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SYDNEY

Gendered Violence Research Network

# **Australian National University Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy Review**

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The Gendered Violence Research Network is based in the Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture at UNSW Sydney.

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This document has been prepared for the sole purpose of our services provided to the Australian National University.

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# Executive Summary

In August 2023, the Australian National University commissioned UNSW's Gendered Violence Research Network (GVRN) to review existing efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence and make recommendations for future action. This review entailed two significant pieces of work:

1. A desktop review of major documents describing existing actions taken by the Australian National University to prevent and respond to sexual violence.
2. Focus groups conducted with key student representatives and staff to explore the university community's priorities for inclusion in the next Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy rolling action plan.

The Australian National University has established an innovative and effective sexual violence prevention and response system splitting responsibility for prevention and response between two separate teams. The split of responsibility ensures that prevention and response activities are informed by true expertise and ensures student confidence in the relevant teams.

Students at the Australian National University have identified sexual violence prevention and response as a key area for concern and have worked with and outside of the University to push for positive change. In recent years, the University has acknowledged this contribution and have increased their focus on building trust with the student community.

The review makes 14 recommendations for actions to be included in the next Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy rolling action plan. Recommendations are focused on three new areas of work as well as the improvement of existing sexual violence prevention and response activities.

## New Areas of Work for the Australian National University

### Action Area 1: Increasing and Formalising Student Engagement

**Recommendation 1:** That the Australian National University develop a sexual violence student engagement plan setting out how the University will include students in its sexual violence governance processes. This plan should:

- be co-designed with students to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflective of student needs.
- set out how students will be engaged before the drafting of major strategic documents or commencement of significant operational changes.
- describe methods in which students can provide feedback on sexual violence prevention and response activities outside of formal feedback periods.
- include engagement opportunities for students from a variety of backgrounds including representatives from the Australian National University Students Association (ANUSA), Senior Residents and other residential student leaders, Respectful Relationships Unit Peer Educators, and club & society executives.

### Action Area 2: Ensuring an intersectional lens is applied to students affected by sexual violence

**Recommendation 2:** That the Australian National University conduct sexual violence prevention activities that improve responses to the intersecting and diverse life experiences of students. The University's prevention teams may wish to consider the following strategies to achieve this:

- employ more peer educators and trainers and ensure they are from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- provide ongoing consultation opportunities to diverse student groups to ensure relevance of training content and delivery style.
- explore specific training aimed to address the needs of international students.

**Recommendation 3:** That the Australian National University address intersectional discrimination experienced by students and staff through increased resourcing to widen prevention and response strategies to other forms of discrimination including racism and transphobia. This may include:

- creation of a whole-of-university anti-discrimination campaign aimed at primary prevention. This campaign should be co-designed with diverse student groups.
- establishment of discrimination disclosure pathways similar to the sexual violence disclosure tool.

**Recommendation 4:** That the Australian National University implement cultural competency training for all staff employed at identified student-facing support services and in other student-facing roles throughout the University.

### Action Area 3: Considering opportunities to provide perpetrators and alleged perpetrators of sexual violence with increased access to behaviour change initiatives

**Recommendation 5:** That the Australian National University consider alternative or restorative justice processes that could be applied in an Australian National University context and how alternative forms of justice may be implemented alongside the usual remedies provided to other forms of wrongdoing and misconduct. This could be informed by conducting an evidence review exploring the availability and effectiveness of perpetrator focused behavioural change programs in university contexts and determine if any learnings from these programs can be applied.

### Expanding on Existing Australian National University Initiatives

**Recommendation 6:** That the Australian National University increase efforts to communicate sexual violence reporting and disclosure processes on the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website. These communications should include:

- a description of the difference between a disclosure and a formal report.
- a flowchart or other clear description of what will happen to a disclosure or formal report of sexual violence once it has been submitted.
- examples of outcomes that can be expected from a sexual violence disclosure or formal report, and in what circumstances victim-survivors can expect these outcomes. This should include some non-punitive outcomes.

**Recommendation 7:** That the Australian National University continue its efforts to increase community awareness of sexual violence drivers, forms and impacts of sexual violence as well as knowing how and where to refer for a more specialised response within the University and to external organisations. To inform the next action plan the Australian National University may consider:

- conducting an audit of existing sexual violence awareness and response training offerings and determine gaps in provision.

- exploring new opportunities to provide mental health first aid, cultural competency and sexual violence disclosure training to Senior Residents and other residential student leaders, as well as staff members in key student-facing roles including senior residential staff and student-facing academic staff such as lecturers and tutors.

**Recommendation 8:** That the Australian National University's sexual violence prevention team work with residential students and staff to facilitate residence-specific prevention programs acknowledging the difference in community and culture at each individual residence.

**Recommendation 9:** That the Australian National University ensure that Residential Experience and University Experience teams work together to provide oversight and advice to each residence to re-introduce the development of residential cultural action plans.

Residential cultural action plans should include:

- intended prevention activities,
- staff responsible for receiving disclosures of sexual violence,
- the process that staff members will take to escalate any disclosure to the Disclosure Tool,
- Student Safety and Wellbeing and/or other relevant services.

Residential cultural action plans should be co-designed with Community Coordinators, Senior Residents, other residential student leaders as well as regular residents to ensure they are fit for purpose.

**Recommendation 10:** That the Australian National University ensure specific residential cultural action plans be developed for third party accommodation providers. These may also include actions to further educate third party staff in sexual violence awareness and response, and ways in which third party providers will act to re-gain the trust of the student community.

**Recommendation 11:** That the Australian National University ensure staff and students in relevant roles are provided with the resources and education to provide a trauma aware response to a disclosure of sexual violence and know how to refer victim-survivors to appropriate reporting and support options. In order to build these skills, the University may consider:

- more widely disseminating the 'responding to disclosures' guide available to all staff and relevant students.
- including the basic principles of trauma aware sexual violence awareness and response education in staff inductions, including casual academic tutors, residential staff, and security staff. This may be best accomplished via e-learning training modules.
- establishing a communication mechanism that allows the University to provide all staff and students with ongoing information about the University's sexual violence prevention and response activities.

**Recommendation 12:** That the Australian National University create a specific Staff Safety and Wellbeing Plan. This plan should be co-designed with staff from a range of colleges and divisions and should be a separate plan aligned to the student safety and wellbeing plan. The plan may include actions intended to address not just sexual violence, but also other safety and wellbeing issues

identified in co-design with staff. The plan should also consider requirements under the Safe@Work program and the newly introduced 'Positive Duty' of employers to proactively address sexual harassment in the workplace.

**Recommendation 13:** That the Australian National University ensure relevant existing supports and reporting mechanisms available to students also be made available to staff members. This may include:

- expanding the function of the sexual violence disclosure tool to also capture staff experiences of sexual violence, and
- providing detailed information on the University's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website about staff sexual violence reporting and support processes and outcomes.

**Recommendation 14:** That the Australian National University conduct a physical safety audit of the campus, both at night and during the day. This audit should aim to identify any physical safety concerns that can be addressed by the University. The audit should include staff and student representatives and assess different areas of campus, security offerings and other relevant safety initiatives already in operation. As a part of this safety audit, the University may wish to consider:

- investing in increased lighting across the campus, especially in areas away from University Avenue. To prevent light pollution that may affect the operations of the observatory, the University could explore the usefulness of red lights, down lights and other non-polluting lighting options.
- the current effectiveness of services provided by the University's security staff and identify any gaps in training and education, and resourcing for permanent staff members.

# Introduction

In 2017, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) released the [Change the Course Report](#), a report outlining findings from the first Australian national survey into university student experiences of sexual violence. Since the release of this report the Australian National University (ANU) has established their 2019 [Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy](#) which sets out how the University will act to prevent and respond to sexual violence until 2026. This strategy was then operationalised in the 2021 [Student Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan](#). This action plan outlined specific sexual violence prevention and response activities to be conducted by the University until 2023. The next action plan to operationalise the SVPS is due to be developed and implemented in early 2024.

In August 2023, the Australian National University commissioned UNSW's Gendered Violence Research Network (GVRN) to review existing efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence and make recommendations for future action. This review entailed two significant pieces of work:

1. A desktop review of major documents describing existing actions taken by the Australian National University to prevent and respond to sexual violence.
2. Focus groups conducted with key student representatives and staff to explore the university community's priorities for inclusion in the next Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy rolling action plan.

The Australian National University's Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy, Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan and other activities have been supported by strong and consistent advocacy and activism from student leaders such as those from ANUSA. In the years following the release of the *Change the Course* report, ANUSA's Women's Department released a number of reports assessing the University's response to sexual violence of which only two are publicly available. These particular student reports and the activism accompanying their release, appear to have strongly influenced the University's prevention and response efforts as well as clearly demonstrating student commitment to this issue.

The Australian National University has also benefited strongly from the expertise of staff employed in the University's sexual violence prevention and response teams, as well as student-facing support staff employed in roles not specific to sexual violence.

In 2019, the Australian National University commissioned Lyn Walker & Associates to conduct an independent review of the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy ([the Walker Review](#)). The review included examination of key documents, development of a draft program logic framework and consultation sessions with students and staff. The Walker report made recommendations for the University's future action under seven key areas. The Walker Review was subsequently used as the basis for the University's Student Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan, the plan clearly defining how the University would achieve the desired outcomes of the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy.

This GVRN report continues the work done by Lyn Walker & Associates and details the findings of the evidence review and an analysis of the multiple focus group discussions undertaken with both students and staff. Both pieces of work underpin the GVRN recommendations for future action for the Australian National University to consider for their next action plan. It is important to note that these recommendations are, at their heart, informed by our analysis of the evidence and perspectives and experiences shared to us by students and staff.



# Methods

The GVRN Review involved two activities where separate analytic methods were applied.

## Activity One – Desktop Review of Key Documents

GVRN undertook a desktop review in which key documents identified, in collaboration with the University, were thematically analysed and reviewed against best practice. Each document was assessed according to the extent to which its recommendations have been implemented and/or according to its incorporation of established best practice including, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- The extent to which the document is fit to purpose and responsive to student and staff needs.
- The extent to which the document incorporates established best practice University prevention and response activities including reporting processes, opportunities for student engagement, and education and training, as outlined in the 'Change the Course' Report, and guidance provided by Universities Australia<sup>1</sup> and the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA)<sup>2</sup>;
- Inclusion of a clear and appropriate timeline for actions, and.
- Inclusion of appropriate monitoring and evaluation.

GVRN also conducted chronological mapping of the key documents identified in the desktop review and applied a logic to the reports. The following documents were considered in the desktop review:

- The Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy
- Student Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan
- The Australian National University Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy Independent Assessor's Report (the Walker report)
- [The ANUSA 'Broken Promises' Report](#)
- [The ANUSA 'Follow Through ANU' Report](#)
- [The Australian National University National Student Safety Survey Detailed Results](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct Reports & Disclosures – Report 2021](#)
- [Respectful Relationships Unit's Sexual Violence Prevention Toolkit](#)
- [ANU Sexual Misconduct Policy \(Update\)](#)
- [ANU Sexual Misconduct Response \(Student\) Procedure](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct Reports & Disclosures – Report 2022](#)
- [Rights, Relationships & Respect Preliminary Evaluation Report](#)

The findings from the desktop review were provided to staff from ANU University Experience on 22 September 2023– see Appendix A for the full Review Report.

