ACTION PLAN FOR THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARRASSMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

2022-2025

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IN RECOGNITION OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS

We dedicate this Action Plan to all past and present students and staff of the University of Newcastle who have experienced sexual violence in any form.

We believe you.

We acknowledge your trauma and suffering.

We see your courage and resilience.

We recognise those loved ones who helped you carry the burden of your experience.

This Plan is our commitment to working with victim/survivors, students, staff and our wider University community to create meaningful change so that together we can prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment on our campuses.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The University of Newcastle acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands within our footprint areas: Awabakal, Darkinjung, Biripai, Worimi, Wonnarua, and Eora Nations. We also pay respect to the wisdom of Elders past and present.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are proud survivors of more than two hundred years of continuing dispossession. We have much to learn from Indigenous peoples' commitment to community, and their use of restorative processes to build and maintain respectful relationships and to repair harm.

We also acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples endure unacceptably disproportionate rates of violence, including sexual violence.

SUPPORT SERVICES

This document discusses rates and prevalence of sexual harm and may be distressing. If you need to talk to someone, support is available.

CAMPUS CARE

The University's dedicated response team responding to and supporting victim/survivors of sexual harm.

T: (02) 4921 8600 | **E:** campuscare@newcastle.edu.au

1800 RESPECT

National sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service. Free and confidential, 24/7.

T: 1800 737 732 | 1800respect.org.au

WELL MOB

Social, emotional and cultural well-being online resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

wellmob.org.au

SAY IT OUT LOUD

A national resource for LGBTQ+ communities and service professionals working with people who have experienced sexual, domestic and family violence.
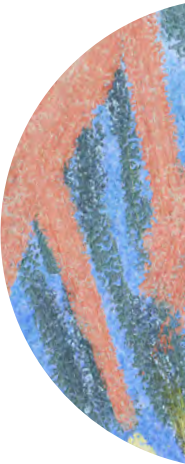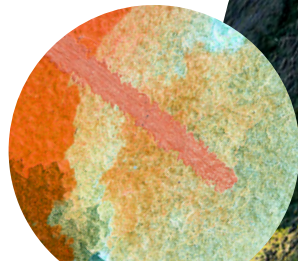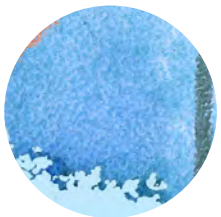
sayitoutloud.org.au

LIFELINE

A national charity providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. Available 24/7.

T: 13 11 14 | lifeline.org.au

UNIVERSITY COUNSELLING SERVICE

Mental health and wellbeing support for University of Newcastle students.

T: (02) 4921 6622 | **E:** counselling@newcastle.edu.au

ABOUT THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Assault and
Sexual Harassment at the University of Newcastle 2022 - 2025
was created after consultation with key stakeholders.

This included:
- The University of Newcastle Students' Association (UNSA) submitted a formal report on 20 June 2022 - Recommendation & Response to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at the University of Newcastle report on behalf of 2022 UNSA SRC
- Consultation with the Convenors of the SRC Student Collectives (present Queer Collective Convenor, Women's Collective Convenor, Parents & Carers Collective Convenor, Accessibility and Equity Convenor, International Students Convenor)
- Sector benchmarking
- Knowledge sharing with Our Watch - Respect and Equality in Tertiary Education Community of Practice
- Staff via the Safe and Respectful Communities Advisory Group (SARCAG) and Safe and Respectful Communities Working Group (SARCWG).

