

SAFE CAMPUSES: TWO YEARS ON

1 August 2019

In 2017, through “Change the Course: Report in to 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.

August 2019 marks two years since the release of the Change the Course report. Considerable progress has been made by the University towards increasing awareness and improving access to support and reporting services. A summary of the recommendations and Griffith’s progress towards each is outlined below.

Leadership & Governance

A Safe Campuses Advisory Group will continue to report through the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor to the Vice Chancellor, Executive Group and Council. The Advisory Group will continue to prioritise consultation and engagement with undergraduate and postgraduate students, and relevant stakeholders.

Changing Attitudes and Behaviours

A targeted working party will continue to oversee efforts in this space which include the expansion of the MATE Bystander program to online delivery, including a module which focuses on consent and respectful relationships, and the continuation of an annual themed awareness week.

The University has now hosted two awareness weeks under the theme of ‘It’s on All of Us’, a message which aims to promote that it’s on all Griffith students and staff to recognise disrespectful behaviours, respond with empathy or as an active bystander, and refer to support and reporting services. ‘It’s On All Of Us’ 2020 will be held in Week 6, Trimester 1.

Awareness of Support Services and reporting avenues

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.

Support services and reporting avenues are promoted across a range of mediums and outlets including online (Safe Campuses site, MyGriffith portal, MyOrientation task), print (posters, banners, booklets) and social media. Support and reporting options are also outlined within the suite of staff and student policies.

Responding to Disclosures training and events such as ‘It’s on All of Us’ week also assist to increase awareness around services and reporting options.

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

During 2017 and 2018, the University developed and implemented separate student and staff policies and procedures in relation to the recognition and response to SASH, and the management of reports and complaints. In 2018, the University commissioned an independent, expert-led review of policies and response pathways in relation to SASH and will progressively work through recommendations across 2019–2020. Open 'Styles Pane' to view all style sheets

Responding to disclosures

Since 2017, the University has provided Responding to Disclosures training to a range of staff in frontline service positions, Harassment and Discrimination Contact Officers, student leaders (student association boards, wellness advocates, residential advisors), and other targeted groups. Initially provided by external partners, the training now titled "Recognise. Respond. Refer." has been tailored to a Griffith audience and facilitated by the Counsellor, Violence Response and Prevention since 2018.

Monitoring & Evaluation: collection, storage and use of information

Data is consolidated annually for consideration by the Safe Campuses Taskforce, the Vice Chancellor and University Council. In early 2018, the University implemented a new reporting workflow, which allows victims to disclose or report incidents, anonymously if they wish. This was complemented by the release of the online reporting form in August 2018. The University is currently implementing a streamlined case management system to further improve reporting processes and data collection, with implementation due August 2019.

Audit of Counselling Services

An external audit of the University's student counselling services was undertaken in late 2017– early 2018. The audit confirmed that in addition to the dedicated Counsellor, Violence Response and Prevention, all Griffith counselling staff have training and experience in working with survivors of sexual violence. Other recommendations adopted include:

- ✓ additional resourcing to target group and self-help programs, including online;
- ✓ dedicated services to support residential colleges to work on programs with students;
- ✓ increase in the availability of "on-the-day" appointments; and
- ✓ regular review of wait time.

Further improvements to counselling services are being considered and implemented across 2019–2020 in response to an independent, expert led review of the University's SASH policy and response pathways; and in conjunction with the implementation of a Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Follow-up sector-wide survey

Universities are to engage an independent body to conduct the National student survey at three-yearly intervals, to track progress in reducing the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The University will continue to work with Universities Australia to fulfil this commitment.

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.

In 2018 and concurrent to the aforementioned review of policies and response pathways, the University commissioned an independent, expert led review of on-campus residential colleges. The review included University run residential colleges at Nathan and Mt Gravatt campuses, and the Gold Coast Village which is managed by external partner Campus Living Villages. The University noted that the review found no significant evidence of hazing practices within the on-campus colleges, and is progressively working through the recommendations in 2019.