## Activity Two – Focus Group discussions with the Australian National University's staff and students

The findings from the desktop review were used to inform questions for student and staff focus groups conducted in September-October 2023, with students and staff representing relevant student

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<sup>1</sup> Universities Australia (2023) *Primary prevention of sexual harm in the university sector – Good practice guide*, available at: <https://universitiesaustralia.edu.au/policy-submissions/safety-wellbeing/good-practice-guide/>.

<sup>2</sup> TEQSA guidelines include: the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/how-we-regulate/higher-education-standards-framework-2021>, and the 'Good Practice Note: Preventing and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Australian higher education sector', available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/resources/good-practice-notes/good-practice-note-preventing-and-responding-sexual-assault-and-sexual-harassment-australian-higher-education-sector>.

representative or support roles. Participating students included representatives from ANUSA and collectives, residential student representatives, Senior Residents and Community Coordinators, and Respectful Relationships Unit Peer Educators. Participating staff members included sexual violence prevention and response practitioners, members of University senior leadership, and College Deans and managers. A full list of student groups and staff members included in focus groups are listed in Appendix B.

Focus groups were semi-structured and focused on student and staff perceptions of what has worked at the University to prevent and respond to sexual violence, and what could still be improved upon. As such, researchers asked some common questions between focus groups but also allowed participants to guide the discussion. A full list of questions included in these focus groups are listed in Appendix B.

The GVRN team met and jointly analysed the notes taken in the various focus groups and identified key themes within and across the staff and student cohorts.

The recommendations included in this report were developed as a result of the findings of the desktop review and our analysis identifying the common themes emerging in student and staff focus groups.

## Findings from the Desktop Review

Thematic analysis conducted as a part of the Desktop Review, identified ten key areas for further consideration in the next rolling action plan.

- The Student Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan is a practical and specifically actionable document outlining the University's commitment to the prevention of and response to sexual violence. Any future Action Plan should include actions, responsibilities and roles.
- The University has set out a successful division of responsibility for sexual violence prevention and response.
- The University's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website clearly articulates the University's strategic plan and communicates clearly and effectively progress to date. A Communication Plan may assist in continuing the clarity of the University's strategic intentions.
- The Sexual Misconduct Response (Student) Procedure is a robust and clear document outlining processes for responding to a disclosure or formal report of sexual violence.
- The University currently delineates between a disclosure and a formal report of sexual misconduct. This ensures that students are able to choose the option that is right for them and provides access to support from a member of the University's sexual violence response team should they require this. The delineation between a disclosure and a formal report should be clearly communicated on the University's websites.
- Currently, there is no clear action plan in place describing consultation with students on the strategic direction of the University's response to sexual violence. A Student Engagement Plan would assist in clarifying the relationship between students and the University and ensure that

actions taken by the University are informed by the lived experiences and identified needs of its student population.

- Considering the high rate of sexual violence occurring in residential settings at the Australian National University, the University should prioritise developing and publishing residential cultural action plans and identify additional prevention and response strategies to reduce the rate of sexual violence and ensure an appropriate response to disclosures.
- Currently it is not clear if an evaluation and monitoring plan has been established for the Student Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan. The creation of a monitoring and evaluation plan will ensure that actions taken are reviewed to establish their effectiveness.
- The Australian National University's sexual misconduct reports and disclosures reports make clear that rate of sexual violence occurring remain high. The GVRN is interested in the reasons for this high reporting rate and whether it reflects greater awareness and a commensurate confidence and willingness to report, or whether the number of incidents remains high.
- Currently the University's prevention and response to sexual violence does not include specific interventions for communities at-risk ie. LGBTQIA+, culturally and linguistically diverse students and students with lived experience of disability.

For the full desktop review, see Appendix A.

## Focus Group Findings

GVRN conducted focus groups with students and staff to inform recommendations for the next action plan. Emerging themes are described below.

### What did staff and students tell us?

#### **Student Engagement**

Students and staff told us that they valued student engagement in sexual violence governance processes, and that this engagement should be formalised.

Students continually raised the importance of meaningful student engagement rather than tokenistic consultation after decisions had been made. Many, particularly those involved in ANUSA, felt they have had to protest to have their voices heard and to force the University to take action on sexual violence. One student noted:

“I feel like there is a ‘baton down the hatches’ approach from the University in the lead up to the August 1st protests... [and] a contempt for student perspectives.”

However, it was not only ANUSA students that raised concerns about a lack of meaningful student engagement. Senior Residents in particular felt they hadn't previously been sufficiently included in strategic planning. Due to the visible role Senior Residents play in residences, they advised GVRN that

they regularly receive disclosures from fellow students and therefore, they felt they could provide strategic planning processes with insight into the needs of students in residences.

Students were also frustrated that there aren't currently enough opportunities for students to provide feedback on sexual violence prevention and response activities outside of major consultation periods. They felt providing feedback on an ad hoc basis has been complicated and at times, students felt their feedback had been ignored. Students requested the creation of a formal feedback process in which feedback would be considered in a timely and meaningful way.

Despite these gaps in student engagement, students were also mindful of recent improvements the University had made. Students were grateful to be included in these focus groups and expressed that student representation on the Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee was an important and valuable step taken by the University to incorporate student voices into strategic planning.

These recent improvements were also raised by staff in focus groups. Staff noted that while student engagement had not always been done well at the Australian National University, they had noticed a recent shift in which students were seen as allies rather than adversaries. Examples of this shift include student representation on all University governance committees, and involvement of University staff in ANUSA's August 1<sup>st</sup> protests.

### **Separating Prevention and Response**

Both students and staff agreed that splitting responsibility for sexual violence prevention and response between two separate services had generated positive outcomes for the University community. They agreed that sexual violence prevention and response requires different and specialised skills and therefore were supportive of the split.

Universally, students and staff felt strongly that the team responsible for sexual violence response were providing a valuable and expert service to the University community. Students liked the end-to-end case management approach and felt that case managers were trustworthy, supportive, approachable and respected confidentiality. One student said:

"I have a lot of confidence that if someone is referred there [the response team] they will be safe and will be treated well."

Staff also acknowledged the key role played by the Office of the Registrar and noted that the close relationship between the Office of the Registrar and the team responsible for sexual violence response supported students to submit formal reports.

However, there was a difference in student and staff perceptions of the team responsible for sexual violence prevention. Where staff felt this team was an effective service, many students, especially those who identified as culturally or linguistically diverse, or as students with disabilities, expressed concerns with the programs and approach taken. Where students felt no defensiveness from the team responsible for sexual violence response, many felt the team responsible for sexual violence prevention demonstrated defensiveness when confronted with student criticism. Students expressed increased confidence in the prevention team since the split of responsibility but felt that some prevention staff saw students as a barrier to rather than a facilitator of their work.

Students unanimously expressed that the Rights, Relationships and Respect (RRR) module was a significant improvement on the previous consent module, Consent Matters. Students involved in residences also appreciated the proactivity of the sexual violence prevention team in reaching out to provide face-to-face RRR training to students in residences.

In staff focus groups, representatives from the sexual violence prevention team acknowledged they had previously struggled to hold responsibility for both sexual violence prevention and response due to a lack of capacity and skills and felt the new separation of responsibilities was a positive step. One staff member noted that the separation ensured the response team could call on the prevention team to provide education and training to communities impacted by an incident of sexual violence.

### **Using an intersectional lens**

Students and staff agreed that the University was yet to appropriately employ an intersectional lens in its sexual violence prevention and response activities and wanted a clearer focus on diverse communities in University sexual violence education and initiatives.

Students noted that the current action plan mentions the higher rates of victimisation experienced by "...female students, sexually diverse students, students with a disability and younger students aged 18 – 21 years..." (p. 2)<sup>3</sup>. Despite this, the Student Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan does not include specific actions to address the intersecting needs of students affected by sexual violence.

Both students and staff have requested that specific actions be included in the next Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy rolling action plan that place an intersectional lens on the University's sexual violence prevention and response activities. They wanted to see intersectional experiences considered in education and training, and university-wide communications.

To do this they requested the University expand their focus to also capture the prevention and response to racism, transphobia and other forms of discrimination, and that the University establish discrimination reporting and disclosure mechanisms, like those in place for sexual violence. Finally, students also told us they wanted more culturally and linguistically diverse staff hired at student-facing support services across the Australian National University.

Staff were especially concerned with the experiences of international students and raised that the existing action plan does not assign responsibility for international student specific sexual violence prevention and response to any particular division within the University. Staff requested that the next action plan specify responsibility for specific actions aimed at international students.

Students also said the RRR module and face-to-face training does not currently pay enough attention to culturally different approaches to relationships, consent and perceptions of behaviours that may constitute sexual violence. Students requested that future training be co-designed with culturally and linguistically diverse and international students and be delivered by trainers representative of culturally and linguistically diverse, and LGBTQIA+ communities.

Representatives from the sexual violence prevention team acknowledged this existing gap in focus groups noting that the RRR Preliminary Evaluation Report found:

"Initial findings suggest that content should be further developed to better support the learning of international students in a culturally sensitive and safe manner. Future evaluation should therefore focus on the education and information needs of our diverse student population." (p. 48)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Australian National University (2023) *Student Safety & Wellbeing Action Plan*, available at: <https://www.anu.edu.au/about/strategic-planning/sexual-violence-prevention-and-response>.

<sup>4</sup> Rossner, M., F. Gadow, B. Muir & H. Robertson (2023) *Rights, Relationships & Respect: Preliminary Evaluation Report*, available at: <https://www.anu.edu.au/about/strategic-planning/sexual-violence-prevention-and-response>.

## What did students tell us?

The above themes were all commonly emerging in both student and staff focus groups. There were also a number of separate and important themes that emerged in student focus groups only.

### **Trust in the Institution**

A concerning theme emerging was a lack of trust that the Australian National University would act in the best interests of victim-survivors. Students told us they largely saw the University as an adversarial institution that would not act to prevent and respond to sexual violence unless pushed to do so by external pressure. In one focus group a student stated:

“There is a complete lack of institutional trust. People just expect to be disappointed.”

According to students, this lack of trust is attributable to an historical pattern which they describe as feeling they have to continually force the University to engage on the issue of sexual violence prevention and response. Without the pressure of student protest, students did not trust the University would act.

Key staff members, especially those in specialist sexual violence prevention and response roles, were keenly aware of this student perspective and emphasised their strong commitment to improving the community's sense of trust in the institution. One staff member reported they were happy that the University had been promoting a message that “...we care about our community, and we want to do better.”

Despite the initially negative response, many students felt trust could be rebuilt if the University continued to provide opportunities for student voices to be heard. One student said they were grateful to have had the opportunity to have their voice heard at this stage before the next action plan was drafted. They said late student engagement had been a significant reason for a loss of trust in the past. Another student reported they finally felt staff are more open and willing to engage with students than had previously been the case.