Consultation will be ongoing as part of the implementation of The Action Plan and will include stakeholders from key populations groups including: UNSA; SRC Collective Convenors; Clubs and Societies/; Residents; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; general student body; staff.
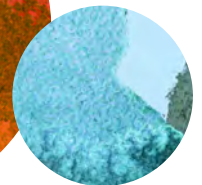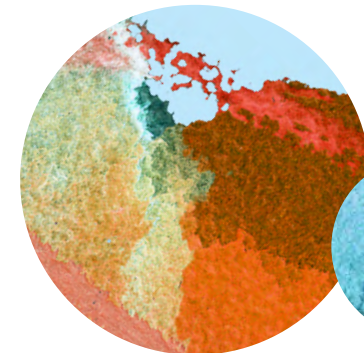
TIME FRAMES

The Action Plan has been divided into short, medium and long-term goals to ensure changes are seen across the institution in the realms of skills, knowledge, behaviours, attitudes and values.

Achieving whole-of-university cultural change around the drivers of gender-based violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault will be the long-term goal of the primary prevention initiatives.

Short: 2022

Medium: 2023-2024

Long: 2025

ACTION PLAN FOCUS AREAS

The Action Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at the University of Newcastle 2022 - 2025 has four key focus areas, these are based on community consultation, as well as the evidence-based Educating for Equality Framework developed by leading national organisation, Our Watch - an initiative under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2022-2032 (The National Plan).

The Educating for Equality framework adopts a public health approach, utilising a socio-ecological model for preventing gender-based violence. This approach identifies three tiers of prevention and seeks to bring about change within and across the structures, norms and practices which make up the university as an organisation and a community. The Educating for Equality framework also highlights the importance of leadership in driving change.

1. GOVERNANCE

REPORTING | POLICY | PROCEDURES |DATA MANAGEMENT

Policies, procedures, guidelines, and practices are critical to the structural makeup of the University. This focus area seeks to review and update relevant policies to ensure they are addressing gender inequality and responding appropriately to the experiences of victim/survivors and population groups who are overrepresented in the NSSS. External experts are able to provide a fresh view to support the developing maturity of our governance in this area. Additionally, transparent reporting of data related to sexual violence incidence, prevalence, processes and outcomes is required. This focus area also seeks continuous improvement with regards to the processes and systems in place for reporting incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

2. RESPONSE (TERTIARY PREVENTION)

SUPPORT | SAFETY | SECURITY

Tertiary prevention or response supports survivors and holds perpetrators to account. It aims to prevent the recurrence of violence. Response at our University will be reviewed and improved to ensure trauma-informed, victim/survivor-centric reporting options; access to ongoing therapeutic support if requested; best-practice training for frontline staff and other first responders; and the provision of the highest level of safety and security on all University of Newcastle campuses. Primary prevention efforts may increase rates of reporting and disclosure, so it is important that response resources are adequate.

3. PREVENTION (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY)

EDUCATION | CULTURE CHANGE | EVALUATION | RESEARCH

Primary prevention works in addition to the response work and aims to stop violence before it starts by addressing the structural causes and underlying drivers of violence. Secondary prevention is an early intervention component which addresses those most at risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence, while primary prevention seeks to address the fundamental drivers of violence. This area will look at whole-of-university education and culture change and will also segment efforts for vulnerable populations and groups. Best-practice prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment requires university-wide, contemporary, multi-modal, evidence-based programs and activities to raise awareness of sexual assault and sexual harassment, consent and consent laws (including the new affirmative consent laws in NSW and other jurisdictions); respectful relationships, bystander intervention, healthy living and harm minimisation (including responsible drinking); and reporting and support for survivors of sexual assault and harassment. This is also an area which presents significant opportunities for new or continuing research.

4. AWARENESS

ENGAGEMENT | COMMUNICATION | CONTENT

Results from the NSSS about University of Newcastle students' lack of knowledge of the University's reporting mechanisms are alarming. There is a critical need to raise awareness of the governance, support, and prevention aspects of the University's ongoing response to sexual assault and sexual harassment. A strategic whole-of-university engagement and communication strategy will be developed to ensure our community knows that the University has a zero-tolerance stance on sexual assault and sexual harassment and gender-based violence. An effective communications and engagement strategy will also ensure victim/survivors know how to access the support they need. Additionally, strong communications will help the community to understand and acquire the skills and attitudes to challenge the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

