

**RESPECT.
NOW.
ALWAYS.**

PROGRESS REPORT: ONE YEAR ON

CQUNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA – *RESPECT. NOW. ALWAYS* ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT – ONE YEAR ON

1 AUGUST 2017 – 1 AUGUST 2018

BACKGROUND

In February 2016, Australia's universities launched a ground-breaking initiative to prevent and address sexual assault and harassment across the sector.

The *Respect. Now. Always.* campaign highlighted the determination of Australia's universities to ensure that our institutions are places of safety and respect and build on work done by individual universities over many years to develop policies, reporting procedures and support services.

The campaign aims were to:

- » raise awareness of sexual assault and sexual harassment and lift the visibility of support services for students;
- » obtain data to guide further improvement in university policies and services; and
- » assist universities in sharing global best practice resources across the sector.

In late 2016, tens of thousands of Australian university students were asked to participate in Australia's first-ever national prevalence survey on university student experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment and keep students safe.

The survey results gave Australian universities a clearer evidence base to guide further work to prevent and address sexual assault and sexual harassment. It is a critical part of the university sector's *Respect. Now. Always.* campaign that aims to keep university students safe.

The leaders of all 39 Australian universities funded the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to investigate the nature and scale of these behaviours. The survey was supported by the National Union of Students (NUS) and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU).

All survey responses were confidential and the privacy of everyone invited to take part was protected.

The survey findings were published by the Commission in the national *Change the Course* report released on 1 August 2017.

In response to the release of this report, CQUniversity established a *Respect. Now. Always.* working group to develop and implement a comprehensive action plan that would ensure CQUniversity's commitment to addressing and responding to sexual harassment and assault.

The CQUniversity *Respect. Now. Always.* Action Plan sets out 41 separate actions under five key pillars. These pillars are:

1. Leadership and governance
2. Awareness, prevention and education
3. Service and support
4. Safety and security
5. Evaluation and research

Each pillar and action has been developed by analysing the recommendations set out in the AHRC's *Change the Course* report and the Universities Australia 10-point plan. It has also been informed by consultation with staff and students, and third party experts.

The plan and all associated actions will be implemented by December 2019. Upon completion, CQUniversity will complete a thorough internal and external evaluation of the plan and the outcomes of each initiative. This evaluation will guide future activity within this space and will also help to CQUniversity to continuously improve its policies, processes, support services, education and awareness messages, and professional development offerings; so that we are better able to respond to the needs of our students.

PROGRESS

EXISTING ACTIONS

CQUniversity has always had a zero tolerance approach to any form of violence, harassment, abuse, bullying or misconduct. Every member of the CQUniversity community has a right to feel safe and to be able to work and learn in a supportive, respectful and positive environment. CQUniversity therefore has a number of governance processes in place to ensure people understand their rights and responsibilities when it comes to their behaviour. Any formal complaint made by a staff member or student is fully investigated and dealt with fairly and compassionately. For many years, CQUniversity has had in place a number of mechanisms to ensure the health, safety and wellness

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of staff and students, these include:

- » **CQUniversity Code of Conduct** – CQUniversity has in place robust code of conduct for staff that outlines university expectations when it comes to behaviour, integrity and compliance with university values; including our zero tolerance approach to any form of harassment, abuse, assault or bullying. Any breach of these codes may result in disciplinary action.
- » **Student Charter** – The CQUniversity Student Charter sets out rules and expectations for both the University and students to adhere to in order to ensure a positive student experience.
- » **Student Behavioural Misconduct Policy** – The Student Misconduct Policy sets out clear rules around the behaviour expectations of all students and outlines different levels of disciplinary action that can be taken.
- » **Zero Tolerance training** – CQUniversity delivers compulsory zero tolerance behavioural training to all staff every two years. The completion of this training is a legal compliance requirement.
- » **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** – The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides staff with access to free, confidential health and wellness support including counselling.
- » **Student Counselling** – CQUniversity provides all students with a free, confidential counselling service. The service provides students with counselling for a range of different issues and also provides students with referrals to other internal support services or to external specialist services.
- » **Emergency Notification Alert System (ENAS)** – CQUniversity has in place an Emergency Notification Alert System (ENAS) that includes a personal safety app and an emergency mass messaging system which allows the University to send urgent safety messages to students during an emergency situation.
- » **Critical Incident Procedure** – The University has in place a Critical Incident Procedure which outlines the University's response to critical incidents, such as an emergency, disasters or a traumatic event.