### **Inconsistent residential approaches**

The Australian National University has an unusually high population of students residing in university residences. While this creates a strong sense of community at the University, it also creates safety and wellbeing challenges. For example, the [National Student Safety Survey](#) found that 32.4% of students who had been sexual harassed at the Australian National University had experienced this in a residential accommodation setting<sup>5</sup>. This is compared to the average rate of 10.6%<sup>6</sup>.

In focus groups, students told us they had experienced inconsistent sexual violence prevention and response approaches across residences. Students felt that, without a clear and consistent protocol,

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<sup>5</sup> ANU (2022) *ANU NSSS Results (Table)*, available at: <https://www.anu.edu.au/about/strategic-planning/sexual-violence-prevention-and-response>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

the individual attitudes and temperament of Heads of Halls and other residential staff largely determined the quality of residences' sexual violence prevention and response. One student said:

“When a report is made to Heads of Halls, they [the Head of Hall] often make the decision whether the incident was ‘serious enough’ to report more formally to ANU.”

Students consistently mentioned third party accommodation providers as having inconsistent approaches to sexual violence prevention and response. They said that third party accommodation providers do not provide residents with sufficient or correct education or information about sex and consent, or sexual violence reporting and support. Of greatest concern, students also did not trust third party accommodation providers to keep disclosures of sexual violence confidential. Students expressed a desire to see the University address issues within third party accommodation providers and consider whether new providers should be engaged to manage accommodation sites where standards of sexual violence prevention and response have not been met.

The Student Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan additionally specifies that residences are required to complete residential cultural action plans outlining how they will prevent and respond to disclosures of sexual violence. To date, cultural action plans have not been published. This means there is no transparency about how an individual residence will respond or even whether they have or haven't developed a cultural action plan.

Additionally, students noted the unique culture of each residence and suggested residential prevention activities be tailored. One such activity suggested by a student was to conduct regular residence-wide discussions about acceptable behaviours and what type of organisational culture residents wanted to build.

### **Problems with the reporting process**

Throughout focus groups, students reported they were happy with the University's disclosure tool, noting it was easy to navigate and user-friendly. However, many still expressed some confusion about the process after a report or disclosure was made. In particular, students were confused about the difference between a formal report and an informal disclosure and felt it wasn't clear what a victim-survivor could expect as an outcome of either a disclosure or report. Students noted the potential helpfulness of a flowchart, or similar, describing where a report or disclosure will go and possible outcomes.

Additionally, students expressed that the University seemed unwilling to explore non-punitive outcomes or mediation of relationships to reports and disclosures of sexual if a formal investigation process has not been conducted. Students noted that many victim-survivors may not want to pursue punitive or disciplinary measures and instead may only want their perpetrator removed from accommodation or classrooms, or other non-punitive protective measures. Students would like any alternatives to disciplinary measures outlined and accessible, even where the victim-survivor does not make an official report.

### **Physical safety**

Another theme that emerged was a concern with physical safety at the Australian National University. There was a perception amongst students that the University campus is not well lit at night because the University had prioritised reducing light pollution above student safety to assist the work of a local Observatory. One student said: “I don't think we should be prioritising the stars over student safety and wellbeing.” Students living at residences located away from University Avenue said their walk home at

night felt particularly unsafe. In response to this issue students suggested the University invest in down lights, red lights or foot lights as these options could provide non-polluting safety lighting.

Students also said they were unwilling to call university security staff to provide an escorted walk home as they did not trust staff to be understanding or to have appropriate knowledge of the campus. One student said they had previously called for an escort to walk home and the staff member seemed irritated that they had been asked to do so. It is not clear to the GVRN team whether the University's security staff have received sexual violence awareness and response training or whether they have been informed that student safety escorts are part of their role.

### **Gaps in training provision**

Students unanimously felt the RRR module was a significant improvement on the previous Consent Matters module. Additionally, many students felt positively about the associated face to face training. Students did express views about how training could be improved and diversified.

First, students noted that the online RRR module is currently easy to skip through. They recommended that more quizzes and activities be added to ensure consistent engagement from participants. Residential student leaders additionally said they had faced difficulties tracking student completion of training. Student participants requested the University establish a central system tracking to establish which students have completed the training.

Some, but not all students, also felt the RRR in-person training content was a good introduction to sex and relationships, however, felt the training could speak more to the actual lived experience of sex and relationships rather than speaking in metaphors and couched terms. One student, currently serving as a peer educator, noted the difficulty of attempting to provide relevant training to students from different backgrounds and with different pre-existing knowledge levels.

Students also felt that RRR in-person sessions were too long at 3 hours and they had noticed some students leave during the break. Students recommended that the sessions be shortened to be more accessible.

Students, especially Senior Residents, also asked for more opportunities to undergo disclosure and mental health first aid training and that this training should be available to an increased pool of student representatives including other residential student officers, club executives and members of residential cultural development committees. Students wanted these trainings to be offered more frequently and training to be focused on the specific needs of the particular student community in question.

Finally, students noted the specific needs of higher degree research students (HDR) and recommended a HDR specific sexual violence eLearning module be created.

### **Dealing with perpetrators**

Students were concerned that the University had not sufficiently considered how they should respond to alleged perpetrators. Students felt strongly that the University should support perpetrators and alleged perpetrators to acknowledge harm and change behaviour. They felt that perpetration of sexual violence, while a serious breach of community trust, did not necessarily mean one should be shunned from the community entirely. Students recommended the University explore education and behavioural change programs aimed at perpetrators. GVRN would add the caveat that safety of the victim/survivor should remain the central consideration.



Students also noted that there were people living in residences who were subject to rumours of allegedly perpetrating some form of sexual harassment/violence. Senior Residents particularly spoke to the difficulty of providing pastoral care to these students or were unsure whether they were even supposed to be providing pastoral care. Students understood this was an issue likely to be difficult for the University to solve but asked that residences provide increased wellbeing support to any Senior Residents providing this service.

## What did staff tell us?

Staff focus groups identified the following themes.

### **Staff Specific Safety and Wellbeing Strategy**

A survey conducted by the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) found that up to one in three university staff members have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace<sup>7</sup>. While universities are places of learning for students, they are also workplaces for staff and as such, incorporating a focus on staff experiences of sexual violence is as important as a focus on students.

The Australian National University's Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy is a whole-of-university strategy and therefore, its remit includes sexual violence experienced by staff. In focus groups, staff raised concerns that staff experiences of sexual violence are not currently being adequately addressed in the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy action plans and response pathways are unclear or little known amongst staff.

To accommodate these concerns, specialist staff advised us that the University's Sexual Violence Disclosure tool is being expanded to better manage staff matters. GVRN commend this expansion and suggest a systematic plan should be established to prevent and respond to staff experiences of sexual violence.

Currently, the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan is singularly focused on students. If this separation is to be maintained, staff involved in focus groups felt a staff specific plan should be established and that the focus of this plan should be sexual violence as well as other workplace safety and wellbeing issues such as bullying and harassment, and work-life balance. Staff suggested this be established as a separate strategy to student sexual violence strategies due to the specific needs of staff.

### **Managing Student Expectations**

In focus groups, staff clearly prioritised student opportunities to engage on sexual violence strategic planning however, they also raised concerns that passionate students occasionally asked too much of individual staff members, especially those in specialist roles. In focus groups, staff expressed that they felt that students would occasionally come to student support services with unrealistic expectations about what staff could do to enact the justice they desired.

Staff felt challenged in communicating confidentiality and legal limitations to students in a way that still validated their experiences and provided them with the support they required. They felt that at times, students could become angry at an individual staff member for what they perceived to be

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<sup>7</sup> National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) (2023) *Sexual harassment in the workplace*, available at: [https://www.nteu.au/News\\_Articles/Media\\_Releases/Sexual\\_Harassment\\_Survey\\_Report.aspx](https://www.nteu.au/News_Articles/Media_Releases/Sexual_Harassment_Survey_Report.aspx).

limited or no outcomes. One staff member said: “we have extremely passionate students, but I think the students think we can do more than we can.”

Formalisation of student engagement as well as provision of clear information describing the reporting process and expected outcomes may go some way in managing student expectations.

## For Future Action

GVRN has determined nine action areas for the Australian National University to consider for inclusion in the next Sexual Violence Strategy action plan. These areas and the associated recommendations are based on the evidence provided by the desktop review and the focus groups undertaken with staff and students. These areas and recommendations are as follows.

### New Areas of Work for the Australian National University

#### **Action 1: Increasing and formalising student engagement in sexual violence governance processes.**

The Australian National University’s Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy listed ‘working with the whole ANU community’ as a key to its approach. This approach is consistent with the Australian Human Rights Commission’s (AHRC) ‘Change the Course’ Report which recommended students be involved in the oversight of university sexual violence governance.

At the Australian National University, students are demonstrably committed to sexual violence prevention and response. In particular, ANUSA student representatives have consistently provided comprehensive and galvanising feedback to senior University leaders on the University’s sexual violence prevention and response activities. The Australian National University has a significant population of Senior Residents, Community Coordinators and other student leaders at University residences many of whom provide a response to student disclosures and have a recognised role in participating in prevention and response activities.

In focus groups, students reported a lack of trust in the University’s commitment to addressing sexual violence on campus. Previously, students have been consulted on sexual violence strategies and action plans after their drafting rather than being included in the creation of the action plan itself. In separate focus groups, staff stated that student expectations of management and the consultation process, had been a difficulty in the past. Both perspectives underscore the importance of trust and student engagement in planning processes.

More recently there have been increased efforts made to include student voices in sexual violence prevention and response efforts. Almost unanimously, students and staff spoke highly of the sexual violence response team and the increase in trust this team has established with the University community. The current consultation process is also indicative of a more open approach to consultation in planning for the next action plan.

Creation of a formal student engagement plan could be a positive next step to continue to move towards closer and stronger student and staff relationships. A formal student engagement plan would set out expectations for how students can engage therefore supporting student voices and protecting staff from unrealistic expectations.

**Recommendation 1:** That the Australian National University develop a sexual violence student engagement plan setting out how the University will include students in its sexual violence governance processes. This plan should

- be co-designed with students to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflective of student needs.
- set out how students will be engaged before the drafting of major strategic documents or commencement of significant operational changes.
- describe methods in which students can provide feedback on sexual violence prevention and response activities outside of formal feedback periods.
- include engagement opportunities for students from a variety of backgrounds including representatives from ANUSA, Senior Residents and other residential student leaders, the Respectful Relationships Unit's Peer Educators, and club & society executives.

## **Action 2: Ensuring an intersectional lens is applied to students affected by sexual violence.**

The National Student Safety Survey conducted in 2021 showed that, in many circumstances, students from diverse backgrounds are more likely to experience sexual violence and may be less likely to report or seek support for these experiences<sup>8</sup>. Non-binary or 'differently termed' students were 24.2% more likely than the average student to experience sexual harassment and 8.3% more likely to experience sexual assault<sup>9</sup>. Students with disability were 5.3% more likely to experience sexual harassment and 5.5% more likely to experience sexual assault<sup>10</sup>. And finally, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students were 6.8% more likely to experience sexual harassment and 3.3% more likely to experience sexual assault<sup>11</sup>.

