

24 September 2020

Ms Kate Jenkins
Sex Discrimination Commissioner
Australian Human Rights Commission

By email: sexdiscriminationcommissioner@humanrights.gov.au

Dear Ms Jenkins

I write in response to your letter of 18 August 2020 requesting an update on UTS's response to the *Change the Course* recommendations. The attached table details our activities.

We appreciate the work of your office and the support and promotion of the issues raised in the *Change the Course* report. We look forward to continuing our interactions, particularly in responding to the outcomes of the national survey in 2021.

Yours sincerely



Professor Andrew Parfitt
Provost and Senior Vice-President

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<p>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.</p>	<p>UTS's Prevention of Sexual Assault and Harassment Working Group established by the Vice-Chancellor in early 2017 continues to provide guidance and direction for the University's actions to address and eliminate sexual violence on campus. This senior group is chaired by the Provost, coordinated by the Program Manager, Respect.Now.Always. and reports to the Vice Chancellor.</p> <p>The UTS Respect.Now.Always. (RNA) work is a whole of community program for sexual violence prevention that seeks to address the attitudes and factors that support sexual harassment and sexual assault in addition to providing professional trauma-informed responses to incidences. UTS approaches this complex issue through coordinated actions designed to bring about sustainable cultural change and a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence. To move towards this outcome, UTS implemented four priority work streams focusing on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reducing the acceptance of the prevalence of sexual violence in our culture, 2. improving how we respond to instances of sexual violence, 3. improving our governance structures and instruments to bring about positive change, and 4. demonstrating leadership and collaboration with external partners. <p>Building on the research insights that were identified in the 2018 UTS RNA Student Voice report, the University increased research funding to better understand the specific UTS environment. In 2019, a project with the UTS Design Innovation Research Centre was commissioned to develop a Strategic Framework that would set a platform for sustaining</p>	<p>The Working Group will continue to focus on driving long term systematic approaches to reducing the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment. It is working with the UTS community; students, academic and professional staff, to ensure that the actions taken align with the community's needs and underpin the implementation of long-term sustainable culture change.</p> <p>Concluding at the end of 2020 will be the research program of community-centred co-design phase. This work will provide a structure for the Working Group, RNA program and UTS community to define, prioritise and implement the four key areas identified in the RNA Strategic Framework. The implementation phase is currently being refined and is anticipated to commence early in 2021.</p>

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	<p>and embedding sustainable cultural change across UTS over the coming years. This Framework was based on the outcomes and changes that the UTS community of students and staff want to see, supported by academic expertise and evidence-based practice. More than 8000 UTS students and staff over the past three years have been engaged throughout the development of this work, including the earlier RNA Student Voice project which provided key student insights into the framework. This has included in-depth interviews and co-design workshops with students and staff, and the establishment of the RNA Crew (almost 200 UTS community volunteers) who support the broader student orientation events seeking feedback on ideas.</p> <p>The RNA program aligns with our longstanding commitment to delivering positive social change through our leadership, teaching and research. This commitment is embedded in our 2027 vision and will result in enhanced social and academic outcomes for our rapidly changing and disparate community. Existing working groups have recurring agenda items focusing on related recommendations. i.e. Work Health and Safety, University Leadership Team, VC Social Justice committee and Concerning Behaviour and Intervention Team. These ensure widespread consultation and input into UTS’s priorities and actions.</p> <p>Regular updates on UTS’s progress against the Action Plan have been publicly communicated at regular intervals since 2017. Regular progress reports are made to UTS Council, the University Leadership Team, Academic Board, Senior Managers Forum, media, staff and students.</p>	

