

## Surveys but No Service

### ANU's progress against Student Demands made August 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 - PARSA and ANUSA Report

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#### Introduction

The anniversary of the release of the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) Report into Sexual Assault and Harassment on Australian University Campuses gives all of us impacted by sexual violence on university campuses an opportunity to reflect on the progress made over the last year and where attention needs to be focused going forward.

We call on the university to **work with us to make change**.

ANUSA and PARSA would like to thank the university on their public commitment to accept the recommendations made in the AHRC Report. We acknowledge that while some progress has been made towards delivering on this promise, progress has been extremely slow and implementation needs to be better resourced in order for the university to deliver on their commitments.

In the past year, the ANU has made some achievements that deserve to be commended. Specifically, we note:

- Updates to the Discipline Rule,
- Commencement of the development of a Cultural Change Strategy,
- Commencement of an audit of ANU Counselling Services,
- Commencement of the Review of Residences, and
- Commitment to establishing a Respectful Relationships Unit with \$660,000 recurrent funding.

These are important actions that the university has taken.

However, more must be done. From a student perspective the key areas for improvement in the ANU's response to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment on campus are in **implementation** and **communication**. While surveys, audits and reviews are all essential to enable a better understanding of the problem at hand and how to tackle it, this in and of itself does not amount to meaningful action to promote positive change. Prioritising surveys and reviews has given the appearance of action and progress. However, little action has been taken to undergo the complex and resource-intensive work required to make a meaningful difference in making the university a safer place, and improving the experience of students when they seek help, try to report an incident, or take disciplinary action against their perpetrator. **Surveys do not make us safer.**

In the report that follows, we highlight key areas where the University must improve and focus their attention going forward. We also restate all of our recommendations of a year ago.

## **Significant Areas for Immediate Focus**

### ***Communication***

The AHRC report highlighted the importance of transparency and accountability in policy responses from Universities:

*“The advisory body should assess and publicly report on the university’s progress towards implementation of these recommendations within 18 months of the release of this report. From then on, public reporting on progress should occur on an annual basis.”*

The university has failed to deliver comprehensive and accessible status updates on their progress for reforming policy. Communication on the project has been fragmented, heavily reliant on blog updates, forums and vague documents that are infrequently updated e.g. <http://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/update-of-progress-against-the-ahrc-recommendations>

Even significant changes that reflect positively on the university, such as the announcement about the establishment of the Respectful Relationships Unit, have been poorly communicated. There is no publicly available timeline for implementation, nor is its proposed remit clear to many students.

The university’s failure to communicate to the community about changes and progress being made has led to, once again, students stepping up and filling in the gaps.

- We call for accessible and comprehensive communication to update the community about progress against the AHRC recommendations.

### ***Resources and Training for Staff and Students***

There has been an increase in training and education packages that are available. However the lack of any coordinated and strategic approach to resourcing and training has led to a situation where the awareness of services, values, policies and procedures within the university community remains largely unchanged. The online Consent Matters module is compulsory for all incoming residential students, but there are many gaps in this delivery and implementation. Staff and returning non-residential students do not have to complete this module. Concerns have been raised as to the efficacy of the module and its appropriateness for postgraduate and international students. Of particular concern is the lack of any compulsory training for teaching and supervisory staff concerning appropriate relationships and procedures for supporting students. It is also particularly concerning that the first responder module is only available to ANU staff, and not students, who have historically been the recipients of many disclosures.

- We call for the delivery of comprehensive and strategically targeted resources and training for the ANU community.

### ***Reporting processes***

Many students across campus still do not know how to report misconduct or how to get support, and no progress has been made towards electronic reporting that might support anonymous reporting. On this, ANU is falling dangerously behind the sector. Universities Australia released guidelines for Universities responses to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2018. These guidelines state:

*“Students should be offered several ways to make a formal report of sexual assault or sexual harassment. Technology has changed the way higher education is delivered, with some students spending less time, or no time, on campus. Safety apps and online reporting tools are just some of the methods by which students should be able to make a formal report; however, there should always be an option for students to make a formal report in person. At a minimum, students need to be provided with the name of a contact person or relevant safety unit, a relevant phone number and an email address through which they can make a formal report.”*

ANU does not have the facility to report sexual assault through our safety app, ANU OK, nor through any online tool. On the main webpage to which students are directed if they google search “[sexual assault reporting ANU](#)”, some names are listed for who you can report to, with no email address or phone number. On [another page](#) where students can find information about how to seek help, email addresses and phone numbers are listed but are not clearly identified. While ANU has changed the Discipline Rule to include sexual violence as misconduct, how to report this violence is still vague and unclear. The university must address this.