Studies demonstrate that efforts to prevent racism, transphobia and other forms of discrimination, may also contribute to decreasing rates of sexual violence<sup>12</sup>. This research indicates the value of an intersectional lens to underpin the Australian National University's sexual violence prevention and response efforts.

In their preliminary evaluation of the RRR online module and face-to-face training programs, the Australian National University has already identified "...education and information needs of our diverse student population" as a key area for improvement in future education and training efforts<sup>13</sup>. The GVRN would like to commend the University for this identified area of future action and make some further recommendations for action.

**Recommendation 2:** That the Australian National University conduct sexual violence prevention activities that improve responses to the intersecting and diverse life experiences of students. The University's prevention teams may wish to consider the following strategies to achieve this:

- employ more peer educators and trainers and ensure they are from a diverse range of backgrounds.

<sup>8</sup> Heywood, W., P. Myers, A. Powell, G. Meikle & D. Nguyen (2022) *Report on the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault among university students in 2021*, Melbourne: Social Research Centre.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Harris, J. (2020) 'Women of colour undergraduate students' experiences with campus sexual assault: An intersectional analysis', *The Review of Higher Education*, 44(1): 1-30.

<sup>13</sup> Rossner, M., F. Gadow, B. Muir & H. Robertson (2023) *Rights, Relationships & Respect: Preliminary Evaluation Report*, available at: <https://www.anu.edu.au/about/strategic-planning/sexual-violence-prevention-and-response>.

- provide ongoing consultation opportunities to diverse student groups to ensure relevance of training content and delivery style.
- explore specific training aimed to address the needs of international students.

**Recommendation 3:** That the Australian National University address intersectional discrimination experienced by students and staff through increased resourcing to widen prevention and response strategies to encompass other forms of discrimination including racism and transphobia. This may include:

- creation of a whole-of-university anti-discrimination campaign aimed at primary prevention. This campaign should be co-designed with diverse student groups.
- establishment of discrimination disclosure pathways similar to the sexual violence disclosure tool.

**Recommendation 4:** That the Australian National University conduct sexual violence prevention activities that improve responses to the intersecting and diverse life experiences of students. The University's prevention teams may wish to consider the following strategies to achieve this:

- employ more peer educators and trainers and ensure they are from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- provide ongoing consultation opportunities to diverse student groups to ensure relevance of training content and delivery style.
- explore specific training aimed to address the needs of international students.

### **Action 3: Considering opportunities to provide perpetrators and alleged perpetrators of sexual violence with increased access to behaviour change initiatives.**

Over many decades, universities and the broader community have made significant efforts to gauge rates and experiences of sexual violence victimisation. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics have conducted the [Personal Safety Survey](#) and the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety have conducted the [National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women survey](#). Each have determined rates of sexual violence and tracked community attitudes over time.

Despite this strong focus on sexual violence victimisation, there has been little research on rates and experiences of sexual violence perpetration. In 2022, researchers from the Queensland University of Technology conducted a systematic evidence review on what is known about perpetration and released a subsequent state of knowledge report. [This report](#) found a number of individual,

relationship, community and societal based driving factors for perpetration of sexual violence<sup>14</sup>. Some of these factors include acceptance of rape culture and gender inequality, and aggressive male peer groups and relations.

In addition to usual disciplinary procedures, the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy specifically noted that, in order to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour, it may be useful to explore:

“...the role of restorative approaches to preventing and responding to incidents of sexual violence in recognition of the other forms of healing, acknowledgement and validation sought by victim-survivors” (p. 5)<sup>15</sup>

The next action plan may consider including an increased focus on providing options for justice as defined by victims. Developing best practice responses to perpetrators and alleged perpetrators must keep the safety of victims and alleged victims as the central consideration.

**Recommendation 5:** That the Australian National University consider alternative or restorative justice processes that could be applied in an Australian National University context and how alternative forms of justice may be implemented alongside the usual remedies provided to other forms of wrongdoing and misconduct. This could be informed by conducting an evidence review exploring the availability and effectiveness of perpetrator focused behavioural change programs in university contexts and determine if any learnings from these programs can be applied.

## Expanding on Existing Australian National University Initiatives

### Action 4: Clarifying reporting and disclosure processes for students and staff.

The National Student Safety Survey also found that, for many who had experienced sexual violence, a lack of understanding of university reporting processes could be a barrier to making a formal report<sup>16</sup>. Universities need to clearly communicate to students and staff what they can expect when they make a formal report or a disclosure and the difference between these two actions. This includes, who will manage a report or disclosure, and potential outcomes.

Currently the Australian National University has a robust sexual violence reporting and disclosure process however, focus groups revealed a lack of student and staff awareness regarding what happens to a report and disclosure after it is made.

**Recommendation 6:** That the Australian National University increase efforts to communicate sexual violence reporting and disclosure processes on the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website. These communications should include:

- a description of the difference between a disclosure and a formal report.
- a flowchart or other clear description of what will happen to a disclosure or formal report of sexual violence once it has been submitted.

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<sup>14</sup> Flood, M., C. Brown, L. Dembele & K. Mills (2022) *Who uses domestic, family, and sexual violence, how, and why? The State of Knowledge Report on Violence Perpetration*. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology.

<sup>15</sup> Australian National University (2019) *ANU Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy 2019-2026*, available at: <https://www.anu.edu.au/about/strategic-planning/sexual-violence-prevention-and-response>.

<sup>16</sup> Heywood, W., P. Myers, A. Powell, G. Meikle & D. Nguyen (2022) *Report on the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault among university students in 2021*, Melbourne: Social Research Centre.

- examples of outcomes that can be expected from a sexual violence disclosure or formal report, and in what circumstances victim-survivors can expect these outcomes. This should include some non-punitive outcomes.

**Action 5: Providing students and staff with sufficient sexual violence awareness and response training and access to information and resources.**

Key components of delivering effective sexual violence prevention and response is training and providing appropriate information and resources to the university community. The Australian National University's Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy aimed to achieve [six key outcomes](#). Many of these outcomes required increasing awareness of drivers, forms and impacts of sexual violence, and mechanisms through which to report and seek support for an experience of sexual violence.

In recent years, the University has established the RRR program of education including an online eLearning module for all students, and an in-person training for students in residences. These efforts are a commendable first step toward community-wide awareness. Continuing efforts to improve community awareness and increasing staff and student capacity to respond with compassion and to know how and where to refer internally and to external organisations could be included in the next action plan.

**Recommendation 7:** That the Australian National University continue its efforts to increase community awareness of sexual violence drivers, forms and impacts of sexual violence as well as knowing how and where to refer for a more specialised response within the University and to external organisations. To inform the next action plan the Australian National University may consider:

- conducting an audit of existing sexual violence awareness and response training offerings and determine gaps in provision.
- exploring new opportunities to provide mental health first aid, cultural competency and sexual violence disclosure training to Senior Residents and other residential student leaders, as well as staff members in key student-facing roles including senior residential staff and student-facing academic staff such as lecturers and tutors.

**Recommendation 8:** That the Australian National University's sexual violence prevention team, work with residential students and staff to facilitate residence-specific prevention programs acknowledging the difference in community and culture at each individual residence.

**Action 6: Ensuring continuity across Australian National University residences in their approaches to sexual violence prevention and response.**

The Australian National University is unique in many ways but especially due to its significant population of students living on or around campus in University residences. At the Australian National University, over 6,000 students live in campus residences making up over 30% of the student population<sup>17</sup>. University residences provide students with strong communities and connection to the campus. However, the high proportion of students in residences also creates a greater need for the University community to consider safety in residences.

In 2021, the National Student Safety Survey found that 12.3% of students who had experienced sexual harassment since starting university had experienced this at student accommodation<sup>18</sup>. At the Australian National University, a much higher rate of sexual harassment (32.4%) occurred in student accommodation<sup>19,20</sup>. The significantly higher number of reports at the Australian National University demonstrates the importance of strong and supportive sexual violence prevention and response activities occurring in residences at the Australian National University.

Student focus groups revealed that, a key difficulty they faced on campus was inconsistent approaches to sexual violence prevention and response across residences. Students felt that while some residences responded to disclosures well, others did not. They reported the quality of response, largely relied on the temperament, skills and commitment of individual residence staff members. Ensuring inconsistency of sexual violence prevention and response approaches and processes across all residences and providing specialised awareness and response training, is a priority.

**Recommendation 9:** That the Australian National University ensure that Residential Experience and University Experience teams work together to provide oversight and advice to each residence to re-introduce the development of residential cultural action plans.

Residential cultural action plans should include:

- intended prevention activities,
- staff responsible for receiving disclosures of sexual violence,
- the process that staff members will take to escalate any disclosure to the Disclosure Tool,
- Student Safety and Wellbeing and/or other relevant services.

Residential cultural action plans should be co-designed with Community Coordinators, Senior Residents, other residential student leaders as well as regular residents to ensure they are fit for purpose.

**Recommendation 10:** That the Australian National University ensure specific residential cultural action plans be developed for third party providers. These may also include actions to further educate third party staff in sexual violence awareness and response, and ways in which third party providers will act to re-gain the trust of the student community.

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<sup>17</sup> ANU (2023) *Residential experience*, available at: [https://www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/residential-experience#:~:text=The%20Australian%20National%20University%20\(ANU,our%20beautiful%20campus%20their%20home](https://www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/residential-experience#:~:text=The%20Australian%20National%20University%20(ANU,our%20beautiful%20campus%20their%20home).

<sup>18</sup> Heywood, W., P. Myers, A. Powell, G. Meikle & D. Nguyen (2022) *Report on the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault among university students in 2021*, Melbourne: Social Research Centre.

<sup>19</sup> ANU (2022) *ANU NSSS Results (Table)*, available at: <https://www.anu.edu.au/about/strategic-planning/sexual-violence-prevention-and-response>.

<sup>20</sup> The ANU NSS Results table only included location specific data related to sexual harassment and not sexual assault, therefore we could not provide a sexual assault specific comparison between the ANU and general university student experiences.



### **Action 7: Providing key staff members with increased information and support to provide trauma aware responses to disclosures of sexual violence.**

The National Student Safety Survey found that 4.6% of students who were sexually assaulted sought support from a person in their faculty or school and 11.6% sought support from a person in their accommodation or residence<sup>21</sup>. This identified help-seeking pattern demonstrates the importance of preparing key staff members with the skills to appropriately respond to disclosures as well as refer victim-survivors to reporting and support options.

GVRN notes that every institution should be able to provide a trauma-informed response to an individual disclosure of sexual violence. At the Australian National University certain staff members without specialist service roles, are not expected to provide this high level of support. GVRN understands that being trauma informed is seen as the end point of a continuum<sup>22</sup>. A trauma informed person has the relevant knowledge and skills to provide a higher level of case management and care to a person affected by sexual violence. The first point on that continuum is being trauma aware. If a person is trauma aware, they have the knowledge and skills to seek information about trauma and may be able to provide a warm referral to someone so they can access the support services they might need.

