
| **2**  Universities develop a plan for addressing the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment that provides students and staff with education and identifies existing resources and communication campaigns that reinforce key messages | The Student Safety committee developed a Student Safety Action Plan focussed on:   * Improving University Responsiveness. * Equipping Students with Knowledge and Skills. * Targeting Higher Risk Environments. * Increasing Visibility and Commitment to Student Safety.   Specific initiatives aimed at addressing the drivers of sexual assault and harassment included:   * **Participation in 18 month National Pilot with Our Watch and** three other Universities (Monash, La Trobe, Western Sydney), contributing to the development of a National tertiary Framework and Series of training and resources aimed at addressing the elimination of sexually related harm at universities. * Drafting of stand-alone Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (prevention and response) Policy and Procedures for Students and Staff. Student and staff stakeholders were closely engaged in the development of the draft in Jan and February 2020. The draft was further refined during Mar-Aug, with progress delayed due to COVID-19 workplace disruption, as well as the need to work through the complex implications of the 20 November 2019 decision in Y v University of Queensland & Anor [2019] QSC 282. It is anticipated the Policy and Procedures will be completed and approved by 31 December 2020. * The development and implementation of Student Critical Incident Policy and Procedures, plus the development and distribution of a Decision Tree outlining Referral pathways and response management. * Development of Student Safety and Wellbeing support Line accessible to both staff and students with SASH and welfare-related concerns. Support, reporting pathways and university policies. * Development of revised evidenced-based modules on the intersectionality of violence – HumanKind. * Distribution of physical and digital resource – The Student Health Guide, which provides additional information on Sexual Assault and Harassment, Consent and support for students. * An audit conducted on front-facing SASH resources by Planning Quality and Review in response to TESQA recommendations.   **External Advisory Committees**   * DVC Student Staff currently sit on the following external advisory committees: Headspace Lismore Consortium & Lismore Suicide Prevention Program Committee.   Other strategies were aimed at targeting higher risk environments:  **Security**   * Active use and review of CCTV feeds. * Staff training specific for security on Responding to Disclosures and Referral Pathways.   **Residential colleges –**   * Orientation program with an increased focus on sexual assault, drugs/alcohol and healthy relationships is mandatory for all new residents. * Residential Assistant workshops that focus on the drivers and intersectionality of violence, sexual assault and harassment and support services/referral pathways for residents.   **Campus libraries –**   * Providing information for reporting, on Multiscreen technology. * A chat service has been implemented so that any person can report immediately and anonymously anything they observe in library spaces (see something say something) or a person can immediately notify a staff member if they are feeling unsafe. * Increased patrols by library staff of library buildings.   A new S4 Plan (student health, wellbeing, safety and emergency) has been developed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) which emphasises personal safety awareness with a commitment to the elimination of sexual and racial assault, harassment, and aggression of all kinds. The Plan has been endorsed by the University’s Executive, with planned training packages a key to addressing issues of sexual assault and harassment.  Key services such as Chaplaincy and Advocacy have been moved to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Students) portfolio and their roles and availability have been actively promoted at the recent Semester 1 new student orientation program. | * The development and implementation of new initiatives by the Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee, using best practice examples from across the sector, aimed at better student education and awareness. * This includes delivery of targeted workshops for Student Leaders in Responding to SASH Disclosures, Suicide Prevention and DV- Alert. * Audit and update current information on the Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment website that provides more specific information about the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment, reporting pathways and support services. * Implementation of Our Watch Training to Students. * Update and redistribution of print material highlighting the University’s position that sexual assault and sexual harassment and provision of information on services available to assist students, especially counselling and psychological support services across all residential colleges and SCU campuses. * Implementation of stand-alone Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (prevention and response) Policy and Procedures for Students and Staff. |
| **3**  *Universities should ensure students and staff know about support services and reporting processes for sexual assault or sexual harassment* | Initiatives have included:   * Drafting of stand-alone Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (prevention and response) Policy and Procedures for Students and Staff. Student and staff stakeholders were closely engaged in the development of the draft in Jan and February 2020. The draft was further refined during Mar-Aug, with progress delayed due to COVID-19 workplace disruption, as well as the need to work through the complex implications of the 20 November 2019 decision in Y v University of Queensland & Anor [2019] QSC 282. It is anticipated the Policy and Procedures will be completed and approved by 31 December 2020. * Implementation of the Student Toolkit and HumanKind Modules. Information and psychoeducation on the drivers and intersectionality of violence, support services reporting and referral pathways. * Inclusion of Humankind Modules and Toolkit in student orientation and induction communication plan, and student orientation materials across campuses to ensure a clear and consistent set of messages regarding SASH and support available to students. * Information about available internal and external support services – including Sexual Assault referral services and reporting processes to the Police, Mental Health services and extensive information about Counselling and Psychological Support Services. * Ongoing relationships with locally available external services; for example, the Counselling Services team undertook training by specialist sexual assault counsellors from the local health services to increase the currency of their skills. * Implementation of the Student Critical Incident Policy to SCU and its stakeholders informing procedures to quickly and appropriately respond to critical incidents which may include cases of sexual violence and assault. * Information about available internal and external support services – including Sexual Assault referral services and reporting processes to the Police, Mental Health services and extensive information about Counselling and Psychological Support Services. The Counselling team have access to, distribute materials to and refer students to the 1800 Respect service specialising in supporting survivors. * Development of a Quick Guide for responding to disclosures of sexual assault – a resource for staff.   