



Results of the 2021 National Student Safety Survey

23 March 2022

Content warning: the contents of this email contain references to sexual assault and sexual harassment. If this content causes you distress or impacts your wellbeing, please contact our [Safer Communities Office](#) or our [Student Counselling Service](#).

Dear students,

Today Universities Australia released a report on the results of the [2021 National Student Safety Survey \(NSSS\)](#). The NSSS was conducted by the Social Research Centre on behalf of all universities in Australia to help us understand the scale and nature of student experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault and how we can better support all students.

About the results

The report can be a distressing read for our community. The survey results highlight the confronting ongoing problem we face in our community and in society in preventing and responding to sexual misconduct.

They confirm that sexual assault and sexual harassment are primarily perpetrated by men against women. They also highlight that people of diverse sexualities and genders and people with disabilities experience it more often. The impacts on victim-survivors, their education and their lives, are profound.

The University's results for the NSSS are available on [our website](#). I would like to personally thank every student who responded to the survey and to recognise the courage of survivors who shared their lived experiences. Your contributions are invaluable in helping us to identify where we need to work harder to create a safe and respectful environment, to see where there has been meaningful progress, and to continue driving cultural and systemic change.

We've already taken strong action – since 2018 all new students must complete a Consent Matters module and consent workshops are held twice a year for all student leaders and first year students living in student accommodation and residential colleges. We've also created a mandatory module for all executive office holders in our many clubs and societies about the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Our policies and processes detail how we will support and protect the safety of survivors, ensure procedural fairness and protect confidentiality, and we have established a Safer Communities Office to provide support to survivors of sexual misconduct. We also employed a Preventative Education Specialist to improve how we increase awareness of issues such as consent and sexual misconduct on campus, and to work with students to design new programs and initiatives.

It's encouraging that this action has led to a shift in some areas of our results – more students are seeking support and there seems to be greater awareness of where to obtain support and how to make a report or complaint. However, many issues of great concern remain and this is where we will focus our efforts, to create a safer and more responsive and supportive environment for all our students.

Frankly, one case is one too many. To every person who has experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault, we are deeply sorry. Every student has the right to feel safe and supported and to be treated with respect and dignity, whether on campus, online or offshore. Anything less is unacceptable.

Further work to address and respond to sexual misconduct

While the University will continue to engage with our community further, we have immediately begun work to develop and implement a University-wide prevention strategy over the next 12 months. This will include:

- redoubling our efforts to raise awareness of support services and improve transparency of all available options for making a complaint or disclosure of sexual misconduct
- delivering appropriate training for all students and staff, so everyone has the essential skills to be an active bystander/first responder, and to refer people experiencing sexual misconduct to reporting options and support both inside and outside the University.

The voices of our diverse student community will be at the centre of our work to inform our approach. We will also consult with key stakeholders including student accommodation providers and affiliated residential colleges, the University of Sydney Union (USU), which oversees clubs and societies on campus, Sydney Uni Sport and Fitness (SUSF), and our work experience and placement partners – as well as our own and external experts – to inform our collective approach.

Support and advice

I understand that the sharing of these survey results and conversations around sexual assault and sexual harassment will be distressing and potentially traumatising for many in our community. If you or someone you know needs support or advice, I encourage you to reach out to the University's support services or external services below:

- University of Sydney Safer Communities Office
Specialist staff who provide trauma-informed support and case management to survivors of sexual misconduct. This team also has a partnership with the Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Hospital Sexual Assault Counselling Service that provides priority access to students. Appointments can be made directly via the Safer Communities Office.
 - + 61 2 8627 6808 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm) or (1800 SYD HLP) 1800 793 457 (Option 2, then Option 1. After hours this number automatically transfers callers to the NSW Sexual Violence Helpline for counselling support.)
 - safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au
- The Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Sexual Assault Service
 - + 61 2 9515 9040 or after hours +61 2 9515 6111
- Student Counselling Service

- +61 2 8627 8433 or +61 2 8627 8437 (accessible within Australia) or text +61 488 884 429 (for SMS chat)
- student.counselling@sydney.edu.au
- Available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

- University of Sydney after hours mental wellbeing support line
 - 1300 474 065 (accessible within Australia) or text 0488 884 429 (for SMS chat option)
 - Available Monday to Friday, 5pm to 9am, 24 hours on weekends and public holidays.

- 1800 RESPECT: National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service
 - 1800 737 732 (available 24/7)
 - www.1800respect.org.au

Further information about support and how to report misconduct is available on the [Student website](#).

Thank you again to students for your participation in the 2021 National Student Safety Survey, which will guide our ongoing efforts to make our campus and community a safe and inclusive place for everyone.

Regards,
Mark

Mark Scott
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

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