

UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA CHARTER ON SEXUAL HARM

Sexual harm is abhorrent and has no place in our society. Every organisation has a role to play in eliminating it.

Our organisations recognise the importance of continuing the work of preventing sexual harm and responding well when reports of sexual harm are made. We recognise the need to continue to improve and listen to those with lived experience of sexual harm.

The elimination of sexual harm cannot be achieved in our sector by working alone. The sector endorses a set of enduring commitments so that, collectively, we can work to change our communities for the better. In giving this enduring commitment, we hope that other organisations will join us.

Signatories of this Charter are committed to:

- Strengthening, developing and implementing policies that make clear that sexual harm is unacceptable, acting against any violations of those policies, and taking allegations seriously, regardless of the seniority or status of the person against whom a claim is made.
- Clearly educating and informing our communities of where and how to report incidents of sexual misconduct, sexual harm, sexual assault or sexual harassment and how to best access support.
- Providing support to all people who report sexual harm and victims of sexual harm, including through: providing access to trauma-informed and culturally appropriate support services; enabling confidential disclosure mechanisms; and supporting those who choose to report to the police.
- Providing clear and easily accessible processes for anyone who chooses to make a report seeking appropriate action against any members of our organisations.
- Ensuring that our processes for investigating and resolving such complaints follow procedural fairness and are timely, fair to all parties, and, to the greatest extent possible, don't re-traumatise people who report sexual harm or victims of sexual harm.
- Providing information on how to access an independent review of our process and work in good faith with such independent reviews.
- Publicly reporting annually on the number of reported instances of sexual harm in our organisations.
- Proactively collecting robust data about occurrences of sexual harm in our organisations and the effectiveness of our reporting and support systems.
- Working collectively in a research-informed manner to better understand and assist in addressing the prevalence of sexual harm in our wider society and develop evidence-based approaches for its elimination.

Our organisations are committed to this course of action – to build on the many initiatives already in place – because rates of sexual harm remain unacceptably high in our communities.

We welcome the government's strong focus on addressing sexual harm, not just on university campuses but in the community in general. We will continue to work constructively with government and victim-survivor groups.