Campus Living Villages (CLV), SCU’s external accommodation provider, has implemented compulsory training to all new student residents with modules relating to expected behaviour and information on how to report a sexual assault or case of sexual harassment. Key staff members have undertaken first responder training and are required for all new Residential Assistants. | * Further development of the sexual assault and sexual harassment webpage with the direct purpose to visibly respond to and enact recommendations of the Guidelines for university responses to sexual assault and sexual harassment (the UA Guidelines. * Investigation of moving towards a compulsory suite of essential training for students and staff results provided to VC Group for consideration. * Updating and printing of wallet-sized cards for all staff and students which contain every emergency number essential for referrals of urgent cases involving sexual harassment or violence. |
| **4**  *Within a year, universities should commission an independent, expert-led review of existing university policies and response pathways concerning sexual assault and sexual harassment, to assess the effectiveness and make specific recommendations to universities about best-practice responses.* | Policy amendments undertaken in response to the AHRC report include:   * Drafting of stand-alone Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (prevention and response) Policy and Procedures for Students and Staff. Student and staff stakeholders were closely engaged in the development of the draft in Jan and February 2020. The draft was further refined during Mar-Aug, with progress delayed due to COVID-19 workplace disruption, as well as the need to work through the complex implications of the 20 November 2019 decision in Y v University of Queensland & Anor [2019] QSC 282. It is anticipated the Policy and Procedures will be completed and approved by 31 December 2020. * Student Critical Incident Policy and Student Safety and Wellbeing Support Line.   An external expert in student safety, Professor Wilks, completed an audit of relevant SCU policies and detailed SWOT analysis, with specific attention to responsive policy and practices regarding sexual assault and sexual harassment.  Implementation of the following recommendations:   * New SMS option for the University Out of Hours Crisis Support Line.   Increased promotion of the International Student BUPA 24 hour Advice LineNew training programs, procedures and guidelines have been recommended and are in development. | * TheImplementation of the National Respect and Equality Framework Recommendations and Training as developed during Southern Cross’ participation in the National REU Pilot conducted by Our Watch. |
| **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 and ensure those identified receive appropriate training*. | Staff from Campus Living Villages received specialised training responding to disclosures of sexual violence and reporting/referral pathways.  Frontline student support staff have undertaken the training module on Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence.  Frontline staff have undertaken the training module on Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence. | * Provision of workshops to student leaders: DV Alert, SAFE TALK and SASH Responses. * Implementation of SASH Response Network specifically trained contact officers to support students SASH disclosures + training. * Epigieum module Responding to Disclosures SASH communicated to staff and evaluated for completion rates. |
| **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.* | Currently, information and reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment are collected and stored confidentially by the University. The Vice-Chancellor and Executive receive regular de-identified reports highlighting any concerns.  The University has purchased and implemented new specialised software for incident and hazard management, RiskWare, which facilitates the online reporting, investigation and actioning of all incidents and hazards. The tool also has a RiskWare pocketSafety app, available on mobile devices - this gives all staff and students the ability to instantly report hazards and incidents, no matter where they are.  Riskware software enables confidential storage of disclosures and data collection.  Riskware data is presented F/N to VC Group. Trend data presented quarterly to Council & Execs. |  |
| **7**  *Within six months of this report, universities should conduct an audit of university counselling services to assess the adequacy of capacity and training and undertake data collection.* | A review of the independent Counselling Services audit and the following recommendations were implemented:   * All Counselling referrals and requests for service are managed through a centralised intake process overseen by the Counselling receptionist. Students are contacted within one working day and determines if the student is eligible and will book an appointment in line with the student’s preference and level of risk. The service utilises a cancellation and wait list, whereby ad hoc available appointments are filled efficiently and effectively, this enables students where possible to access an appointment earlier than maybe initially advised. Any disclosures of sexual assault/harassment received at the intake process are escalated to the Counselling Manager to be managed. * All Counsellors (8 in total) have undertaken training by specialised local sexual assault Counsellors and have established relationships with local sexual assault services strengthening referral pathways to external organisations. * Data is collected daily and reported monthly to senior management. Alternative pathways of support