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<p>2 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</p>	<p>At UTS we have zero-tolerance for any form of sexual assault or sexual harassment. In practice this means that our whole community understands and actively shares this commitment. To drive the sustainable changes we seek, the UTS Prevention of Sexual Assault and Harassment plan includes a variety of programs, research, educational resources and capacity building tools that draw upon the University's updated policies and are disseminated via a strategic communication program. These initiatives are selected specifically to address the underlying causes of sexual assault and harassment, and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The release of the RNA Strategic Framework, the UTS community's recommendations on preventing sexual violence at the end of 2019 • Since its release, the program team has applied research priorities and activities identified by the Preventing Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Working Group to develop resources to support the implementation of the Framework. • The programs and educational resources focus on establishing and setting expectations of behaviour and knowledge when people enter our community, with additional tailored opportunities offered throughout the year to key audiences including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mandatory Consent Matters training for all UTS students and staff. Since being introduced in 2018, more than 65,000 students and staff have completed the training with a 100 per cent pass rate. An optional survey at the end of the training measures efficacy and appetite and is consistently monitored, sitting at high satisfaction since the start of the program. 	<p>UTS will continue to monitor the efficacy and scope of its approach to addressing the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment and adjust its actions accordingly. During 2021 the RNA program team will again work with student representatives and staff to roll-out an updated version of the online Consent Matters module.</p> <p>UTS is working with external experts and the UTS community to co-design the implementation of the RNA Strategic Framework with the two-pronged goal to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embed a sustainable cultural change process that contributes to the elimination of sexual violence and its causes, and • build and cement a personal sense of responsibility and ownership for creating a safer and more respectful UTS community to learn and work. <p>Working with the Student Services Unit, a project is underway to remind staff to report incidences of sexual assault. Underlying this project is understanding some of the barriers and challenges staff are facing in reporting these incidences, which include some of the lower level incidences of unwanted sexual behaviour. Understanding these lower level</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Professor Moira Carmody’s Sex and Ethics training and Ethical Bystander training for all UTS Housing Residential Networkers. – RNA briefing sessions for all new residents moving into all UTS Housing and all ActivateUTS student club executives and sporting team managers. – Annual Responding with Compassion training for all campus security staff delivered by Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia. – Integrated messaging and conversations throughout Orientation periods as well as for student and staff onboarding. • An ongoing calendar of internally and externally created student-focused communications regarding topics such as sexual consent, bystander behaviours, boundary setting, support etc. The mode of delivery of these communications have predominantly become online since March (the start of covid-19 and campus closure) • A student-driven and staff supported, interactive campaign (Wanna Spoon? Ask First!) with activations at O’Day and Clubs Day in 2018, 2019 and 2020, Summerfest and Winterfest (music concerts), Play Day, Night Noodle Markets, International Women’s Day events etc. A free ice-cream stall provides an informal, interpersonal and non-threatening setting to discuss sex, consent, bystander behaviours, reporting and other related topics. 2021 will be the fourth year of this campaign, and it continues to be extremely well received by students and staff. As part of Australia’s Good Design Week, this was campaign 	<p>incidences is currently being explored in a collaboration with Rapido Social.</p> <p>The RNA program team is engaging with discipline experts to formalise a tailored evaluation practice, particularly in relation to identifying and evidencing outcomes.</p>

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	<p>awarded the 2020 Good Design Awards Best in Class (Social Impact) from Good Design Australia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The COVID-19 pandemic required the RNA program team to quickly respond to an expanded focus that reinforces our commitment to our safe and respectful community within the context of physical distancing and significant social and personal uncertainty. Identifying new opportunities to connect with our students and acknowledging the rapid shift in digital communication, the RNA program team worked with other business units to produce relevant and valuable content that continues to educate and reinforce UTS's commitment to a safe and respectful university environment. This has seen a shift away from face-to-face interactions, and greater communication with our community on themes including active (virtual) bystander behaviour, netiquette guidelines, boundary setting including a follow-up podcast with UTS Student Hacks. For Semester 2 Orientation we launched the new https://respectandconsent.uts.edu.au/intro/ site to temporarily replace our flagship 'Wanna Spoon? Ask First!' ice cream events. <p>Creating a gender-inclusive work culture and working to address gendered inequities in employment are central to the UTS vision and strategic direction of the RNA program. UTS is acknowledged as a leading higher education organisation in promoting gender equity and providing an inclusive work and study environment, having been consistently recognised as a Gender Equality Agency Employer of Choice since the inception of the award. UTS was also one of the first accredited organisations in Australia with the Bronze Athena SWAN Award.</p>	

