

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

ANU's progress against Student Demands made August 1st 2017 - PARSA and ANUSA Report

Compiled by: Key student advocates and staff at PARSA, ANUSA and the ANU Women's Department.

Introduction

The Student Associations recognise the efforts made by many passionate advocates within the ANU community who are working to improve safety and wellbeing on campus. The establishment of the Respectful Relationships Unit (RRU), along with its important work of awareness-raising, is a key milestone in addressing sexual violence on campus.

We applaud the work of the Respectful Relationships Steering Committee, which ceased operation at the beginning of this year with the formal establishment of the RRU. This year we have seen significant work undertaken by the RRU and the University on many important projects for which students have been advocating.

However, progress on implementation for many of these initiatives has been subject to administrative delays and more of the same bureaucratic issues which have impeded progress in the past. Student advocates are exhausted by the constant need to hold the University to their commitments. The University has failed in its duty to effectively communicate the progress made to the community which has exacerbated the dissatisfaction among advocates of change.

We hope that this does not speak to a broader lack of vision for the cultural and institutional change required to properly protect current and future members of the ANU community.

Significant Areas for Immediate Focus

Code of Conduct

Following hours of drafting work by student advocates, the University took on the responsibility of establishing an ANU Code of Conduct. Recent communication from the University indicates that the purpose and scope of this document has once again shifted, further delaying implementation. We are now in the same place that we were two years ago as the structure of the document has been changed repeatedly (most recently with a return to the original student proposal), with little or no tangible progress.

This is extremely disappointing as it fails to acknowledge the importance and urgency of this document, something which student advocates have been seeking to impress upon the University since before the release of the AHRC report. We cannot stress how disappointed we are in the University's lack of progress on this crucial document. Communication has been sorely lacking and at times deliberately evasive, and this document must, at last, become a strategic and cultural priority for the ANU. The University must hold itself to standards worthy of its academic standing.

Respectful Relationships Working Group

The Respectful Relationships Working Group (formerly referred to as the Advisory Group), has met only once this year. We are disappointed that meetings have been as frequent as the Foundation Day Lecture, and that it has been afforded so little resourcing as to be ineffective. Not only have meetings been infrequent, but it has achieved so little in its first six months when it was touted as a natural successor to the Respectful Relationships Steering Group and the original Respectful Relationships Working Group.

We are pleased that the frequency of the meetings has increased as a result of the requests of the student associations but we have significant concerns about sustainability and resourcing.

Residential Review

The lack of substantive headway following the Residential Review is extremely concerning. Not only has there been no progress report, the University has taken significant steps to limit student participation in the review process and restrict access to the results (namely, student presidents were given access to one physical copy of the report at the end of 2018). Requests from student leaders of key people driving the review forward for meetings and consultation have been summarily refused, indicating that when it comes to meaningful engagement with student leaders, a student partnership agreement is merely a piece of paper.

Tri-annual survey of sexual assault and sexual harassment

The ANU committed to undertaking a second review of sexual violence on campus in 2019, but as of August there has been no progress. It is vital that the University has a sound understanding of the continued prevalence of sexual violence on campus to ensure that we are able to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the ANU community. It is extremely disappointing that the University appears to have taken the credit for committing to undertaking a second survey, without following through with implementation. This is an occurrence we have found to be unfortunately common in the organisational response to this issue.

Online Reporting Tool

An online reporting tool has been discussed consistently for the last 18 months. There has been significant progress, including workshops and consultation, towards the development of this tool for the ANU over the end of 2018 and into the beginning of 2019. Since then, however, this project has completely run out of steam. From the communications we have been able to elicit, we understand that there have been significant and unexplained delays in rollout and it is now unclear whether this tool will be used at all. It is delays in

crucial initiatives like this that emboldens perpetrators of sexual violence to continue to act without fear of accountability at the ANU.

Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy

We understand that the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy, which was approved by the former and current Student Working Group and Steering Groups, is being subjected to major redrafts, and therefore major implementation delays. It is unclear why the significant work already put into this document is insufficient and further delays are unconscionable considering the subject matter and general institutional failures. We are deeply concerned that what was a consultative and transparent document is now closed and opaque, and that the community has still not been informed as to why this document has to be revisited. We are very sceptical of the University's ability to undertake culture change without a strategy.

It is critical for the robustness of this document that a wide range of stakeholders are involved in its creation and that student voices must be considered central to the entire process.

Restorative Justice

Although restorative practice workshops were run earlier in the year, there has been no communication as to any of the outcomes of these workshops, or how the University means to progress in this space. Once again, we are disappointed in the lack of tangible progress towards the commitments made.



Conclusion

Once again, although we acknowledge the work done by many at the University and that cultural change is not something that can happen overnight, there have been critical systemic failures to follow through on commitments, and an unwillingness on the part of leadership to take responsibility for delays and future action.

We are disappointed in the lack of progress since we wrote of the same issues of communication, inaction and bureaucratic delays, and once again call on the University to do more to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students, no matter their gender, sexual identity or abilities.

Appendix: ANUSA and PARSA Demands of August 1st 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.