internally and externally are offered to students who may be in urgent need of support in instances where appointments may not be readily available. Crisis appointments are held open on the counselling calendar to accommodate where possible these referrals. All staff are trained in utilising these appointments for students at risk or who need immediate support. The After-Hours Crisis line reports to the Counselling service daily of any instances of disclosures and crisis referrals they have received after hours, which provides the team information whereby they can provide further follow up and wrap around services. A report is received every three months to the Manager of Counselling from the organisation managing this Crisis line. All reports of sexual assault are uploaded into the risk management system Riskware, all staff have received training in utilising this database. Reports are collated and extracted from Riskware and forwarded to the VC Committee. | Implementation of the recommendations from the report of the Counselling Services review will be monitored, evaluated and reported regularly to the University’s Executive until all recommendations have been implemented successfully. |
| **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.* | Southern Cross University is committed to preventing, addressing, and reducing the harm caused by incidents of sexual assault and harassment for those within our care and communities. The University is fully supportive of a national survey to better understand and respond to incidents at a sector-wide level.  Southern Cross University will participate in the follow-up national survey. Also, the University has committed to taking a national leadership role in the broad area of student safety and wellbeing. It will contribute to research and evidence-based practice in the area of sexual assault and sexual harassment. | SCU’s survey will be conducted in 2021, and planning for this is currently underway. |
| **9**  *Residential colleges and university residences should consider implementing report recommendations and commission an independent, expert-led review of the factors which contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in their settings.* | Campus Living Villages (CLV) the University’s external accommodation provider has reviewed its policies and procedures, with actions including that all new students will be required to undertake an online induction program. Modules relate to expected behaviour and information on how to report a sexual assault or case of sexual harassment. Key staff members will continue to undertake first responder training.   * In 2017, the Australian Human Rights Commission released a landmark report, Change the Course, which examined the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment among Australian tertiary education students, and recommended campus accommodation providers review their policies. * Campus Living Villages (CLV) has a stated commitment to create a safe and secure environments for its residents, guests and staff. As such in 2018 CLV undertook an extensive review in order to respond to the Change the Course report, search for any potential gaps in its existing policies as they relate to sexual assault and harassment, and ultimately to further improve the residential experience. * The findings from our research and subsequent recommendations are based on an independent review by SenateSHJ of the policies, procedures, training and communication on sexual assault and sexual harassment at CLV’s Australian Villages. It included a review of the perception of their application through quantitative and qualitative research among residents and staff. * Combining the review of policies with the quantitative and qualitative research provided a range of insights, reinforced our prior experience and understanding, and highlighted areas for improvement. It should be noted that in all the qualitative research focus groups a professional sexual assault counsellor was present. * Recommendations. The seven key recommendations from the independent review:  1. Improve the resident induction process, this was a particular issue amongst international residents, who may arrive at differing times and struggle with language barriers. 2. Train staff, and of importance provide role clarity and processes for reporting. Provide clear guidance and proper training for Village staff on how to manage sexual assault and harassment. 3. Raise the ongoing level of conversation around this topic. 4. Properly resource and set consistent policies across the portfolio and ensure adequate training is undertaken. 5. Invest more in social cohesion – this was particularly prevalent amongst international residents who felt isolated and in some instances concerned that if they reported an issue it could affect their visa conditions. 6. Increase transparent reporting. 7. Physical steps to help prevent incidents.  * Each of the 7 recommendations has a detailed action plan that has been operationalised across the business, including at SCU Lismore and Coffs Harbour villages.  1. For all residents, moving into our Villages from 2019, they are required to undertake a compulsory online induction program, which includes modules relating to expected behaviour and information on how to report a sexual assault or case of sexual harassment. 2. Key team members including Resident Assistants have undertaken first responder sexual assault training, which is a recurring annual activity. 3. An ongoing communication plan to both residents and staff is undertaken throughout the year to maintain the ongoing level of conversation. 4. A regular review of all our policies and an ongoing training programs for staff and residential assistants has been implemented. 5. Any incidents of sexual assault and harassment will be addressed according to our policies and procedures, reporting of such will continue to be reported to our University partners and at a CLV Executive and Board level. 6. Any physical facility improvements will be addressed. | The Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee is reviewing:   * Published work from other universities on factors which contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in residential colleges; * Legal responsibilities for residential colleges related to sexual assault and sexual harassment; and * Evidence-based initiatives that will reduce the incidence of sexual assault and increase student safety.   The findings of this review will facilitate discussions with CLV and other accommodation providers about how they may increase safety and meet their legal obligations about sexual assault and sexual harassment. |

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