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<p>3 Universities should ensure students and staff know about support services and reporting processes for sexual assault or sexual harassment</p>	<p>UTS continues to drive widespread awareness raising of support services and reporting processes both within and outside of UTS through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing promotions of the online portal for those who wish to make a disclosure about sexual harassment or sexual assault but prefer not to do so in person • Ongoing promotion of mandatory online reporting for all staff who receive a disclosure or are aware of an incident of sexual violence involving a student • Inclusion in all student orientation material and new staff onboarding resources • Co-hosting events with student clubs on campus to promote awareness of reporting channels and support services • Supporting student-led publications with interviews and content for publication • Onboarding materials and training resources for incoming and existing staff (professional and academic), continue to be developed and released throughout the year • Engagement with subject coordinators to integrate content and appropriate research opportunities with students learning outcomes • A collaboration between the RNA program and final year Design students to explore how UTS can better communicate with students about the availability of diverse selection of student support services. The findings from this research were used to update the RNA 2020 Orientation events and material. 	<p>UTS will continue to review its engagement strategy with its students and staff to maintain a focus on the prevalence and drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment across its community. UTS is undertaking work to make information even more accessible and processes transparent.</p>

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	<p>In addition to the above, key messages focussed on respectful relationships have been integrated into a number of student and staff channels and mediums including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TalkCampus app • Supporting online study portal • Student Learning Hub podcasts • An audit of all online information pertaining to sexual assault and harassment reporting and support services within the UTS web environment, followed by improvements. <p>Inclusion of RNA branding on all bar and café staff uniforms, UTS Div1 sports uniforms and City2Surf race shirts as a visual reminder of the UTS commitment to the elimination of sexual violence.</p> <p>The success of the above initiatives can be seen in the 2020 Student Satisfaction Survey, where 79% of students believe 'UTS provides a supportive environment for students to call out and/or report instances of sexual harassment' and 87% are satisfied with the 'service / support provided about information relating to sexual consent, harassment or assault'.</p>	
<p>4 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</p>	<p>Across 2017-2019 the University has undertaken a major review of related policies and other governance instruments to ensure they are aligned to reflect the University's values and expected standards of behavior to support the objective of preventing sexual violence at UTS.</p> <p>The Student Support Unit monitors and completes regular reviews of the changing demands for their service, which is used to direct resourcing and improve service provision in line with student needs.</p>	<p>UTS will continue to review and monitor its policy suite and procedures in line with its continuous improvement strategy, drawing on sector and community best practice as it evolves.</p> <p>Across 2019-2020 UTS's Equity and Diversity Unit has been leading the development and</p>

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<p>harassment, to assess effectiveness and make specific recommendations to universities about best practice responses.</p>	<p>Established in 2019, the Student Complaints Office works alongside the Equity and Diversity Grievance Officers to receive and record equity and non-equity related complaints. Together these services also monitor response pathways and provide key support for delivering best practice within the university.</p>	<p>coordination of a Student Mental Wellbeing Strategy which is expected to be introduced in 2021.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>UTS has identified staff and students most likely to receive disclosures and provides Responding with Compassion training to Security staff, Counsellors, Residential Networkers and student leaders. In addition to the mandatory Consent Matters online module, student leaders across the university are provided with additional training.</p> <p>Vicarious trauma training by Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia has been made available to students and non-clinical staff who receive disclosures of sexual violence.</p> <p>All campus bar staff complete Good Night Out training which focusses on understanding and responding to sexual harassment and assault in licensed premises.</p> <p>Onboarding for all new staff reflects UTS's commitment to the elimination of sexual violence, introduces our reporting pathways and available support for staff and students within and outside the university.</p> <p>Face-to-face onboarding provided to casual academics addresses rights and responsibilities about respectful relationships specifically with students.</p>	<p>UTS will continue to review and monitor the available resources for students and staff. If new education tools become available, or the needs of the University community change, they will be included in the University's process</p>

