



Kate Jenkins  
Sex Discrimination Commissioner  
Australian Human Rights Commission  
Via email: [sexdiscriminationcommissioner@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:sexdiscriminationcommissioner@humanrights.gov.au)

14 September 2020

Dear Commissioner Jenkins,

Thank you for your letter dated 18th August 2020.

It is timely that we take this opportunity to reflect on the three year anniversary of the Change the Course Report and also on more recent findings contained in the Respect@Work Report.

I attach a document outlining the progress made by Deakin University against each of the Change the Course recommendations. The attached document also outlines Deakin's future planned actions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team for your ongoing work in this space. I look forward to hearing more about the Respect@Work findings and recommendations at an upcoming Universities Australia meeting.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Iain Martin'.

Professor Iain Martin  
**Vice-Chancellor**

## Deakin University Implementation of Change the Course Recommendations as at September 2020

Recommendation	Action taken since last milestone report in February 2019	Planned/future action
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b><i>Vice-Chancellors take direct responsibility to implement recommendations, including decision-making and monitoring and evaluation of actions taken. Establish an advisory body. Develop an action plan.</i></b></p>	<p>The Vice-Chancellors Advisory Group has continued to meet regularly since its inception.</p> <p>The name of the group was changed in late 2019 from the Vice-Chancellors RNA Advisory Group to the Vice-Chancellors Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Advisory Group. The new name adopted by the group reflects a two-fold, institution wide commitment. This commitment is to the prevention of sexual harm and to ensuring that, where staff and/or students do experience sexual harm, they are provided with a supportive, victim-centred response.</p> <p>The Vice-Chancellors Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Advisory Group continues to oversee the development and delivery of annual Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plans.</p>	<p>In 2021 the Vice Chancellors Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Advisory Group will continue to oversee development and delivery of the annual Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan.</p> <p>Evaluation of the current Action Plan is underway with findings informing development of the new 2021 Action Plan. The 2021 Action Plan is scheduled to be presented at the Vice-Chancellor Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Advisory Group meeting to be held in October.</p>

Recommendation	Action taken since last milestone report in February 2019	Planned/future action
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b><i>Universities develop a plan for addressing the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment that includes education programs, and identifies existing resources and communications campaigns that reinforce key messages.</i></b></p>	<p>Through the 2019 and 2020 Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plans Deakin has continued to develop and deliver a suite of staff and student training and education programs. These programs seek to address the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online modules tailored for both staff and student audiences which focus on respectful behaviour and appropriately responding to disclosures of sexual harm.</li> <li>• Face-to-face training offerings tailored for both staff and student audiences which cover topics such as bystander intervention, respectful behaviour and appropriately responding to disclosures of sexual harm.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the above, Deakin has developed and delivered an annual communication plan targeting both staff and students. The annual communication plan aligns with initiatives such as the <i>16 days of activism against gender based violence</i> as a means of leveraging existing resources and communication campaigns.</p>	<p>In 2021 Deakin will again develop an annual Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan. In line with best practice guidance from the AHRC, Universities Australia, TEQSA and with pending legislative change through Victoria’s new Gender Equity Act 2020, the focus of this plan will be: to challenge the drivers of gender based violence and promote understanding of the link between gender equity and gender-based violence.</p> <p>The ability to deliver on these initiatives was enhanced earlier this year when the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Team was moved to the Diversity and Inclusion Team (home of the Gender Equity Action Plan). This move will embed work undertaken in the area of sexual harm prevention and response as part of broader gender equity work and ensure that Deakin is in a position to holistically respond to the gendered drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment.</p>

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<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b><i>Universities should ensure students and staff know about support services and reporting processes for sexual assault or sexual harassment.</i></b></p>	<p>Safer Community Services continues to be available to both staff and students as a central point of contact for the disclosure and reporting of sexual harm and domestic and family violence.</p> <p>In addition, the Student Support and Referral Hub was launched in 2020. This resource brings together information on a range of services available at Deakin in one easily accessed location. The resource is designed to assist academic and professional staff to refer students when an issue requires immediate response, to share information regarding support services and to support staff to enable student conversations. Many of the support and referral services included in the Student Support and Referral Hub are also available to staff.</p> <p>Deakin also continues to deliver information to staff and students through a dedicated annual communication campaign and through a range of training offerings covering topics such as respectful behaviours, responding to disclosures of sexual harm and bystander awareness. All of these training offerings contain information regarding support services available and reporting processes for sexual harm.</p>	<p>In 2021 Deakin will continue to deliver a suite of training offerings to ensure that both staff and students are aware of support services and reporting processes available.</p> <p>As in previous years, Deakin will again develop and deliver an annual staff and student training and education campaign. All communication initiatives will continue to be evaluated for reach and engagement with the aim of continuous improvement.</p> <p>In 2021 a particular focus will be on engagement with the Deakin University English Language Institute (DUELI). An independent entity, DUELI provides an English Academic Purposes (EAP) pathway program which aims to support students to gain access to their chosen course at Deakin. As many DUELI students go on to complete courses at Deakin, early training delivery will seek to ensure in depth understanding of behavioural standards as well as knowledge of support services and reporting pathways.</p>

