



# Student Safety & Wellbeing Plan

Released 21 March 2022

## Overview

*The Australian National University (ANU) is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive study and work environment for our community. We put the health, safety and wellbeing of those impacted by sexual assault and sexual harassment at the centre of our response and processes.*

The University has taken progressive steps to meet the recommendations found within the Australian Human Rights Commission's [Change the Course Report](#) in 2017, the 2018 Nours Review of Responses to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in ANU Residences and the [ANU Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy](#) (SVPS) released in 2019. Additional information about the University's response and action to the Change the Course Report can be found at <http://www.anu.edu.au/about/strategic-planning/sexual-violence-prevention-and-response>.

It has been acknowledged that there have been significant delays in the implementing the SVPS and In September of 2021, the ANU Senior Management Group committed to a three-phase approach to rebuilding our internal capacity to implement and embed the SVPS under the direction of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student and University Experience).

This included the development of an SVPS Taskforce, led by the Director University Experience and comprised of key internal stakeholders and student leaders. This Taskforce has been, and continues to be responsible for driving the agenda for the phased implementation throughout 2021 and into 2022 with a focus on [education and prevention](#), [reporting, disclosures and case management](#) which are supported by a committed and transparent [institutional response and reporting](#).

The approach that was endorsed by the Senior Management Group in September 2021, and which informed the work undertaken in phases 1 and 2, was informed by the following core principles:

- Rebuilding our people capacity.
- Ensuring that we have good service integration and clinical governance.
- Students are engaged in the approach.
- The approach is led by experts, evidence and data.

In phase 3 we will strengthen our approach to prevention strategies. Successful prevention strategies are inevitably multi-faceted and require a long-term commitment to changing culture and focus on providing evidence-based information that is supported through the development of training-based interventions that ensure the community understands the evidence. In the Lyn Walker Assessment of the SVPS recommends actions that work on promoting gender equity across the University, raising awareness of issues pertaining to

sexual violence, building staff and student knowledge and skills in responding to and preventing sexual violence, developing leadership roles of students and staff in responding to and preventing sexual violence, building partnerships to support collaborative action, and undertaking research and evaluation that captures the learnings, outputs and outcomes arising from strategy implementation.

Over 2021 the ANU committed to an agenda to change the maturity and diversity of the residential population within our on-campus Residences. Over the period of the next 2 years, we are continuing to roll out strategies which will ultimately increase the proportion of later year undergraduate students while still maintaining our accommodation guarantee to commencing students. We are also looking at strategies to increase and further broaden the social mix in residences including the proportion of low-SES and rural students, this is in line with the University strategy to diversify the student mix. These measures are complimented by an academic enrichment program in to build the value proposition of residences as learning communities.

In the suite of initiatives that have been identified for phase 3, a number of them are focused on action in residential halls as 25% of ANU student population. To be fully effective these initiatives will require us to work with our student and staff community to develop an enhanced operational model. We will consult with staff and students on the implementation of these initiatives.

The initiative concentrates on the need for increasing the clinical management and pastoral care capabilities of ANU to more effectively support our students and increased manage behavioural risk. With a focus on student accommodation, it is noted that alongside this ANU is considering an additional investment to support COVID safety, commercial and operational management of the Residences.

These initiatives will be implemented with the input of key stakeholders including student representative groups and the staff who work in student support services.

## Phase 1

Phase 1 focused on rebuilding capacity and was timed to conclude at the end of 2021. During this phase the ANU committed to continuing their support for the National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) and strengthening the support mechanism already in operation. This included establishing the Student Safety and Wellbeing Team and the recruitment of several key positions. This recruitment included three Case Managers who work to support victim/survivors who disclose to the University.

The establishment of the SASH Taskforce was also completed during this time. This Taskforce meets weekly with the goal of supporting the rebuilding of ANU internal capability for both prevention and response activities and collaborating to improve reporting and disclosure processes and transparency.