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	Continued communications with the above groups ensure that all new staff receive this training as a matter of priority, including 'refreshers' for ongoing staff.	
<p>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.</p>	<p>Ongoing streamlining of systems is occurring at UTS to ensure information is routinely collected and stored confidentially and used appropriately by relevant officers. UTS treats all reports of sexual assault and harassment confidentially. Information relating to a reported sexual assault or harassment incident will be handled in line with the sexual assaults and harassment privacy notice.</p> <p>UTS Counselling introduced an evening counselling service in December 2018 and is now running with 3 part-time Counselling staff.</p> <p>A Student Complaints Office has been established specifically to ensure the capturing and reporting of data relating to student complaints.</p> <p>Information is provided to the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor each month, to ensure oversight and to allow for continuous improvement in the university's response, as it implements a zero-tolerance approach.</p> <p>The University Leadership Team, which includes the Vice-Chancellor, receives bi-monthly reports of program progress as part of the long-term strategic plan status report.</p>	<p>UTS will continue to monitor the demand and provision of our support services and resources to meet the needs of our community and adjust our actions accordingly.</p>
<p>7 Within six months of this report, universities should conduct an audit of</p>	<p>UTS' Student Services Unit provides counselling and health services for students. Its review of its counselling support prior to the AHRC report led to:</p>	<p>UTS will continue to monitor the demand and provision of its support services and resources to meet the needs of the UTS community and adjust its actions accordingly.</p>

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<p>university counselling services to assess adequacy of capacity and training and undertake data collection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the number of counsellors trained in responding to trauma to the equivalent of 11 full-time positions. • An evening counselling service that commenced in December 2018 and is now running with 3 part-time counselling staff. • A specialist UTS trauma-informed 1800 telephone support service. • The introduction of an online reporting portal for individuals seeking to make a disclosure of an incident to UTS. This facility is available to both students and staff. • Introduced mandatory online reporting for all staff who receive a disclosure or are aware of an incident of sexual violence involving a student. • All current UTS students get free access to the <i>TalkCampus</i> app, an online wellbeing and mental health peer support network that supports an additional seven languages • There are a variety of free support and advocacy services within UTS where students and staff may seek advice, resources and support including; the Equity and Diversity Unit, the Ally program, the UTS Students Association and Batyr • All UTS staff and their immediate family members have access to free, professional and confidential support through our Employee Assistance Program providers PeopleSense 	
<p>8 Universities should engage an independent body to conduct the National university student survey of</p>	<p>UTS remains supportive of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of sexual assault and sexual harassment amongst university students in Australia.</p>	<p>UTS will take part in the next national university student survey scheduled for 2021.</p>

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sexual assault and sexual harassment at three yearly intervals to track progress in reducing the prevalence of these incidents at a sector-wide level.	Full details of the Respect.Now.Always national student survey postponement has been added to the UTS RNA website as an announcement item.	
<p>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.</p>	<p>UTS does not have any independent residential colleges and can therefore directly manage the culture and environment of its university residences.</p> <p>The Design Innovation Research Centre’s Student Voice report is an expert-led, student-focused insight into the factors which contribute to sexual violence, and the university’s response. It looked holistically at the entire university, with specific focus on housing and student social events.</p> <p>UTS previously completed a review of its student accommodation facilities, and now students living in UTS residences receive all the training and support enjoyed by all UTS students (including Consent Matters training), but in addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members of the UTS Housing Resident Networker program receive Sex and Ethics and Ethical Bystander training • All members of the UTS Housing Residential Networker program attend face-to-face briefing sessions where students explore strategies to identify, prevent, report and respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment. 	<p>Following the work of the Student Voice project, UTS reinforced its commitment to the Respect.Now.Always program by developing the RNA Strategic Framework, released late last year. The focus for the rest of 2020 and beyond is to engage the UTS community as part of the implementation of the Strategic Framework.</p>