

SAFE CAMPUSES

October 2020



Introduction

In August 2017, through “*Change the Course: Report into Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault at Australian Universities*”, the Australian Human Rights Commission released nine recommendations to assist Universities to enhance both the prevention of and response to, sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH) in University settings. Griffith University committed to implementing the recommendations in full and under the guidance of the Safe Campuses taskforce.

In 2017, Griffith University committed to adopting the Change the Course report recommendations in full and established the Safe Campuses initiative to oversee this work. A summary of the recommendations and Griffith’s actions and progress towards each is outlined in this report.

Change the Course recommendations

1. Leadership & Governance

The University continues to respond to the Change the Course recommendations, and support Universities Australia’s Respect. Now. Always. Campaign. This work is overseen by the Safe Campuses Advisory Group, chaired by Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Debra Henly, and reporting regularly to the Vice Chancellor. A formal report is prepared annually for University Council which outlines new and improved initiatives together with incident, reporting and support data.

2. Changing Attitudes and Behaviours

Ongoing efforts to change attitudes towards sexual assault and sexual harassment, and promote positive, respectful behaviours are coordinated in collaboration between the Project Officer, Student Wellbeing and Safety; Counsellor, Violence Response and Prevention; and the MATE Bystander team, and overseen by a targeted working party that supports the Advisory Group.

Key achievements across 2019–2020 include:

- Virtual *It’s On All Of Us* week – resource sharing and webinars
- MATE Bystander Program webinars for the Griffith community:
 - How to be an effective bystander during Covid-19 – 68 attendees
 - Respectfully Challenging Problematic Behaviours – 90 attendees
 - Man to Man: Exploring the role of men in preventing violence – to be [held in October](#)
- Office of the eSafety Commissioner webinars
 - Keeping Safe Online is Everyone’s Business – 50 attendees
 - eSafety for University Staff – two webinars being held in October
- Introduction of the [SASH Responder network](#) – a network of staff trained in recognising the signs of trauma, responding with empathy and with knowledge of support and reporting pathways available
- Implementation of a bespoke case management system which enables automated workflows and secure collection and reporting of systemic data. The system supports the University’s online reporting form, with provisions for formal, informal, identified and anonymous reporting.
- Development and delivery of e-Learning programs:
 - [Sex & Respect: It’s On All Of Us](#) – respect as the foundation of healthy relationships; consent in relationships and sexual interactions; attitudes and assumptions; and bystander interventions.

- [MATE Bystander Program online](#) – personal leadership; gender inequality and gender based violence; sex and respect; and being the change through positive bystander actions. Nearly 400 individuals have completed the online program since its release in April.
- Recognise. Respond. Refer online – for [staff](#) and [students](#) – recognise the signs of violence and disrespectful behaviour; responding with empathy; and referring to support and reporting services at or external to the University.
- Development and/or improvement of tip sheets and other online resources:
 - [Sex. Love. Dating.](#) – Respectful relationships booklet;
 - [Responding Effectively to Disclosures](#) tip sheet;
 - [Managers Guide: Supporting staff to support our students;](#)
 - [Violence in LGBTIQ+ Relationships;](#) and
 - [Safe Campuses](#) website.

3. Awareness of support services and reporting avenues

Griffith understands the importance of supporting students and staff who have experienced violence to choose their own path for healing and resolution, and provides a range of services and options for students and staff.

The University appointed a dedicated Counsellor, Violence Response and Prevention in September 2017 to coordinate the delivery of priority personal violence counselling services and violence prevention awareness. This service, together with reporting avenues are promoted online, on-campus posters and flyers, through policy, tip sheets and resources, It's On All Of Us themed events and through responding to disclosures training.

A dedicated [SASH Responder network](#) was implemented in May 2020. The network is made up of over 90 staff from academic and student-facing administrative areas, who are trained to receive disclosures with empathy, compassion and knowledge of the support and reporting options available. SASH responders are promoted online and via posters and signage in their local areas.

4. Commission an independent, expert-led review of existing university policies and response pathways

An independent, expert-led review of policies and response pathways was conducted in 2018. The student SASH and misconduct policies are currently being reviewed in line with this review, and subsequent sector learnings, including TEQSA's Good Practice Note: Preventing and responding to SASH in the Australian higher education sector.

5. Responding to disclosures

Per above, the [SASH Responder network](#) was implemented in May 2020 and includes staff who have attended the Recognise. Respond. Refer. for SASH Responders workshop. The workshop explores the drivers of violence and gender-inequality; types of interpersonal violence; concepts such as power and control, power imbalance and coercion; signs of violence and trauma; responding with empathy and compassion; and support and reporting options available both at the University and externally.

In August 2020, the Recognise. Respond. Refer. online module was released to University [staff](#) and [students](#). The module provides basic information on the themes outlined above, together with practice scenarios in a University setting. Over 150 individuals accessed the module in its first month. The quick guide to [responding effectively to disclosures](#) is also available online.

6. Monitoring & Evaluation: collection, storage and use of information

In September 2019, the University implemented a bespoke case management system which enables automated workflows and secure collection and reporting of systemic data through the online Report a Concern form. The form has provisions for formal, informal, identified and anonymous reports.

Reporting, disclosure and support data is consolidated annually. See below, [Reporting, disclosure and reporting data](#) for further details.

7. Audit of Counselling Services

An external audit of the University's student counselling services was undertaken in late 2017- early 2018. Enhancements to Counselling and Wellbeing Services include:

- continuation of priority appointments through the Counsellor, Violence Response and Prevention;
- extension of the crisis line to a 24/7 Wellbeing Support Line, offering round-the-clock access to immediate and crisis support for Griffith students. The services is operated for the University by LifeLine and provides referral back to University counsellors where requested.
- piloting a triage counsellor to aid students accessing on-campus services.
- dedicated services to support residential colleges
- an increase in the availability of "on-the-day" appointments; and
- regular reviews of wait times.