Further, the university has not clarified its position on informal reporting information collection and retention. Concerns have been raised that information about informal complaints is being withheld from formal investigations being undertaken by university officials (investigating misconduct). This raises severe concerns that university offices and departments, where students are directed to seek support and information concerning their options, are functioning to protect predators who have a clear and documented history of concerning behaviour.

- We call for the university to invest in or develop an online reporting tool that enables anonymous reporting.
- We call for the university to create a simple and accessible page that clarifies how a student can report, and what will happen in the process.
- We call on the university to develop a clear policy for the management of informal reports, considering the important role these play in alerting the university to predators in our community, and how they support formal investigations.

### ***Vulnerable and marginalised groups***

The ANU has yet to explicitly engage in addressing the issues around many vulnerable and marginalised groups at the ANU, in particular: Higher Degree by Research (HDR), International, Queer, Indigenous and students with a disability.

Higher Degree by Research students, notably those students undertaking a PhD or Master of Philosophy, were highlighted in the AHRC report as being a vulnerable group, at higher risk of staff on student violence. This is attributable to the supervisor relationship where students are, by the nature of their studies, are in a position of less power in relation to their academic supervisor. These relationships, where students are dependent on their supervisors for academic knowledge, advice, networks, and future career outcomes, create unique vulnerabilities. The ANU has committed to addressing these issues but to date no substantive work has taken place.

Students who identify with particular marginalised groups in our community are also at high risk. ANU has this year been highlighted as a place where homophobic comments are publicly made, and students who are queer identifying, publicly [ridiculed and bullied](#). With the AHRC report finding Queer students as

particularly vulnerable, it is valid to question the little work that has been done in this space to support these students.

Similarly, ANU, who disbanded their centralised International Student Service some years back, has done little to support international students to access support or find safe pathways to reporting, even in the wake of the [Al Jazeera report](#). Indigenous students and students with disabilities, other vulnerable groups, have not been considered or consulted in creating safer spaces in our university.

- We call for the university to deliver a meaningful services to support those who know are most vulnerable in our community.
- We call on the university to develop its cultural change strategy with these groups in mind.

### ***Campaigns and Cultural Change***

Since the AHRC Report, we have not seen any targeted interventions or campaigns delivered to address hot spots for high risk periods such as Orientation Week. Despite that the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC) has been present on the ANU campus for more than a year, many students do not know it is there to help and support them. While significant initial steps were taken by student leaders to develop ANU Community Standards, this progress significantly slowed when the university became involved. These Standards, though drafted, have not gone out for consultation, nor have steps been taken to develop a timeline for endorsement. Additionally, we have not seen progress on consultation regarding the implementation of a Cultural Change Strategy.

- We call for the university to ensure the ANU Community Standards are formally adopted by the end of 2018.
- We call for the university to commence a restorative and meaningful consultation process on the Cultural Change Strategy by the end of 2018.
- We call for the university to deliver a meaningful service awareness and bystander intervention campaign in O-Week of 2019.

### ***Restorative Justice***

Progress on engaging in cultural change restoratively has been minimal. Restorative justice was integral in the demands handed to the ANU by students in August last year, yet there has been little movement towards integrating the principles of restorative justice into the university's response. Processes must be trauma-informed and victim centred, emphasising healing and perpetrator responsibility and accountability, and recognising the role of the community in both harm and healing. There has been little movement towards a formal, transparent restorative process, either between the university and the survivors it has harmed, or as an option in disciplinary processes. Where progress has been made, it is not communicated transparently with the community, which is a core principle of restorative practice.

- We call for the university to meaningfully engage with and implement principles of restorative justice in its work in fulfilling the recommendations.
- We call for the university to engage in a restorative process with survivors, and to implement a restorative process as an option in disciplinary action.
- We call on the university to commit to coordinating and collaborating with sector expertise on this topic.