The aspiration for the University, is that the University as a whole, provides victim-survivors with a trauma-informed response to sexual violence. Certain specialist staff should also be able to provide this higher level of response, but every staff member should be able to provide a trauma aware response.

**Recommendation 11:** That the Australian National University ensure staff and students in relevant roles are provided with the resources and education to provide a trauma aware response to a disclosure of sexual violence and know how to refer victim-survivors to appropriate reporting and support options. In order to build these skills, the University may consider:

- more widely disseminating the 'responding to disclosures' guide available to all staff and relevant students.
- including the basic principles of trauma aware sexual violence awareness and response education in staff inductions, including casual academic tutors, residential staff, and UniSafe staff. This may be best accomplished via e-learning training modules.
- establishing a communication mechanism that allows the University to provide all staff and students with ongoing information about the University's sexual violence prevention and response activities.

### **Action 8: Ensuring that staff experiences of sexual violence are sufficiently captured by the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy rolling action plans.**

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<sup>21</sup> Heywood, W., P. Myers, A. Powell, G. Meikle & D. Nguyen (2022) *Report on the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault among university students in 2021*, Melbourne: Social Research Centre.

<sup>22</sup> UNSW (2022) *Stop. Empower. Support. UNSW Gendered Violence Strategy & Action Plan 2022-2025*, available at: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/planning-assurance/safety/safer-communities/resources/stop-empower-support>.



The Australian National University's Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy is a whole-of-university strategy and therefore, includes staff. Until now, the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy's rolling action plans have focused on students. A whole-of-university-strategy would necessarily include preventing and responding to staff experiences of sexual violence. A more inclusive prevention and response strategy would include a focus on the needs of staff experiencing sexual violence in the next action plan.

In 2023 the National Tertiary Education Union conducted a survey asking its members about their experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace. This survey found almost 30% of respondents had experienced some form of sexual harassment in the workplace<sup>23</sup>. Despite the clear prevalence of sexual harassment experienced by staff, many universities' sexual violence prevention and response efforts focus solely on students. A strong student focus is very important however, universities must also acknowledge the experiences of staff.

Universities must also ensure compliance with positive duty requirements considered in the 2022 update to the Sexual Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), and requirements to provide a psychosocially safe work environment under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (ACT). The University must also consider its requirements under the University's Enterprise Agreement which states:

"...the University will work towards an environment that is... supportive of staff who are to be respected, talent is nurtured and supported, and staff enjoy a safe and engaging work environment" (p.5)<sup>24</sup>.

**Recommendation 12:** That the Australian National University create a specific Staff Safety and Wellbeing Plan. This plan should be co-designed with staff from a range of colleges and divisions and should be a separate plan aligned to the student safety and wellbeing plan. The plan may include actions intended to address not just sexual violence, but also other safety and wellbeing issues identified in co-design with staff. The plan should also consider requirements under the Safe@Work program and the newly introduced 'Positive Duty' of employers to proactively address sexual harassment in the workplace.

**Recommendation 13:** That the Australian National University ensure relevant existing supports and reporting mechanisms available to students also be made available to staff members. This may include:

- expanding the function of the sexual violence disclosure tool to also capture staff experiences of sexual violence, and
- providing detailed information on the University's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website about staff sexual violence reporting and support processes and outcomes.

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<sup>23</sup> National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) (2023) *Sexual harassment in the workplace*, available at: [https://www.nteu.au/News\\_Articles/Media\\_Releases/Sexual\\_Harassment\\_Survey\\_Report.aspx](https://www.nteu.au/News_Articles/Media_Releases/Sexual_Harassment_Survey_Report.aspx).

<sup>24</sup> Australian National University (2020) *Varied 2017-2021 Enterprise Bargaining Agreement*, available at: <https://services.anu.edu.au/human-resources/enterprise-agreement>.

**Action 9: Providing a physically safe University campus for all students, staff and visitors to the Australian National University.**

According to the National Student Safety Survey, 54.7% of students who were sexually harassed in the 12 months previous to the survey had experienced this in general campus areas (Heywood et al. 2022). A campus that feels physically safe and welcoming is an important aspect of community building and efforts to improve student perceptions of physical safety at the Australian National University would be beneficial.

Campus safety was reported to be a significant student concern in focus groups. In some cases, students said they felt the University prioritised limiting light pollution for the benefit of a local observatory, above the safety and wellbeing of students. To improve this perception, the Australian National University may consider making some changes to the infrastructure of the physical campus.

**Recommendation 14:** That the Australian National University conduct a physical safety audit of the campus, both at night and during the day. This audit should aim to identify any physical safety concerns that can be addressed by the University, The audit should include staff and student representatives and assess different areas of campus, security offerings and other relevant safety initiatives already in operation. As a part of this safety audit, the University may wish to consider:

- investing in increased lighting across campus especially in areas away from University Avenue. To prevent light pollution that may affect the operations of the observatory, the University could explore the usefulness of red lights, down lights and other non-polluting lighting options.
- the current effectiveness of services provided by the University's security staff and identify any gaps in training and education, and resourcing for permanent staff members.

# Appendix A: Desktop Review

## Introduction

In 2017, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) released the *Change the Course* report, a report outlining findings from the first Australian national survey into university student experiences of sexual violence. Since the release of this report the Australian National University (ANU) has progressed activities and actions to prevent and respond to sexual violence on campus including establishing systems to support appropriate response to incidents and reports of sexual violence connected to the University.

The Australian National University's actions have been supported by strong and consistent advocacy and activism from student leaders such as those from the ANU Students Association (ANUSA). In the years following the release of the *Change the Course* report, ANUSA's Women's Department released a number of reports (the *Broken Promises* Report and *Follow Through ANU* report) analysing the state of the University's response to sexual violence and made recommendations for improvement. These student reports and the activism surrounding their release appear to have strongly influenced the University's prevention and response efforts as well as clearly demonstrating student commitment to this issue.

The University has taken important steps to respond to the initial AHRC report, the *National Student Safety Survey* (NSSS) and reports generated by ANUSA. As a first step the University produced the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy (SVPS), a document guiding the University's prevention and response. Following this, the University published the Student Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan. This plan operationalised the guidance outlined in the SVPS providing clear and actionable commitments from the University to sexual violence prevention and response.

This report outlines the results of a desktop review assessing major documents describing the progress made and current state of sexual violence prevention and response produced by the Australian National University and its community.

## Methodology

In order to arrive at this final report, research staff at GVRN conducted a systematic review of documents generated by the Australian National University and its community. These documents were identified via the University's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website and are as follows:

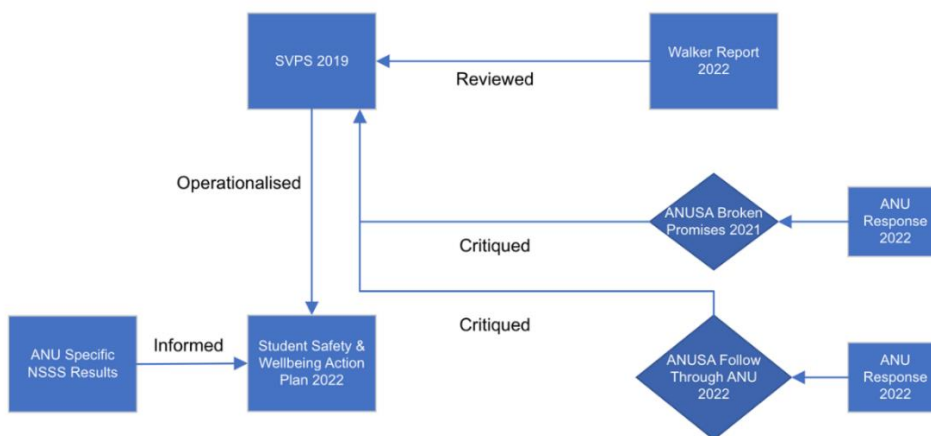
- Australian National University generated strategies, action plans and reports:
  - o The Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy
  - o The Australian National University Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy Independent Assessor's Report (the Walker report)
  - o Student Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan
- Student generated reports:
  - o The Broken Promises Report and Australian National University response
  - o The Follow Through ANU Report and Australian National University response
- Australian National University generated resources:
  - o National Student Safety Survey Detailed Results

- Sexual Misconduct Reports and Disclosures – Report 2021
- Respectful Relationships Unit’s Sexual Violence Prevention Toolkit
- ANU Sexual Misconduct Policy (Update) and ANU Sexual Misconduct Response (Student) Procedure
- Sexual Misconduct Reports and Disclosures – Report 2022
- Rights, Relationships and Respect Preliminary Evaluation Report

The actions included in these documents were then reviewed using publicly available websites to determine University progress. As a result of this review, the GVRN was then able to make recommendations for further progress of existing action plans and suggest actions to be included in future rolling action plans under the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy. These recommendations will be expanded upon following consultations with Australian National University students and staff.

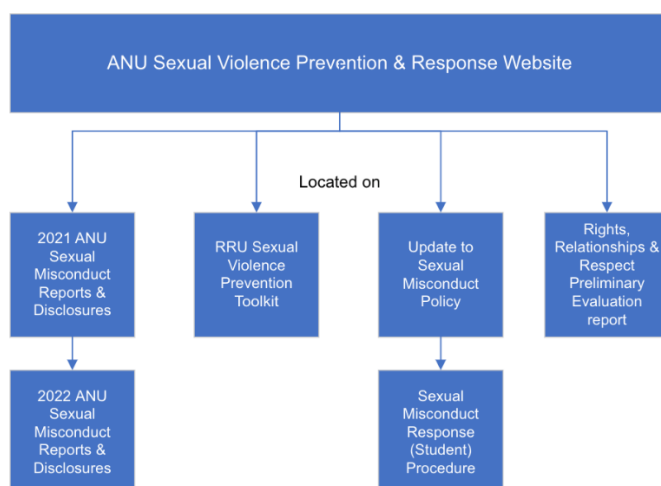
### Document Logic Map

For this desktop review, the GVRN reviewed 14 documents generated by the Australian National University and its community. Below is a map describing the relationship between primary strategic documents produced by the University and ANUSA.



Note: Reports noted in the rectangle shapes refer to University generated reports whereas the reports noted in the diamond shape refer to student generated reports.

The remaining documents reviewed for this desktop review are sexual violence prevention and response resources and documents produced by the Australian National University. These resources are located on the University’s Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website here: Below is a map describing the relationship between these documents.



## Findings

### Australian National University Strategic Documents

#### Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy

In November 2019, the Australian National University produced the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy (SVPS). This strategy acted as a guiding document for the University's actions towards the prevention of, and response to, sexual violence on campus. The SVPS is inclusive of all students and staff and outlines what needs to be done ('our approach') and priorities for action.

The University's approach to what needs to be done is described as:

1. Focus on the drivers of violence
2. Act on the reinforcing factors
3. Work with the whole ANU community
4. Connect and coordinate prevention efforts.
5. Engage groups at high risk of perpetration or victimisation in prevention efforts.