RECENT ACTIONS

As part of the implementation of CQUniversity's *Respect. Now. Always.* Action Plan, the following initiatives have been delivered in the past 12 months:

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Respect. Now. Always. Working Group

CQUniversity has established a *Respect. Now. Always. Working Group* to oversee the implementation of

the University's action plan. The group is made up of representatives from the following operational areas:

- » Student Experience (, Student Communication, Student Life and Wellbeing)
- » People and Culture
- » Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (QCDFVR)
- » Corporate Communications
- » Tertiary Education Division
- » Student Residences
- » International
- » Campuses and Engagement

The group will also work closely with students (including the Student Representative Council and the Student Mentor team) who will provide advice and feedback to the group, related to the activities being delivered and any emerging issues that need to be considered.

The group is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience and Governance.

The establishment of this group is allowing the University to deliver a consolidated whole-of-organisation response to all issues related to the prevention and management of sexual assault and harassment on campus, while also ensuring that the actions delivered are meeting the key recommendations listed in the AHRC's *Change the Course* report and Universities Australia 10-point Action Plan.

Student critical incident policy

CQUniversity has developed and endorsed a policy that specifically deals with the management of student critical incidents. The policy was informed by consultation with law enforcement, legal and health professionals, and specialist support service providers. It sets out a framework for student safety and wellbeing. In particular, it deals with the prevention of sexual harassment and assault. The policy also informs the University's response to reports of sexual harassment, assault and misconduct, sets out steps to ensure student safety and wellbeing is prioritised at all times, and outlines recommendations to ensure all complaints are dealt with fairly and compassionately.

Staff guidelines for responding to students in crisis

A comprehensive set of staff guidelines has been developed that clearly set out university expectations for appropriately responding to student complaints, students in crisis and disclosures of sexual violence. The guidelines will act as a reference tool for all staff and will assist them in providing appropriate first responder support to students in crisis, even if they have not undertaken a related training course. The

guidelines clearly set out a process for responding to students, recording information and referring students to relevant support services.

Review existing governance documentation

Members of the *Respect. Now. Always.* Working Group are currently reviewing policies and procedures related to student governance matters. This review will ensure the documentation adequately addresses the management of complaints and any disclosure of sexual harassment and assault. It will also ensure existing governance documentation aligns with newly created documentation such as the student critical incident policy and staff guidelines.

Improved visibility of governance documentation

The University has improved the visibility of governance documentation by developing specific *Respect. Now. Always.* online hubs on StaffNet, Student Portal, and the corporate website. These hubs list and link to related documentation, provide audiences with useful reference material and outline available internal and external support services. This action will help to ensure that all students know how and where to find information and what their rights and responsibilities are when it comes to their behaviour, safety and wellbeing, and that of others.

Mandatory reporting of disclosures of sexual harassment and assault

The University has implemented a requirement for all formal staff or student disclosures of sexual harassment and assault to be de-identified and officially reported to the University Executive. Reporting all disclosures of sexual harassment or assault will help the University to get a clearer picture of how often incidences occur, where they are happening and what additional support needs to be provided to victims and survivors. All reports are de-identified to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

Development of online information hubs

CQUniversity has created three online information hubs for the sharing of *Respect. Now. Always.* related information and content. The hubs have been created on StaffNet, the Student Portal and the CQUniversity website. The hubs provide a centralised space for staff, students and the public to access information about preventing and responding to sexual harassment and assault, making a report and connecting with support services.