GUIDING DOCUMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

Please visit the University's Policy Library for the current versions of the following documents:

- University of Newcastle Code of Conduct
- Student Conduct Rule
- Prevention and Response to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy
- Prevention and Response to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Procedure
- Promoting a Respectful and Collaborative University: Diversity and Inclusiveness Policy
- 'Safe and Healthy Workplace' Priority of the Looking Ahead Strategic Plan
- Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategy 2020-2025

OTHER RESOURCES

- Our Watch – Educating for Equality: a Model to Address Gender-Based Violence at, and through, Australian Universities (and additional Our Watch – Respect and Equality In Tertiary Education resources)
- Universities Australia – Guidelines for University Responses To Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (2019)
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency - Good Practice Note: Preventing and Responding To Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment In the Australian Higher Education Sector - Including the Nine Principles for Managing Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (Sash)

FOCUS AREA ONE:
GOVERNANCE

REPORTING | POLICY | PROCEDURES | DATA MANAGEMENT

Key community concerns:

- Awareness of reporting avenues and outcomes
- Campus Care and support services resourcing and wait times
- Transparency about how information is used
- Trust in the process (time frames, appropriateness of outcomes)
- Understanding of sexual violence as a crime
- Challenges for those with disability including cognitive disability
- Impact of reporting on academic standing

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME
1.1. Review, update and create relevant policies, procedures and guidelines (External reviewer to be engaged)	• Engage external expert reviewer • External report completed with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed internally and final recommendations provided • Updates completed as per final recommendations	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice-President	Medium
1.2. Review and update reporting options (accessible, trauma-informed, victim/survivor centric and CALD)	• Engage expert reviewer (internal or external) • Report completed with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed internally and final recommendations provided • Updates completed as per final recommendations	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice-President	Short
1.3. Victim/survivor informed review and update of Adverse Circumstances process	• Engage expert reviewer (internal or external) • Report completed with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed internally and final recommendations provided • Updates completed as per final recommendations	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice-President	Short
1.4. Create and publish documentation on sexual misconduct process and how information is used in sexual misconduct cases – include information on academic standing	• Content created re sexual misconduct process with a student audience in mind • Content approved and published on website	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice-President	Short

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME
1.5. Evaluate data on wait times for support for sexual assault and sexual harassment reports	• Collection of data on wait times for support for sexual assault and sexual harassment reports • Data compared to best practice for support for sexual assault and sexual harassment victim/survivors • Report completed with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed and adjustments to process/resourcing for support as required	Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Experience and Academic Registrar	Medium
1.6. Review accessibility of sexual misconduct information and process	• Engage expert accessibility reviewer (internal or external) • Report completed with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed internally and final recommendations provided • Updates completed as per final recommendations	Senior Manager, AccessAbility and Support	Medium
1.7. Develop and implement reporting function in MyUni App	• IT to provide recommendations on reporting functionality on app • If functionality is feasible content created as required • Reporting function added to MyUni App as per IT recommendations • Promotion of functionality to students	IT Business Partner, Respectful Communities Coordinator	Medium
1.8. Develop institutional data collection methods to enable the University to track progress in relation to the effectiveness of sexual assault and sexual harassment response and prevention actions implemented	• SPP to provide recommendations on existing data collection methods and development of new data collection tool • Data collection tool developed • Data gathered and analysed	Director Strategy, Planning and Performance	Medium > long
1.9. Develop and implement a process and schedule for institution-wide sexual assault and sexual harassment data collection and reporting	• Report on current process for institution-wide data collection and reporting with recommendations outlining purpose of future data collection and reporting, and recommended process and schedule provided • Recommendations assessed internally and final recommendations provided • Process and schedule implemented as per final recommendations	Director Strategy, Planning and Performance	Medium
1.10. Consult and engage with multiple and diverse student groups including: UNSA, SRC Collective Convenors, Clubs and Societies, Residents/Student Living, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, general student body and staff	• Schedule for stakeholder engagement - including focus groups - is created in consultation with key stakeholders • Stakeholder engagement schedule implemented	Respectful Communities Coordinator	Ongoing