### *Under-resourcing and Over-reliance on Student Advocates*

Members of the staff Respectful Relationship Steering Committee and Working Group are people within the university with other full time roles who have been tasked with assisting in the development of resources and the implementation of cultural change. These groups are important, as we need the buy-in and expertise from all areas of the university. However, without a dedicated support team resourced to deliver the project, progress has been extremely underwhelming. External consultants have been brought in to help review, assess and develop strategy, but little resourcing has been devoted to implementing the recommendations of the surveys and reviews. This lack of resourcing speaks to the slow progress on key demands, the failures in communication with the university community, the lack of implementation of any cultural change strategy, and the lack of development of any comprehensive resources and training for staff and students.

The lack of resourcing and coordinated strategy for project implementation has led student advocates to step up to fill in the gaps. Substantial unpaid time and labour has been devoted to the Working Group and Steering Committee by the student representatives taking part. Bringing the CRCC on campus was an initiative led by students, the draft business case for the Respectful Relationships Unit was developed by students, as was the business case for the Bystander and Awareness campaign. The university needs to do better on delivering on their own projects, taking initiative and working collaboratively with students. The current approach which is consistently relying heavily on the good will and unpaid labour of students to deliver on ANU promises is neither just or sustainable.

ANU has a habit of siloing issues, and not working as a cohesive campus community to address significant issues. In so doing, the university ends up putting responsibility for dealing with significant issues on one, or a small group, of people. The University must be aware of these historical trends, and ensure that the Respectful Relationships Unit does not end up as a siloed service, responsible for implementing the rest of the AHRC recommendations alone. Rather, cultural change must be developed in an integrated way across the whole campus.

- We call for the ANU to take responsibility for resourcing the delivery of their promises, to work collaboratively with student advocates on these initiatives.

## **Appendix: ANUSA and PARSA Demands of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 and associated KPIs**

### ***1. Provide specialised support staff in anticipation of the release the Survey results***

**KPI:** Provide CRCC and ANU Counselling with adequate funding to secure a locum specialised trauma counsellors experienced in working with students.

**KPI:** Engage with CRCC and ANU Counselling in supporting further communication of their services and resources to students.

**KPI:** Ensuring all staff in student facing roles are appropriately prepared and supported to respond to student disclosures.

### ***2. Provide safe and accessible information for survivors and their supporters***

**KPI:** Online portals should direct students and staff to the “Respectful Relationships” ANU website as soon as actionably possible; to be updated fortnightly to reflect changes in services, context and based on student feedback.

**KPI:** In-course syllabus and orientation guides should contain this information beginning Summer Session 2017-2018.

**KPI:** SCAPA to communicate and coordinate with ANUSA and PARSA to provide online graphics and posters to inform the student body of resources and support services on campus, such as CRCC.

### ***3. Creation of an ANU Sexual Assault & Sexual Harassment (SASH) Taskforce***

**KPI:** We expect the membership and terms of reference of this Taskforce to be finalised within two months and a first meeting to be held before 1 October 2017. The membership and contact information for this Taskforce must be made publically available. The Taskforce will release progress reports after each meeting.

**KPI:** We expect the terms of reference of this Taskforce to be focused on reducing sexual assault and sexual harassment at ANU and for their work to be framed by a Strategy similar to ANU’s Mental Health Strategy.

**KPI:** We expect this Taskforce will meet regularly in order to make substantive progress.

### ***4. Engage in a process of restorative justice***

**KPI:** We expect the scope and design of the process to be finalised within three months, and to have a public announcement by the start date by 1st November 2017.

**KPI:** We expect a public apology made by the Vice Chancellor after the restorative process takes place.

5. ***Review of policy, processes and protocols to create a centralised Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy for ANU***

**KPI:** We expect this external review process to produce: a) a draft centralised sexual assault and sexual harassment policy for ANU, and b) a set of resource recommendations to accompany this draft policy.

**KPI:** We expect each of the concerns listed above to be addressed in the final report, which will be reviewed and approved by a working group including the PARSA and ANUSA presidents, PARSA and ANUSA Women's Officers, and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for student experience before it is presented to be passed at the next ANU Council meeting before 1 December 2017.