Further improvements to counselling and wellbeing services continue to occur in conjunction with the implementation of the [Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).

8. Follow-up sector-wide survey

The University continues to support Universities Australia's Respect. Now. Always. campaign and will participate in the next sector-wide survey of Australian university students in 2021. Griffith's participation is scheduled for September 2021.

9. Residential colleges and university residences should commission an independent, expert-led review of the factors which contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in their settings.

An independent, expert-led review of University residences was completed in 2018, concurrent to the Recommendation 4 review of policies and response pathways. An internal review of accommodation services was also conducted in 2019. Enhancements to date include:

- dedicated counselling and wellbeing services to support residential colleges
- focus on early identification of problematic relationships and behaviours including mental health concerns
- inclusion of key accommodation staff as members of the SASH Responder network
- ongoing training and awareness activities for residential staff and leaders including responding to disclosures and LGBTI+ inclusion

Future initiatives include:

- development of a Recognise. Respond. Refer for Homestay families e-Learning module, also incorporating basics of recognising and responding to mental health concerns
- development of resource pack for Griffith residents at off-campus purpose built student accommodation sites, including training for RAs and staff; and tip sheets/flyers outlining support and reporting options and encouraging Griffith students to access relevant support at the University, regardless of where an assault or incident may have physically occurred.

Reporting, disclosure and support data

Reporting and disclosure

Incidents and concerns are reported via a range of students, staff and services across the University. The University acknowledges that not all victim-survivors wish for their report or disclosure to be captured by the University, however it is working to encourage staff and students to report all incidents and concerns, anonymously if they wish.

A snapshot of incidents and concerns captured by the Campus Support Team and Report a Concern form is as follows, with further details outlined below.

Reporting Channel	Period 01.09.17– 31.08.18	Period 01.09.18 – 31.08.19	Period 01.09.19 – 31.08.20	Notes
Report a Concern	9 SASH disclosures (4 x SA, 5 x SH)	28 SASH disclosures (4 x SA, 24 x SH)	15 SASH disclosures (3 x SA, 12 x SH)	Consistent with previous reporting period, a majority of concerns relate to bullying, (non-sexual) harassment and discrimination. SASH incidents reported occurred online (4), off campus (4) and on-campus (7).
Campus Support (Security)	1 sexual assault	1 sexual assault	0 sexual assault	Nearly 300 less incident reports received than the previous reporting period, presumably due to less people on campus during Covid-19 related restrictions.

Report a concern

A total of 96 submissions were received via the Report a Concern form, which is significantly less than the previous reporting period (150). Consistent with previous reports though, a majority of reports relate to bullying, harassment and discrimination (70), with 3 related to sexual assault and 12 related to sexual harassment and reported incidents are occurring on campus, online and off-campus. Also consistent with previous reports, data indicates that students are choosing both formal (59%) and informal (41%) reporting options across the range of reportable behaviours.

Campus Support (Security)

During the reporting period, a total of 587 incidents were reported via the Campus Support team. Incidents range from behavioural concerns to damage, first aid, security or fire alarm activation, theft and vehicle incidents. During the reporting period, 3 incidents related to verbal assault, 5 to physical assault/stalking and 32 to aberrant behaviour. Despite 7 on-campus SASH incidents being reported through the Report a Concern form, there were no reports to Campus Support regarding sexual assault.

Support

Students can access support from the University via Counselling and Wellbeing and the University Crisis Line. A snapshot is provided below:

Support Channel	Period 1.9.17 – 31.8.18	Period 1.9.18 – 31.8.19	Period 1.9.19 – 31.8.20	Notes
Counselling and Wellbeing – Personal Violence	212 unique clients	194 unique clients	226 unique clients	A majority of contacts continue to be from female students, with most incidents not reported to police. Sexual assault, rape and domestic violence were the leading types of violence disclosed.
University Crisis Line (LifeLine)	126 unique contacts	377 unique contacts	453 unique contacts	The University Crisis Line has been operated for the University by LifeLine since October 2017 and was expanded from an after-hours to a 24/7 service from February 2020.

Counselling and Wellbeing

Student Services may provide support to students and staff through the Counselling and Wellbeing, Welfare or Chaplaincy services, or a combination of these. Personal violence data for the reporting period indicates:

Measure	Period 1.9.17–31.8.18	Period 1.9.18 – 31.8.19	Period 1.9.19 – 31.8.20
# Unique clients referencing personal violence	212	194	226
# incidents of personal violence referenced	272	249	190
# clients reporting more than one type of violence	46	90	8
% disclosures from female students	92.5	89.6	84
% disclosures made by International students	17.3	15.4	29
% incidents reported to police	29.1	20.8	27
% violence type = sexual assault, rape or domestic violence	73.9	80.3	90
% violence type = childhood sexual abuse	17.6	12.1	8
% violence type = sexual harassment	8.5	7.6	6
% timing of incident = within past month	29.2	46.1	42
% timing of incident = one to twelve months	25.2	20.3	37
% timing of incident = over one year ago	45.6	33.6	38
% timing of incident = not disclosed	24	18.9	8

Mental Wellbeing Support Line

The Mental Wellbeing Support Line (previously University Crisis Line) offers a 24/7 immediate and crisis support service for students, with referral back to the University or other support services as requested by the student. During the reporting period, Griffith students have sought support from the Support Line on 453 occasions. Reporting data for the period 1.9.19 to 31.8.20, indicates that 82 contacts related to family and relationship concerns and 7 related to abuse and trauma, and that the service is mostly contacted by students identifying as female (53%), followed by those identifying as male (28%), with the remainder unknown/undisclosed (19%).