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<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b><i>Within a year, universities should commission an independent, expert led review of existing university policies and response pathways in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment, to assess effectiveness and make specific recommendations to universities about best practice responses.</i></b></p>	<p>In line with this recommendation a review of Deakin’s policies and response pathways was undertaken by PwC in 2018.</p> <p>In 2019 Deakin policies and procedures relating to sexual assault and sexual harassment were consolidated, resulting in the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy and associated Sexual Harm Response Procedure. The policy and procedure were structured to ensure that victim-survivors were aware that, regardless of the type of sexual harm they experienced, Safer Community Services would be available as a central support service. By consolidating separate sexual assault and sexual harassment policies the need for victim-survivors to distinguish between experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment prior to seeking support has been removed.</p>	<p>In 2021 Deakin will seek to review policies relating to domestic and family violence.</p> <p>Recent events have seen an increase in the number of staff and students working and learning from home. During this period Deakin’s Safer Community Service have seen a rise in the number of requests for support relating to domestic and family violence.</p> <p>A review of current domestic and family violence policies will seek to identify additional ways in which Deakin can support staff and students experiencing family violence.</p>

Recommendation	Action taken since last milestone report in February 2019	Planned/future action
<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b><i>Universities should conduct an assessment to identify staff members and student representatives within their institution most likely to receive disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment and ensure those identified receive appropriate training.</i></b></p>	<p>Following an assessment to identify staff members and student representatives most likely to receive disclosures of sexual harm Deakin has continued to roll out targeted training including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a compliance module titled Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Harm which is mandatory for all commencing Deakin staff</li> <li>• face to face training in responding to disclosures of sexual harm delivered to all contracted security personnel prior to commencing work at Deakin</li> <li>• a tailored online Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Harm module developed and delivered (through DUSA) to student leaders</li> <li>• annual refresher training in responding to disclosures of sexual harm delivered to staff at Deakin’s Student Residential Services</li> <li>• annual refresher training in responding to disclosures of sexual harm for the Harassment and Discrimination Contact Officer (HDCO) Network, responsible for supporting staff and students experiencing harassment, discrimination, bullying and/or victimisation.</li> </ul>	<p>In 2021 all current training offerings will continue to be rolled out.</p> <p>In addition, new opportunities will be sought to expand and reinforce training for those most likely to receive a disclosure of sexual harm.</p>

Recommendation	Action taken since last milestone report in February 2019	Planned/future action
<p><b>6</b></p> <p><i>Universities should ensure that information about individual disclosures and reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment is collected and stored confidentially and used for continuous improvement of processes.</i></p>	<p>In 2020 Deakin will launch a new Sensitive Case Management system designed, in part, to manage information regarding disclosures and reports of sexual harm. This system will be used by the Safer Community Services Team, Staff Complaints Team and by areas managing student complaints, misconduct and appeals. Privacy and confidentiality will be maintained through the granting of specific user rights relevant to each team.</p> <p>The storing of information on a single system increases data security and reporting capability while also allowing for timely identification of emerging trends. An additional advantage of the system is that it allows those seeking to report sexual harm the option to do so through an online form.</p> <p>De-identified reports continue to be provided to the Vice-Chancellors Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Advisory Group every six months and used to improve prevention and response actions.</p>	<p>As the Sensitive Case Management system has only recently been launched, in 2021 Deakin will continue to refine business processes associated with the system and to improve reporting to ensure newly captured data is able to be used to inform continuous improvement processes.</p>

Recommendation	Action taken since last milestone report in February 2019	Planned/future action
<p><b>7</b></p> <p><i>Within six months of this report, universities should conduct an audit of university counselling services to assess adequacy of capacity and training and undertake data collection.</i></p>	<p>An external review of Deakin’s counselling services was completed in accordance with the AHRC recommendation in February 2018.</p>	
<p><b>8</b></p> <p><i>Universities should engage an independent body to conduct the National university student survey of sexual assault and sexual harassment at three yearly intervals to track progress in reducing the prevalence of these incidents at a sector-wide level.</i></p>		<p>Deakin will continue to support student participation in the national university student survey of sexual assault and sexual harassment conducted through Universities Australia.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p> <p><i>Residential colleges and university residences should consider implementing report recommendations, and commission an independent, expert-led review of the factors which contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in their settings.</i></p>	<p>In line with this recommendation PwC conducted a review in 2018. The review identified the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaborative and supportive staff culture</li> <li>• zero tolerance approach to serious misconduct</li> <li>• visible and responsive security and staff</li> <li>• regular monitoring and review</li> <li>• willingness of leadership to seek and act on feedback.</li> </ul>	<p>The CEO of Deakin Residential Services continues to be an active member of the Vice-Chancellors Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Advisory Group.</p> <p>Partnership activities with Deakin Residential Services will be included in the 2021 Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan.</p>