



Audit of university responses to the *Change the course* report

Snapshot of progress: December 2017

In November 2017, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins, wrote to all 39 Vice Chancellors to request information about what actions their university had taken in response to the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities*.

All 39 universities have accepted the majority of the Commission's recommendations, and 32 universities have explicitly accepted all nine recommendations made.

In addition, in the information provided to the Commission, universities highlighted specific actions they were taking which align with the recommendations of *Change the course*:

- 32 universities have reported establishing, or a commitment to establishing, an advisory body or working group, in line with **Recommendation 1** of *Change the course*.
- All 39 universities reported implementing, or a commitment to implementing, training and education in relation to sexual assault, sexual harassment and respectful relationships to some or all of their students, in line with **Recommendation 2** of *Change the course*.
- All 39 universities reported that they have taken steps to increase the availability and visibility of their support services in line with **Recommendation 3** of *Change the course*.
- 20 universities reported that they have launched or will launch apps for students that offer a range of information and services including links to support services, links to campus security or information on consent and relationships.
- 23 universities reported implementing, or a commitment to implementing, a review of existing university policies and response pathways in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment, as per **Recommendation 4** of *Change the course*.
- 36 universities reported identifying staff members and student representatives most likely to receive disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment and ensured they have received training in responding to disclosures or are preparing to do so, in line with **Recommendation 5** of *Change the course*.
- 23 universities reported that they are working to ensure that information about disclosures and reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment is collected and stored confidentially, in line with **Recommendation 6** of *Change the course*.

- 16 universities reported planning to conduct an audit of university counselling services, as per **Recommendation 7** of *Change the course*.
- All universities, through their peak body Universities Australia, have committed to conducting the national survey on the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment every three years, in line with **Recommendation 8** of *Change the course*.
- Nine universities have reported taking steps to review factors which contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in their residential colleges and university residences, as per **Recommendation 9** of *Change the course*.

Some of the practical measures reported by universities included:

Adelaide University's appointment of the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission to conduct 'An Audit of Structures and Systems that Prevent and Respond to Incidents of Sexual Harassment and Assault'.

The **Australian National University** has appointed Donelle Wheeler, former diplomat and President of the Australian National Committee for UN Women, as independent chair of the campus-wide steering group for addressing sexism, sexual harassment and sexual assault on campus. The Canberra Rape Crisis Centre has also had a full-time presence on campus since 7 August 2017.

RMIT University has committed to implementing a survey to measure of violence supportive attitudes within their student community on an annual basis.

Southern Cross University is currently undertaking an audit of its counselling services, particularly regarding accessibility for students across all campuses and those students studying externally.

Deakin University will commission an independent, expert-led review of the factors which contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in Deakin Student Residential settings. This review will consider areas such as a trauma-informed and rights-based approach in a situation in which an allegation of sexual assault has been made and the ways that hazing practices and college 'traditions' and the role of alcohol facilitate a culture which may increase the likelihood of sexual violence.

University of Queensland has established a First Responder Network made up of members of the UQ Community. First Responders provide a safe and supportive environment so survivors of sexual assault and misconduct can receive information on the support services that are available.

Central Queensland University is developing a long-term education and awareness campaign to promote zero tolerance, consent, respect, bystander response, reporting, policy and support services for students with messages to be distributed via printed materials across all campuses and on digital platforms.