6. ***Resourcing: engaging specialised staff to support students***

**KPI:** Ensure the on-campus Canberra Rape Crisis Centre staff are adequately supported structurally, are integrated into existing internal paths of reporting and referral, and that funding from the ANU is secured past the existing 3 year contract.

**KPI:** By Semester 1 2019 establish an independent office that provides and coordinates student support and investigation relating to sexual assault and sexual harassment on campus, and engage and fund staff in this capacity.

**KPI:** Commit to an ongoing review of the ANU's capacity to serve students of marginalised identities and collect student feedback to inform improvement in this area.

**KPI:** We expect the university to begin reporting on wait times for students requiring support, with the goal to ensure wait times for crisis and regular support is reasonable, and to make the results of this reporting available to internal stakeholders by mid-2019.

7. ***Reform reporting and investigative structures to affirm the agency and confidentiality of survivors and hold perpetrators accountable.***

**KPI:** Create a central office and separate staff position/s to coordinate the collection of reporting information and conduct internal investigations by Semester 1 2019. This office will:

- Create confidential, anonymous and robust reporting options.
- Review mandatory reporting requirements and wherever possible ensure de-identification is an option to maintain confidentiality of survivors.
- Ensure internal university investigations are conducted confidentially, case files are retained for external accountability.
- Ensure all university staff are trained to keep the survivor informed of all processes and input at decision points, and are resourced to respond and proceed all cases in a timely and satisfactory manner.
- Are empowered to respond to perpetrators of sexual assault and harassment with appropriate sanctions, including engaging survivors and perpetrators in a restorative justice process.

#### **8. *Community standards***

**KPI:** The ANU Community Standards document will be publicly announced and implemented by mid-2018, and be automatically attached to all staff and accommodation contracts, and student enrolments.

#### **9. *Pre-arrival information & training for all students on consent***

**KPI:** Mandatory consent training will be tied to all students' ISIS enrolment by 2019. In-person delivery of mandatory consent training by specialist professional educators will form part of the ANU's official orientation program for all new, incoming domestic and international students by 2019.

**KPI:** The consent training must be best practice and suitable for a diversity of students.

#### **10. *Training for staff and students receiving disclosures***

**KPI:** A commitment to expanding disclosures of sexual response and vicarious trauma training to student representatives, academic and professional staff and residential student leaders.

#### **11. *Stronger systems to support students in residential environments***

**KPI:** We expect policies to be developed around each of the policy areas listed above by Semester 1 2019. Training for staff and students should be fully funded and implemented by Semester 1 2019. The ANU Community Standards document and Affiliated College equivalents should be publicly announced and implemented by Semester 1 2019, and be automatically attached to all staff and accommodation contracts.

#### **12. *Higher Degree by Research (HDR) and Honours student supervisor support***

**KPI:** The ANU needs to ensure that HDR students are being engaged by the ANU outside of their supervisor. There needs to be adequate support for HDR students so that they are not reliant solely on supervisor relationships.

**KPI:** Information regarding sexual assault and sexual harassment policy and resources for HDR students needs to be developed in collaboration with PARSA and included in induction programmes.

**KPI:** The ANU must insist on mandatory training for supervisors. The ANU can ensure this training is completed by embedding this competency within performance standards. Mandatory training should include how to effectively supervise and ethical codes of behaviour.

#### **13. *Students are valued as equal members of the ANU community***

**KPI:** Create a Student Partnership Agreement led by ANUSA and PARSA. This Agreement should be endorsed by ANU Council.

#### **14. *A commitment to ongoing reporting and periodic reviews***

**KPI:** The Strategic Plan on Reducing Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment on campus will set specific targets and be included in the Healthy Universities operational plan under Student





Experience, and be periodically reviewed, updated and reported on by the Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Taskforce.

#### *15. Commitment to a future survey*

**KPI:** The Strategic Plan on Reducing Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment on campus will include future surveys of student experience, and satisfaction with the University's policies, procedures and responses on this issue. The data will be publicly released and reviewed by the Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Taskforce to inform future co-ordinated action. Ideally this would take place alongside another nationwide survey.