Phase 1 also included the review of the disclosure process of the University, leading to a significant reduction in the number of steps needed to complete a disclosure. The taskforce also completely removed the need for a survivor to complete the disclosure process with a new option to directly contact a case manager. The taskforce also oversaw an improvement to our case management process and implemented an integrated service approach with wider support options.

An independent review of the SVPS was commenced, with the development of Terms of Reference and the engagement of an external expert. This review was tasked with assessing

the SVPS and actions that had already been completed, and in addition to make recommendations on how to progress the SVPS in the coming years.

## Phase 2

Phase 2 commenced in early 2022 and built on the foundations of built in Phase 1 with a focus on ANU Responses. In this period the independent review has been concluded, and we release this today along with the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan.

During this time the Taskforce has supported the implementation of measures to strengthen data reporting on disclosures and to increase the transparency of reporting through the publication of the Sexual Misconduct Reports & Disclosures report which details the reports and disclosures received through an ANU mechanism. This report was made public on 2 March 2022. We released a report that analyses over three years the trends in student disclosures and reporting under the ANU.

The report detailed some key highlights from the reports and disclosures data captured between 2019 and 2021. The report notes that:

- Year on year, more individuals are coming forward to report and disclose incidents of sexual misconduct.
- In 2021, all reports of alleged sexual misconduct heard at inquiry received a finding of misconduct and the majority of respondents were penalised with exclusion from the University.
- The majority of individuals contacting ANU through confidential disclosures are doing so to seek support through our specialist case managers or to inquire about formally reporting sexual misconduct to the University.
- The majority of incidents disclosed happened on campus in residential halls/colleges and off campus, usually in a nightclub, bar, or private residence.

The Respectful Relationships Unit has undertaken work to improve the Enlivening Consent training program which is an expert led series of sessions that contextualises and extends the learning from the compulsory Consent Matters online learning Module. As of 2022 both the Consent Matters Module and the Enlivening Consent training are compulsory for all students who are moving into residence for the first time. In addition, the Reach Out Campaign was launched at the commencement of Semester 1 2022, this campaign included the development and distribution of smart stickers that connected student and staff to the support services available.

## Phase 3 (Current)

This current Phase of the University program of work will continue to build on previous phases and will include the launch of a Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan. It is intended that this initiative will be fully implemented by Semester 1 2023, with some key initiatives being targeted for Semester 2 2022. This will include a dedicated action plan that will support the further strengthening of the ANU's sexual violence education and prevention, reporting, disclosures and case management and institutional response and reporting initiatives. This program will in addition focus on initiatives that support young people to further develop their knowledge and skills required to engage in respectful relationships.

Actions in the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan:

**Number 1:** Implement all the recommendations from the **Independent Assessor's Report** (Lyn Walker, 2022). This will entail a two-year program of work. These recommendations include:

- Indicate a zero-tolerance approach in the sexual violence policy.
- Strengthen and document procedures for responding to victim/survivors and perpetrators and disseminate widely across the University.
- Increase student engagement in strategy planning and implementation processes.
- Prioritise actions within ANU residential settings while maintaining a whole of organisation approach.
- Strengthen governance, planning, coordination and evaluation systems underpinning strategy implementation.
- 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 backgrounds. This cohort is recommended as a priority for 2022 -2024 due to the large percentage of the Australian population and the ANU community from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- Strengthen development and monitoring of cultural action plans and disseminating information on outputs and outcomes achieved.

**Number 2:** Ensure that university staff are able to access effective and supported training on Student Safety and Wellbeing at ANU.

**Number 3:** Make accessible consent training mandatory for enrolment at ANU.

**Number 4:** Significantly invest in more professional trained ANU staff in our Residences and implement within the context of a strengthened operations model.

**Number 5:** Expand the case management support from Student Safety and Wellbeing team to assist in Student Residences, the reporting process and in student groups.

**Number 6:** Introduce oversight mechanism for University Council to oversee these recommendations and to keep the University accountable.

These initiatives will be implemented with the input of key stakeholders including student representative groups, and staff who work in student support services. The initiatives have been costed to ensure an efficient implementation process. The estimated investment in the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan is \$3.3m.