Increased visibility of internal and external support services

CQUniversity has increased the volume of all internal student support messages and promotional materials across the campus network and has also increased the promotion of student services on digital platforms including social media. CQUniversity has

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also established stronger links with external support services (regional, state and national) and increased the promotion of these support services across the campus network.

By increasing the promotion of these services, CQUniversity will be able to provide a more accessible and inclusive service and assist more students than ever before. Increased promotion will also help to ensure students in crisis, particularly students who have been impacted by sexual violence, feel comfortable to access these services and seek help.

Staff inductions

CQUniversity has added information about the *Respect. Now. Always.* campaign to the online new staff induction and compulsory online staff refresher program. The information will provide staff with reference material and documentation, university specific information, resources and key contacts via the StaffNet page. All new staff need to review this information as part of the mandatory new staff induction process and all existing staff will need to review this information as part of the annual corporate refresher program. Going forward, additional content and training modules will be added to the induction programs. The full induction module will be completed by the end of 2019 (requiring ongoing maintenance and review thereafter).

Adding this information to the new staff and refresher induction programs reminds staff of CQUniversity's strict expectations around respectful behaviour and adherence to our code of conduct. It will also provide staff with updated information on how to access documentation and provide immediate support and referral to students.

Compulsory mental health response training for student facing staff

CQUniversity has made mental health first response training compulsory for all student facing staff members, student peer leaders and residential advisors. Along with this, the training is being

advertised to all staff, particularly academic staff, as recommended professional development. Going forward, the training will also be offered to all students living at a residential college.

SERVICE AND SUPPORT

Additional mental health messages delivered to students

As well as increasing the promotion of student support services, CQUniversity has also increased the volume and frequency of mental health and self-care messages delivered to staff and students. It is hoped that by increasing the volume of messages related to mental health and wellness, staff and students will feel more comfortable in accessing services and seeking help when they need it. Likewise, promoting these messages more frequently will also help students who have been impacted by sexual assault and harassment, to access support and report their experience.

Professional development for counselling staff

CQUniversity has provided all counselling staff with additional opportunities for professional development in the area of trauma response and sexual assault. This professional development has been achieved through formal learning experiences and through consultation with experts in this area, including sexual and gendered violence experts from CQUniversity's own Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (QCDFVR). CQUniversity also sponsored the QCDFVR to facilitate a visit by world-renowned sexual violence and restorative justice expert Professor Mary Koss. During her visit in the first half of 2018, Professor Koss provided counselling staff with training and resources related to restorative justice and responding to disclosures of sexual violence.

University-wide mental health strategy

CQUniversity has developed a university-wide mental

health strategy. The scope of the strategy extends to staff and student mental health and outlines a framework for implementing actions that will assist in the improvement of all aspects of staff and student wellness.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security audit

CQUniversity is currently planning a full safety and security audit of all campuses. The audit will identify issues that impact negatively on safety and security and outline recommendations to rectify these issues. In particular, the audit will assess the promotion of security contact information, the availability and accessibility of emergency buttons, CCTV and lighting.

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

QCDFVR research project

CQUniversity's Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (QCDFVR) is currently undertaking a pilot project at CQUniversity that looks at the sexual experiences of university students. The anonymous study will look at issues such as attitudes and behaviours around respect and consent, relationships, experiences of harassment and assault, support service accessibility and whether students have ever been exposed to abuse or harassment using digital platforms.

The results of this survey will allow the University to develop messages and tools that students can relate to and understand. It will also allow CQUniversity to develop reference tools that will better support staff in their response to critical incidents. Furthermore, using an evidence-based approach, that is informed by students as the primary audience, will ensure CQUniversity is engaging with students and using messages that they have told us they need, rather than delivering messages we think they need.

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