

1 August 2017

IRU STATEMENT 13/2017

Addressing sexual assault and harassment on university campuses.

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) supports the range of measures being taken by Australian universities to better understand the extent of sexual assault and harassment experienced by their students, including the release today of the results of the Australian Human Rights Commission report into sexual violence on campus. Through the commissioning and public sharing of the data, universities are seeking to highlight and understand the scope of the problem and to improve and strengthen their responses, policies and practices.

The commitment to ensuring campuses are places of safety, respect and thriving for all students remains a priority for our six universities. We are thankful to our students, and all university students who have participated in this landmark survey and desire to hear their voices and experiences. It is their stories which will continue to shape and direct our responses.

University students and staff are entitled to learn and work in a safe and respectful environment, one which responds promptly and appropriately to incidents of sexual violence and harassment. Guided by this landmark report, universities will be better able to respond, enhance their support services, tailor their awareness and training programs, and create more effective policies and practices.

Universities Australia on behalf of all thirty-nine universities has established: 'Respect. Now. Always' a national response which complements the work and resources of each individual university. The focus is on strengthening safety and respect on campus, raising awareness of sexual assault and harassment, and making support services and reporting more visible. The campaign builds on the ongoing work of individual universities to develop safeguards, reporting policies and support services for victims of sexual violence.

The report released today is a call for cultural reflection and sector-wide action. Improving safety on campus is paramount, as is ensuring our policies and procedures encourage reporting and support compassionate and just responses.

If you have been affected by the content of the report and would like to seek support, you can contact:

- Universities Australia national support line: 1800 752 224
- Your university's [On-Campus Security and Counselling Services](#);
- Local sexual assault /rape crisis centre www.humanrights.gov.au/list-sexual-assault-services

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