These five areas are informed by Our Watch's *Change the Story*, an evidence-based framework designed to guide a coordinated and effective national approach to preventing violence against women.

The University outlines six priorities for action in the SVPS:

1. Build a strong and coordinated ANU prevention system.
2. Scale up and build on what works.
3. Research, innovate and inform.
4. Monitor and evaluate.
5. Engage, communicate and co-design with the community.
6. Engage in an ongoing dialogue about ANU values and ethics.

#### GVRN Analysis

While the University's approach and priorities for action reflect best practice, the SVPS does not outline *how* actions will be taken, nor does it outline responsibilities for any of the priorities for action. Instead, the SVPS states that specific actions will be described in rolling action plans that will be established at different points in time.

The SVPS does not specify a timeline for the development and operationalisation of the rolling action plans. The first Action Plan was scheduled to commence in 2019, but to date, there is no evidence that this rolling action plan was developed.

The SVPS also identifies the importance of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework to measure the success of the University's progress implementing the SVPS. To date no progress has been made towards developing an M&E Framework.

### [Australian National University Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy Independent Assessor's Report \(Walker Report\)](#)

In March 2022, Lyn Walker & Associates was commissioned by the Australian National University to review the SVPS. This review had a specific focus on identifying actions that could be considered for implementation during 2022 and 2023. The Review conducted an examination of relevant University documentation, liaised with key staff to clarify issues arising from this examination, developed a draft program logic framework and ran consultation sessions with students and staff. The findings of this review are documented in what is colloquially referred to as the *Walker Report*.

From this inquiry, the following themes emerged as priorities for future action:

1. Reviewing the current sexual violence policy with a view to adopting a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence.
2. Strengthening and documenting procedures underpinning responses to those who have been subjected to or perpetrated sexual violence. The Walker review also recommended disseminating information on response procedures across the University.
3. Increasing student engagement in strategy planning and implementation processes.
4. Maintaining a whole of organisation approach to the work whilst giving priority to actions to be implemented within ANU residential settings.
5. Tailoring some activities to ensure that actions designed to both respond to and prevent sexual violence are relevant to the needs of students from varying ethnic/cultural backgrounds. This cohort is recommended as a priority for 2022 -2024 due to the large percentage of the Australian population and the ANU community, who are from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This does not preclude establishing other cohorts for priority attention in future strategy iterations.
6. Making explicit the decentralised approach to strategy implementation including the roles to be performed by both the Respectful Relationship Unit (RRU) and the Student Safety and Wellbeing Team (SSWT) and the mechanisms that will be implemented to secure increased engagement in the work from staff and students located across the University.
7. Strengthening governance, planning, coordination and evaluation systems underpinning strategy implementation. This includes development and monitoring of annual action plans and disseminating information on outputs and outcomes achieved.

### **GVRN Analysis**

As part of this desktop review, the GVRN has reviewed the University's progress in responding to these seven recommendations for future action:

1. Since the release of the Walker review, the Sexual Misconduct Policy has been reviewed. A zero-tolerance approach is not currently incorporated in this policy however, this is likely based on their assessment of what would be a best-practice strategic direction. Taking a zero-tolerance approach assumes that we could ever reach a place in which there is no sexual

violence at all. This may not be a realistic aim and GVRN support's the University's re-consideration of the utility of a zero-tolerance approach.

2. Since the release of the Walker review, the University has also produced a Sexual Misconduct Response (Student) Procedure. This procedure outlines processes for how students can access reporting, disclosure and support for an experience of sexual violence. This procedure document is an important step in transparently communicating reporting and support processes available at the University. This could be strengthened by providing a clear differentiation between what constitutes a disclosure as opposed to a formal report. It also does not make clear what forms of support or outcomes students can expect from either a disclosure or formal report.
3. Increasing student engagement in strategic planning and implementation is an important priority for action for the University and currently, there is no specific plan in place to achieve this. Our analysis suggests that there would be merit in the development of a student engagement plan co-designed with students, especially those representing the ANUSA Women's Department. This plan would outline how the University will engage with students to ensure that ongoing rolling action plans are informed by the lived and living experiences and needs of students.
4. Currently, the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan (which will be assessed later in this desktop review) states that Residential Cultural Action Plans will be released in Q4 2023. These action plans should be published to the University's sexual violence prevention and response website found here: <https://www.anu.edu.au/about/strategic-planning/sexual-violence-prevention-and-response>
5. Action 1.4 of the Student Safety & Wellbeing Plan states that the University will review current prevention activities, re-design consent education modules for diverse cohorts, and explore re-design of promotional activities to include language of origin. This action is due for completion in Q4 2023. Once this action is complete, we suggest that actions taken be published on the University's sexual violence prevention and response website.
6. As noted by the Walker review, the split of prevention and response responsibilities between the Respectful Relationships Unit (RRU) and the Student Safety and Wellbeing Team (SSWT) respectively is an important and commendable aspect of the University's response to sexual violence.
7. The Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan operationalises the SVPS, and a new Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee with student representation has been established. This demonstrates the University's continuing commitment to progressing their prevention and response to sexual violence on campus. We also recommend that the University develop a Monitoring & Evaluation Plan for the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan and subsequent rolling action plans.

### Student Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan

Alongside the release of the *Walker Report* and NSSS detailed results in March 2022, the Australian National University also released the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan. This plan operationalises the guidance provided in the SVPS by outlining concrete actions captured under the following headings:

1. Start implementing all the recommendations from the Independent Assessor's Report (Walker Report).
2. Ensure that University staff are able to access effective and supported training focused on Student Safety and Wellbeing.

3. Make accessible consent training mandatory for enrolment and pilot new prevention education programs with a focus on online safety.
4. Significantly invest in more professionally trained staff in residences and implement within the context of a strengthened operations model.
5. Expand the case management support from the Student Safety and Wellbeing team.
6. Introduce oversight mechanism for the University Council to oversee these recommendations and to ensure accountability.
7. Strengthen and document procedures for responding to victim/survivors and perpetrators and disseminate this information widely across the University.

## **GVRN Analysis**

The implementation of the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan is still in progress and as such, progress is difficult to determine. The GVRN commends the Australian National University for the comprehensiveness of the intended actions and makes the following assessment in response to each action area heading:

1. Response to the *Walker Report* is clearly in progress and may benefit from the suite of recommendations made in the previous section.
2. The University's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website outlines that staff have been provided with education and training including the RRU's Sexual Violence Prevention Toolkit (which will be assessed later in this document), and optional student disclosure training. Actions 2.1-2.6 of the Student Safety & Wellbeing Plan outlines new training areas that are being explored until Q4 2023. Our analysis suggests that that these areas are codesigned with students. We recommend that, when this action is complete, the University communicate this on the Sexual Violence Prevention & Response website.
3. Since the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan was released, the Rights, Relationships and Respect module has been launched. This module is a consent and respectful relationships module and is mandatory for all commencing students to complete. This module is run by the RRU and a preliminary evaluation was completed in June 2023 assessing the success of its first 6 months of operation. This evaluation was conducted by the RRU internally. After considering the evaluation findings, it may be helpful to consider what additional training is required or whether there is a need for follow up or refresher training.
4. The University's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website details increased staffing at ANU Residential Experience, however our analysis suggests that more detail be provided outlining how many roles have been filled and what these roles entail.
5. The University's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website also details increased Case Manager staffing at the Student Safety and Wellbeing Team however our analysis suggests that that more detail be provided outlining how many roles have been filled.
6. A Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee and Steering Group with student representation has been established to oversee implementation of the recommendations included in the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan.
7. As outlined previously in this desktop review, the University has produced a Sexual Misconduct Response (Student) Procedure. This procedure outlines processes for how students can access reporting, disclosure and support for an experience of sexual violence. This procedure document is an important step forward in transparently communicating reporting and support processes, however it currently lacks clear differentiation between what constitutes a disclosure as distinct from a formal report. It also does not make clear what forms of support or outcomes students can expect from either a disclosure or formal report.



The University has made significant progress on the implementation of actions in the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan. However, the GVRN recommends that a formal Monitoring and Evaluation Framework be established to ensure that the University is achieving against its targeted outcomes.

## Student Generated Reports

### The ANUSA *Broken Promises* Report

In August 2021, ANUSA's Women's Department released the *Broken Promises* Report. This Report provided a strong critique of the actions the University has taken, and identified action not yet taken, to implement recommendations from the AHRC's *Change the Course* Report, a Report completed by an independent assessor which reviewed Australian National University residences' response to sexual violence (the *Nous Review*), the SVPS, and the SASH Taskforce Report, and an internal University report conducted by members of a University sexual violence taskforce.

In the *Broken Promises* Report, ANUSA Women's Department claims the following about the SVPS:

"Neither the SVPS nor the SPVS Background are particularly well-suited to creating clear actionables for the ANU staff. As such, they are generally quite vague documents with few promises between them." (ANUSA 2021: 13).

The *Broken Promises* Report concludes with the following recommendations:

1. Fulfilling the 'One Stop Shop' recommendation from the Rapid Context review and developing the Respectful Relationships Unit (RRU) into a multi-pronged unit for understanding disclosures, reporting, and engaging in prevention.
2. A single, designated senior executive staff member who is both ultimately responsible for, and has relevant authority over, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) service provision on campus.
3. A Cultural Change Action Plan catered for addressing the drivers of sexual violence.
4. Publication and development of a communication plan to disseminate data relating to investigative outcomes in sexual misconduct cases that is de-identified and anonymous.
5. The high number of recommendations coming out of numerous reports suggests the need for an oversight mechanism of the ANU's SASH response.

In the months following the publication of ANUSA's 'Broken Promises' report, the University made a number of commitments to change. First, independent assessor, Lyn Walker, was commissioned to conduct a review into the SVPS. Following this, University published very detailed results of the National Student Safety Survey, the first of a number of promised rolling action plans – the Student Safety & Wellbeing Plan – was established; and the University released their first ever de-identified report of sexual misconduct reports and disclosures. These documents are further analysed below.

### ANU Response to ANUSA's *Broken Promises* Report

In May 2022, senior leaders from the Australian National University wrote to student leaders at ANUSA officially responding to the recommendations of the 'Broken Promises' report. The response letter thanks student leaders for their advocacy and provides detailed responses to the *Broken Promises* recommendations and responds in detail to the recommendations they made. A summary of the University's responses to the student critique follows:

1. *Fulfilling the 'One Stop Shop' recommendation from the Rapid Context review and developing the RRU into a multi-pronged unit for understanding disclosures, reporting, and engaging in prevention* – the Walker Report welcomed separation of responsibilities for prevention and

response between the RRU and SSW Team within the University. This alternate practice to the One Stop Shop approach ensures that both the RRU and SSWT are able to focus their resources on prevention and response while remaining connected under the management of the University Experience Division, which provides coordination.

