

Action Plan in response to *Change the Course* – National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities

Recommendations

The following Recommendations are summary descriptions of the full recommendations contained in the report. The University of New England responses likewise represent a high-level summary of the more comprehensive suite of actions being implemented by the university in response to the report's findings and recommendations.

Recommendation 1

Establishment of the required governance structures and ensuring the leadership of Vice-Chancellors in the timely and comprehensive implementation of the Report's recommendations

University of New England Response

- The Vice-Chancellor has established an Advisory Committee to drive the implementation of the University's response to the *Change the Course* report recommendations, as well as appointing a dedicated project manager to oversee and evaluate progress.
 - The first official meeting was held in November 2017, and meetings occur monthly. Members of the Advisory Committee represent a diverse cross-section of staff, students and community members including the president of UNE Student Association, International students, Academic Staff, Professional Staff, UNE Senior Counsellor and Psychologist and the Acting Health Service Manager Child Young People Family Team Armidale Community Health Service.
 - Student and staff forums will continue in 2018 to obtain feedback on actions undertaken and to obtain information and ideas on future actions.
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Recommendation 2

Develop a plan for addressing the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment accompanied by an education program and communications

University of New England Response

- The University is implementing face to face facilitated and online training courses on Consent for students.
- Training is also being provided for all staff and students Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence

- UNE is also currently organising face to face training for specifically identified staff members and students as first response officers.
- Arranging a number of forums, guest speakers and promotional events to convey the key messages and raise awareness of the Respect. Now. Always. Campaign. In addition, the University's Respect. Now. Always. web page has been updated with critical information, news items, and links to resources and key contacts.
- Sex Discrimination Commissioner Ms Kate Jenkins has been tentatively booked to attend a luncheon at the University on the 10 April 2018 for staff and students to speak about the Change the Course Report and cultural change.
- The University has also engaged the local Liquor Accord to help address the role of alcohol in sexual assault and sexual harassment on campus and within the township.
- Face to Face training is being provided to new college residential students during wellness week inclusive of consent, bystander intervention and without consent it's is rape. Also included is information about support and how to find it. This will be further embedded with more face to face training commencing in March.
- Dr Renee Hamilton from Universities Australia attended wellness week and gave a talk about Respect.Now.Always to the new students and residential fellows. Dr Hamilton then participated in a panel for Q&A concerning the videos and training provided consent, bystander intervention and without consent it's is rape.
- The University through UNE Life now owns and runs the University Safety and Security and has imposed best practise for security and service delivery.
- College event management has been reviewed and brought into line with best practise, to meet the legislative requirements of the Liquor Act and Responsible service of alcohol.
- The Residential College Code of Conduct has been reviewed to include strong stance on Sexual Assault/Harassment and Hazing.
- A revised bus service will commence in T1 2018 to enable students to travel into town and return safely. This service will complete 30min circuits and can be tracked and contacted by students directly. This service will also be utilised to collect student from the airport and train station for intensive school attendance.

Recommendation 3

Take action to ensure information about reporting avenues and support services is widely disseminated and easily accessible. Evaluate actions to ensure activities have increased awareness.

University of New England Response

- The University is in the process of commissioning the production/tailoring of a Respect. Now. Always. mobile app which will contain key information and contacts regarding sexual harassment and sexual assault, including the university's counselling service and the anonymous reporting form.
- This app will complement the existing UNE Safety app, which is targeted at providing key contact information to ensure safety on campus. Promotional stickers, posters, banners and other promotional material with clearly visible contact information will be disseminated, with a special focus on targeting new enrolments during wellness week and orientation week activities.

- The theme for the UNE Orientation is Respect. 10 Banners displaying the support contact numbers for the University and the national support numbers will be displayed around the University and in each access Centre and the Sydney Campus. These banners will then be displayed in every college and in the main student area of the University throughout the year.
- There will be a Respect Now Always display and information centre during the Life Saver day within Orientation.
- There is also an art installation being run called the Fabric of Respect whereby all staff and students can attend and make the pledge of respect and zero tolerance. The VC will be attending to make her pledge and all staff are encourage to do the same in a show of support and solidarity on the UNE Zero Tolerance stance.
- Support information together with the UNE message of Zero Tolerance has been placed on every water container to be handed to every participant in Orientation week.
- The UNE Respect Now Always web pages have been update to include current information regarding RNA
- Support numbers and information has been disseminated throughout the Colleges in poster form.
- Training given to new residential students during wellness week includes support information both within the University and externally.
- Wellness week is a week of information and training provided to new residential college students to prepare them for University life. This week also contains information about alcohol consumption, mental health, education regarding to hazing and RNA inclusive of support areas within and externally to UNE.

Recommendation 4

Universities must take steps to ensure that students who experience sexual assault or sexual harassment have access to specialist support, from a service provider with required expertise and training in this area.

Within a year of the release of this report, the University should commission an independent, expert-led review of existing university policies and response pathways in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment.

University of New England Response

- The University is currently assessing a number of proposals for an external and independent review of the existing university policies and response pathways in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment.
- The purpose of expediency, an internal audit has commenced as an initial step, with a view of supplementing this with the more comprehensive qualitative evaluation of the counselling services.

Recommendation 5

Universities should conduct an assessment to identify staff and student representatives most likely to receive disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment and ensure these staff members and student representatives receive training

University of New England Response

- The University is in the process of establishing a cohort of student and staff who will be nominated and trained in first response disclosures.
- Training is to be provided by an external organisation with the appropriate expertise face to face.
- Proposals are being obtained regarding the completion of this work from appropriate organisations with the required expertise.

Recommendation 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

At least every six months, Vice-Chancellors should be provided with de-identified reports of this data, including trends or identifiable concerns which arise, along with recommendations for any necessary improvements to processes

University of New England Response

- An anonymous reporting form has been established and linked on the university's Respect. Now. Always. web page, to receive de-identified and confidential reports of instances of sexual assault and sexual harassment.
- This form can also be accessed via the University's safety app.
- This form is operational and the data will be exported at regular intervals and presented to the Vice-Chancellor. This will be provided in addition to the data gathered from formal reports, and analyses of trends and suggestions for improvement as well as resource allocation.
- Anonymous questions can now be asked and will be answered via the RNA web page

Recommendation 7

Within six months of the release of the national report, but as soon as possible, universities should conduct an audit of university counselling services, with a particular focus on the ability to support students who have been affected by sexual assault or sexual harassment

University of New England Response

- The University has engaged the Internal Audit and Risk Unit to undertake this work. An expert will be employed to complete the audit with oversight by Audit and Risk.

- Areas already identified as possible deficiencies is the physical location of the counselling unit and reception support.
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Recommendation 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

University of New England Response

Universities Australia has committed to repeating the survey and the University of New England will again support this effort.

Recommendation 9

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

University of New England Response

- The Australian Human Rights Commission has been engaged to conduct the independent audit of the UNE residential system.
- The Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Ms Kate Jenkins and the Major projects officer, Ms Natasha de Silva will be attending UNE on the 7 March 2018 to commence this process.