2. *A single, designated senior executive staff member who is both ultimately responsible for, and has relevant authority over, SASH service provision on campus* – Professor Ian Anderson AO, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student and University Experience) is the single, designated senior executive staff member at the Australian National University who has responsibility for the sexual assault and sexual harassment service provision on campus.
3. *A Cultural Change Action Plan catered for addressing the drivers of sexual violence* – Cultural actions plans have been developed specifically for Residential Accommodation and our analysis suggests that similar plans need to be developed across the University. This is noted in the Independent Assessment and is incorporated into Phase 3 of the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan to be implemented by the end of 2023.
4. *Publication of data relating to investigative outcomes in sexual misconduct cases that is de-identified and anonymous* – On March 2, 2022, the Australian National University released the first public report on Sexual Misconduct Reports and Disclosures.
5. *The high number of recommendations coming out of numerous reports suggests the need for an oversight mechanism of the ANU's SASH response* - The University is in the process of establishing a mechanism for ANU Council oversight of this work and to further develop equity, inclusion and safety at the University. This mechanism will include members of ANU Council, independent experts from outside the University and student representatives. Further detail will be released on this in the coming weeks.

## **GVRN Analysis**

The GVRN broadly endorses these responses from the Australian National University and additionally recommends that residential cultural action plans be published on the University's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website. The GVRN also notes that since this letter was released, the University has established a Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee with student representation that acts as an oversight mechanism over the University's SASH response.

### [The ANUSA Follow Through ANU Report.](#)

In August 2022, ANUSA's Women's Department released a second report critiquing actions taken by the University to prevent and respond to sexual violence. The 'Follow Through ANU' Report used NSSS statistics to demonstrate that rates of sexual violence at the Australian National University are far higher than at the average university and argues that students are yet to be appropriately consulted on the University's strategy planning and implementation processes. For the report, ANU Women's Officers conducted interviews and focus groups with student leaders in ANUSA and in residential communities and made recommendations for actions to be taken by the University to prevent and respond to sexual violence. These recommendations were made under the following headings:

1. Engage with the intersectional aspects and effects of SASH.
2. Improve staff conditions and ensure their capacity to respond to students.
3. Increase transparency and accountability.
4. Clarify reporting, disclosure and support-seeking processes.
5. Create a system that accommodates for survivors, and,
6. Actually, listen to students.

## ANU's Response to the *Follow Through ANU Report*

The following month, senior leaders at the University wrote a second letter to the ANUSA Women's Department responding to the recommendations of the 'Follow Through ANU' Report. This letter details that the Student Safety & Wellbeing Action Plan deals with much of the recommendations. The responses are outlined below (summarised for brevity):

1. *Engage with the intersectional aspects of sexual assault and sexual harassment* – actions include:
  - a. RRU's Understanding and Responding to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment training includes information on intersectionality (Stream 2)
  - b. Case management support for students involves a thorough assessment of all areas of the student's life and a case plan is developed to address the multiple and complex layers of identity of each individual. (Stream 5).
2. *Improve staff conditions* – actions include:
  - a. Wider support and clinical supervision for staff (Stream 2.2)
  - b. Specific training for student facing staff (Stream 2.3)
  - c. Resource stabilisation and improvement in residential halls, including development of a specified annual education and training calendar for all residential staff (Stream 4.4)
  - d. Overall residential reform and transformation project, where one of the agreed principles is to 'invest in our staff' (Stream 4.5)
  - e. Hub and spoke models for Case Managers supporting staff in key student facing roles including academic and residential halls (Stream 5.4)
  - f. Expansion of staffing in Student Safety and Wellbeing Team to include the appointments of additional case managers and a Nurse Practitioner with expertise in sexual health (Stream 5.2 and 5.5)
3. *Increase transparency and accountability* – actions include:
  - a. The Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee of Council
  - b. Student Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group
  - c. Regular meetings between Chief Residential Services and Operations Officer, Deputy Director, Residential Services and Operations and Presidents of Inter-hall Council
  - d. Annual sexual violence reports and disclosures reports
4. *Clarify reporting, disclosure and support seeing processes* – actions include:
  - a. Review of the Sexual Misconduct Policy (Stream 1.1)
  - b. Developing new training available to students (both online and face to face) to increase awareness of consent, respectful relationships, support and complaint processes at ANU (Stream 3.1 – 3.2)
  - c. First responder training (for front-facing student roles) (Stream 4.1)
  - d. Introduction of new disclosure mechanisms for easier access to a Student Safety and Wellbeing Case Manager (Stream 5.2)
  - e. Strengthen and document procedures for responding to victim/survivors and alleged perpetrators (Stream 7.1)
  - f. Strengthen and document procedures related to Residence based disciplinary and well-being matters (Stream 4.4)
5. *Create a system that accommodates survivors* – actions include:
  - a. Staff wellbeing support and clinical supervision (to also cover students directly impacted or who support a disclosure or incident, i.e., Senior Residents or Community Coordinators) (Stream 4.2)
  - b. Declaration of criminal activity during residential applications (Stream 4.3)

- c. Improve visibility of current processes for victim/survivors and create new collateral and promotion tools to explain the processes for victim/survivors (Stream 7.1).
6. *Actually, listen to students* – actions include:
  - a. Reviewing the visibility of the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Response and Support webpage in consultation with students to ensure the information is easily accessible and meets their needs.
  - b. Undertaking a campaign to promote support services and resources available at ANU and within the community that is delivered, based on student advice, through channels that students will actively engage with; and
  - c. Implementing bi-annual training for student leaders, including those within ANUSA, PARSA, residential halls, and clubs and societies, on available support and processes to ensure students are properly informed and up to date.

## **GVRN Analysis**

The GVRN broadly endorses these responses from the University but notes that a student consultation framework co-designed with student leaders would extend the University's response to recommendation six.

## **ANU Generated Resources & Reports**

### **National Student Safety Survey Detailed Results**

Also in March 2022, the Social Research Centre released the results of the National Student Safety Survey (NSSS), a national survey into university student experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment whilst at university. Following this report's release, many universities chose to release some results specific to respondents from their universities in the form of summary documents. The Australian National University went beyond this and released data related to the University's student responses to all of the questions included in the survey.

The results included:

- 1,647 respondents to the NSSS were ANU students.
- Of these, 58% were female, 37% were male and 5% were differently described.
- 80% were domestic students and 20% were international students.
- 65% were undergraduate compared to 35% postgraduate.

Across the entire NSSS, on average, 1 in 6 (16.1%) of students experienced sexual harassment and 1 in 20 (4.5%) experienced sexual assault since starting university. At the Australian National University these numbers were far higher with 26.1% having experienced sexual harassment and 12.3% having experienced sexual assault. Additionally, ANU students were 21.8% more likely than the average Australian university student to state that the most impactful incident of sexual harassment occurred in a university residence. ANU students were also 15.8% more likely to state that the perpetrator of this incident was a student from their place of residence.

These results could be potentially attributed to the high percentage of students living in on-campus accommodation compared to other universities or increased reporting because of increased student awareness of these issues.

Although the NSSS did not make recommendations for university action, the results clearly demonstrated the ongoing need for all universities, to continue to increase and enhance their efforts in the prevention of and response to sexual violence.

### [Sexual Misconduct Reports and Disclosures - Report 2021](#)

Also in March 2022, the Australian National University released their first ever de-identified sexual misconduct reports and disclosures report. This Report outlined all reports and disclosures received by the University from students, staff and visitors between 2019-2021. According to this report, the University received four formal reports in 2019, nine in 2020 and 31 in 2021. This is likely indicative of increased community awareness of the greater availability of reporting processes. Of the four reports received in 2019, three progressed to investigation and all resulted in penalties. Of the nine in 2020, six progressed to investigation and all resulted in penalties. Of the 31 reports in 2021, 21 were investigated and received penalties, seven were in progress at the time of writing, and three were either beyond the jurisdiction of the University or it was deemed inappropriate to proceed due to other investigative processes being undertaken.

In October 2019, the University established the Sexual Misconduct Disclosure Form. The report outlines that, unlike a formal report, “a disclosure is not a formal complaint, can be anonymous, and the person reporting is able to, but does not have to, identify the other person/people involved” (p. 10). In this first year (October 2019 – September 2020), the University received 250 disclosures of sexual misconduct and the following year (October 2020 – September 2021) it received 366.

Of these disclosures 47.4% in 2019-2020 and 51% in 2020-2021 occurred in a Residential Hall or College. The most common perpetrators of disclosed sexual violence were undergraduate students (56.8% 2019-2020, 74.1% 2020-2021).

### **GVRN Analysis**

The GVRN would like to commend the Australian National University for the release of this report. The release of de-identified data included in this report demonstrates the University’s commitment to transparent communication of the problem of sexual violence. This data can support the University to understand, in what areas it should target its interventions. Additionally, the GVRN would like to commend the inclusion of the appendixes de-mystifying formal reporting processes, sexual violence case management offerings, and questions asked in the sexual violence disclosure form. We would recommend that these clear process descriptions also be included on the University’s Sexual Violence Prevention & Response website.

### [The Respectful Relationships Unit’s Sexual Violence Prevention Toolkit](#)

In October 2022, the Respectful Relationships Unit (RRU) released a Sexual Violence Prevention Toolkit. This toolkit is designed for “...those staff and students who have taken up representative positions in the area of sexual violence prevention, as well as staff in key leadership positions across the academic and professional spheres.” (p. 11). The toolkit aims to provide these students and staff with a practical guide to implementing prevention strategies with their particular cohorts and population groups.

The guide begins with a description of the drivers and reinforcing factors of violence and proposes a community-based approach to prevention. The toolkit begins with a series of baseline questions for the reader to consider. These questions include:

- Does the leadership team actively show an ongoing commitment to an equitable culture and the prevention of sexual violence?
- Are all new staff and students in your area given induction training on sexual violence prevention and available support services? Etc.

The toolkit then includes a series of information sections including :

1. Academic life
2. Organisational life
3. Social life
4. Accommodation and residential experience
5. Community partnerships

The toolkit emphasises the importance of a monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure success. The toolkit invites users to contact the RRU to access support to create tailored prevention frameworks.

### **GVRN Analysis**

In combination with effective education and training, and the support of specialists such as RRU staff, this toolkit can function as a helpful resource supporting students and staff who want to implement prevention programs in their areas. The GVRN notes that this toolkit is currently quite broad without specific action areas, which may limit its applicability in some circumstances. This potential issue may be mitigated by the support RRU provides students and staff to align the toolkit to their areas. Additionally, it is likely this toolkit is easier for staff to use rather than students due to the different levels of available institutional support.

### [ANU Sexual Misconduct Policy \(Update\) & ANU Sexual Misconduct Response \(Student\) Procedure](#)

The Australian National University updated its Sexual Misconduct Policy in November 2022. This update aligned the language and intent with significant work completed by the University since the policy was originally created.

Additionally, in December 2022, the Sexual Misconduct Response (Student) Procedure was launched. This procedure set out clear university processes to respond to student reports and disclosures of sexual violence. The procedure included information about how to access immediate aid in crisis situations, contact details for support services, as well as likely processes following the receipt of a student disclosure and/or formal report.

### **GVRN Analysis**

The Sexual Misconduct Response (Student) Procedure is an important addition to the University's sexual violence prevention and response landscape. It provides clear information about the processes a student can expect before making a disclosure or formal report. Creation of this document clearly demonstrates the University's commitment to transparency.

To continue the progress made by the implementation of this Procedure our analysis suggests that a staff procedure is also created. Although the GVRN understands that sexual violence where it pertains to staff members is dealt with using a different process, it would also benefit students to be aware of



these processes. Additionally, we know that students sometimes perpetrate sexual violence against staff members. This is one reason why it is important that staff processes are transparently communicated in the same way as student processes. It would also be helpful to outline the process that is applicable to students who are also employed casually or in fixed term/permanent employment at the University.

Our analysis also suggests that the University make clear the range of outcomes that students might be able to expect from a disclosure and/or formal report. This could potentially be located in this procedure document, or it could be located on a University website.

### [Sexual Misconduct Reports and Disclosures - Report 2022](#)

In May 2023, the Australian National University released their second de-identified Sexual Misconduct and Disclosures Report. This Report outlined all sexual misconduct reports and disclosures received by the University from students, staff and visitors in 2022. The Report identified 20 formal reports and 204 disclosures of sexual misconduct were received by the University in 2022.

Of the 20 formal reports received, 14 were investigated by the Office of the Registrar, and 6 were withdrawn or did not proceed due to jurisdictional or other issues. Of the 14 that progressed, 82% of the alleged perpetrators were excluded from enrolment, 9% were suspended, and 9% were denied access to specified University facilities.

Of the disclosures received 117 of reporters provided identification, meaning they provided contact details and could be contacted by a Student Safety & Wellbeing Unit Case Manager. A further 87 reports were made anonymously with no contact details being provided. The most common supports requested from disclosures included: contact from a Student Safety & Wellbeing Unit Case Manager (78), information and support with formal reporting (23), and assistance to minimise contact with the alleged person who caused harm and other safety measures (21).

### **GVRN Analysis**

The GVRN would like to again commend the Australian National University for their ongoing commitment to the release of these reports. The de-identified data included in these reports are an important marker of the University's progress towards sexual violence prevention and response and represents a clear commitment to transparent communication with the University community.

Unlike the 2021 report, this report makes transparent actions taken by the University to prevent and respond to sexual violence since the previous. This is an important and valuable addition to the report. The GVRN would also like to note that the 2022 version of the report is also designed in a way that is easier to read and is more visually appealing.

### [Rights, Relationships & Respect Preliminary Evaluation Report](#)

In June 2023, the Respectful Relationships Unit (RRU) released a 6-month preliminary evaluation report assessing the success of their Rights, Relationships & Respect program (RRR). This program included an online module (stream 1), a 1-hour in-person RRR training session during Orientation Week (stream 2), and an RRR online module plus three 2-hour in-person RRR Pilot Workshops delivered during Semester 1 (stream 3). Stream 1 was available to all commencing students with over 3,500 students completing the course. Stream 2 was mandatory for all commencing residential students with over 1,400 students participating. Stream 3 was available only to students at Ursula Hall, Burton & Garran Hall and John XXIII College with 180 students participating.

To evaluate the program, the RRU ran post-completion surveys and found very high satisfaction with the online module with over 85% of participants agreeing that the online module was clear and valuable. Post-completion surveys found that most participants were satisfied with face-to-face training however, satisfaction was slightly lower than the online module. When asked to respond to the statement 'overall, this workshop was a valuable learning experience', 47.05% either agreed or strongly agreed, 35.29% neither agreed nor disagreed and 17.64% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked about improvements could be made to the workshops, participants suggested that the workshop pay more attention to non-verbal and other forms or ways to communicate consent. They also suggested an increased focus on real life application rather than focusing primarily on conceptual knowledge.

The Evaluation Report concludes that the RRR has been a success and outlines a number of next steps to continue to improve the program as a result of the evaluation. These include exploration of student barriers to completing the online module, and content development especially in relation to intersectionality and cultural safety.

### **GVRN Analysis**

The GVRN would like to commend the RRU for this early evaluation. Evaluation is a vital aspect of program building. It ensures that programs can be adaptable to the needs of students and staff participants. This evaluation is incredibly detailed and reflective. The GVRN understands that RRU plans to make some adjustments to the program and complete another evaluation at a later stage. The GVRN endorses progression of the next steps that the RRU have outlined.

### **Future Directions**

This Report documents and provides comment on the review of 14 key documents describing the development and implementation of the Australian National University's prevention and response to sexual violence on their campus. From this review the GVRN has determined the following emergent themes issues which will be explored further in the interview and focus group stage of this project to inform the next Action Plan. They are:

- The Student Safety & Wellbeing Action Plan is a practical and specifically actionable document outlining the University's commitment to the prevention of and response to sexual violence. Any future Action Plan should include actions, responsibilities and roles.
- The University has set out a successful division of responsibility for sexual violence prevention and response between the Respectful Relationships Unit and the Student Safety & Wellbeing Team. Interviews and focus groups will ascertain synergies and overlaps between the two business units to enhance individual and shared responsibilities of each team.
- The University's Sexual Violence Prevention & Response website clearly articulates the University's strategic plan and communicates clearly and effectively progress to date. A Communication Plan may assist in continuing the clarity of the University's strategic intentions.



- The Sexual Misconduct Response (Student) Procedure is a robust and clear document outlining processes for responding to a disclosure or formal report of sexual violence.
- The University currently delineates between a disclosure and a formal report of sexual misconduct. This ensures that students are able to choose the option that is right for them and provides access to support from a Student Safety & Wellbeing Unit Case Manager should they require this. The delineation between a disclosure and a formal report should be clearly communicated on the University's websites and form part of a Communication Strategy and any training provided.
- Currently, there is no clear action plan in place describing consultation with students on the strategic direction of the University's response to sexual violence. A Student Consultation and Co-Design Plan would assist in clarifying the relationship between students and the University and ensure that actions taken by the University are informed by the lived experiences and identified needs of its student population.
- Considering the high rate of sexual violence occurring in residential settings at the Australian National University, the University should prioritise developing and publishing residential cultural action plans and identify additional prevention and response strategies to reduce the rate of sexual violence and ensure an appropriate response to disclosures.
- Currently it is not clear if an evaluation and monitoring plan has been established for the Student Safety & Wellbeing Action Plan. The creation of a monitoring and evaluation plan will ensure that actions taken are reviewed to establish their effectiveness.
- The Australian National University's sexual misconduct reports and disclosures reports make clear that rate of sexual violence occurring remain high. The GVRN is interested in the reasons for this high reporting rate and whether it reflects greater awareness and a commensurate confidence and willingness to report, or whether the number of incidents remains high. will explore this in upcoming interviews and focus groups.
- Currently the University's prevention and response to sexual violence does not include specific interventions for communities at-risk ie. LGBTQIA+, culturally and linguistically diverse students and students with lived experience of disability. Interviews and focus groups will specifically explore the range of diverse needs and prospective actions and strategies which may helpfully inform the next Action Plan.

## Appendix B: Student & Staff Focus Groups

### Members of Focus Groups

Students involved in focus groups were afforded anonymity regarding their involvement and therefore, we will not be identifying each student involved in focus groups. However, students were representative of the following groups:

- ANUSA Office Bearers and representatives from ANUSA Disabilities, Queer and Women's Departments.
- Senior Residents.
- Community Coordinators.
- Residential student leaders.
- RRU Peer Educators.

The following staff were invited to participate in focus groups:

Name	Role
Kate Bisshop-Witting	General Manager, ANU College of Science
Donelle Claudianos	General Manager, ANU College of Health and Medicine
Matt Cousins	General Manager, ANU College of Engineering, Computing and Cybernetics
Matthew Davies	Associate Dean of Education, College of Asia and the Pacific
Kristen Farrell	Executive Officer, Office of the Dean of Higher Degree Research
Anita Fitch	General Manager, ANU College of Law
Liza Flanagan	General Manager, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific
Felicity Gouldthorpe	Acting Director, Residential Experience Division
Dana Hanna	Associate Dean of Education, College of Business and Economics
Geoff Hinchcliffe	Associate Dean of Education, College of Arts & Social Science
Leeanne Kelly	Senior Manager, Student Safety & Wellbeing
Lisa Kennedy	Head of Clinical Services, University Experience Division
Alison Kevan	Senior Project Manager (Education), Office of the Vice Chancellor
Martyn Kirk	Associate Dean of Education, College of Health and Medicine
Merryn McKinnon	Associate Dean of Education, College of Science
Joel McLean	Interim Head of Inclusive Communities, University Experience Division
Wayne Morgan	Associate Dean of Education, College of Law
Edward O'Daly	Director, ANU Communications & Engagement
Scott Pearsall	Registrar
Millan Pintos-Lopez	Operations Manager, Residential Experience Division and Professional staff representative on ANU Council
Yana Potrebica	General Manager, ANU College of Business and Economics
Chris Price	Director & Chief of Staff, Office of the Vice Chancellor
Joel Radcliffe	Manager, Respectful Relationships Unit
Larissa Siliezar Mendoza	Practice Lead – Sexual Misconduct, Student Safety & Wellbeing
Jeremy Smith	Associate Dean of Education, College of Engineering, Computing and Cybernetics
Matt Talbott	General Manager, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences
Grady Venville	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
Kate Witenden	Chief People Officer, Human Resources Division
Sally Wheeler	Deputy Vice Chancellor (International & Corporate)

## **Student Focus Group Questions**

1. How do you feel students are currently being involved in the ANU's sexual violence prevention and response strategic planning?
2. What do you think the ANU has done well in sexual violence prevention and response?
3. What do you think the ANU needs to do to improve sexual violence prevention and response?
4. Do you think the ANU has adequately communicated actions they have taken to prevent and respond to sexual violence?
5. Do you think an appropriate focus has been made by the ANU on sexual violence prevention and response in residential settings? What could change?
6. Do you think the ANU's response to sexual violence is appropriately considerate of the diverse needs of the student population?
7. Do you think the ANU provides students with adequate opportunities to undergo sexual consent education? Do you think the ANU's Rights, Relationships & Respect program adequately provides students with consent education?
8. Do you think staff at the ANU are receiving adequate sexual violence training?
9. Do you think residential staff and students receive adequate sexual violence and consent training?
10. Do you think the case management provided by the Student Safety & Wellbeing Team adequately meets the needs of the student population?
11. Do you think the prevention role provided by the Respectful Relationships Unit adequately meets the needs of the student population?

## **Staff Focus Group Questions**

1. What do you think the ANU has done well in sexual violence prevention and response?
2. How have staff been engaged in sexual violence prevention and response strategic decisions?
3. How have you managed alignment between the University's prevention and response activities?
4. How do you think the University has responded to the Walker report and ANUSA generated reports?
5. Is there a desire at the ANU to shift towards a 'gendered violence' focus as opposed to solely 'sexual violence'?
6. How does the University respond to incidents of sexual violence that occur outside of ANU?
7. Are staff members aware of the SVPS and actions taken to prevent and respond to sexual violence?
8. What do you think needs to be in the University's next rolling action plan?