FOCUS AREA TWO:
RESPONSE (TERTIARY PREVENTION)

SUPPORT | SAFETY | SECURITY

Key community concerns:

- Barriers to accessing support including: guilt; shame; beliefs that sexual violence is not a serious offence; fears around confidentiality; poor previous experience; the experience of male victim/survivors, diversity of support staff
- Safety on campus including safe spaces, lighting, security response times, appropriateness of security response
- Resourcing of Campus Care and other support services
- Inappropriate responses from Security and other frontline staff

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME
2.1. Document and review support options on all University campuses and locations	• Engage reviewer (internal) • Report completed with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed and final recommendations provided • Updates completed as per final recommendations	Senior Manager, Counselling and Psychological Services	Short
2.2. Establish physical 'safe space' at Callaghan	• Engage with IFS to outline purpose and requirements (completed) Secure appropriate site Cross-divisional project team created for space development Space developed Space opened to students Space promoted to students	Chief Operating Officer/Deputy Director Campus Development	Long
2.3. Implement 'Safer Library' Initiative	• Frontline staff training: Cultural Competency (completed); Ally training (completed); Responding to disclosures of sexual violence (completed); Bystander Intervention Training (to be developed); Dealing with difficult clients in frontline service (to be developed) • Infrastructure: Installation of security help phones/duress points in our 24/7 zones; Closer collaboration with security on student feedback with a focus on after hours support; Library sites registered under the Welcome Here initiative. Working with IFS review of internal/external camera coverage. • Look for a Lanyard campaign: An all-inclusive campaign about Lanyards signifying staff as an ally for all things – safety, resource finding, assistance etc.	University Librarian	Short
2.4. Document and review lighting and other security elements on all campuses	• Engage reviewer (internal) Report completed with recommendations if required Recommendations assessed and final recommendations provided Updates completed as per final recommendations	Security Manager	Complete

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME
2.5. Review and enhance Safety and Security information and services in MyUni App	• Engage reviewer (internal) • Report completed with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed and final recommendations provided • Updates completed as per final recommendations	IT Business Partner, Security Manager, Respectful Communities Coordinator	Medium
2.6. Review resourcing for Campus Care	• Consult with Campus Care team on additional resourcing requirements • Recruit or otherwise provide additional resourcing to Campus Care team as recommended	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice-President	Complete
2.7. Review and report on gender diversity procedures in recruitment of support staff (CAPS)	• Consult with EDI Manager and CAPS senior manager to assess recruitment processes • Recommendations (if any) provided • Update recruitment processes if required	Associate Director - Student Wellbeing	Medium
2.8. Review and report on current training for Security and frontline Staff	• Engage reviewer (internal) • Report completed with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed and final recommendations provided • Updates to training program completed as per final recommendations	Security Manager, Associate Director, Wellbeing, Health and Safety	Medium
2.9. Develop and implement first responders' network	• Benchmark first-responders networks across the university sector • First-responders network project team formed • First-responders framework created • First-responders network established • First-responders network promoted	Respectful Communities Coordinator, Campus Care team	Medium
2.10. Engage with external student accommodation providers to share knowledge and ensure best practice for student safety and support	• Establish project team with Student Living for engagement with external providers • Guidelines created for best practice and collaboration re support for students living in externally hosted student accommodation • External student accommodation providers engaged • Guidelines shared with external providers • Schedule for ongoing engagement created and implemented	General Manager Student Living	Medium
2.11. Consult and engage with multiple and diverse student groups including: UNSA, SRC Collective Convenors, Clubs and Societies, Residents/Student Living, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, general student body and staff	• Schedule for stakeholder engagement - including focus groups - is created in consultation with key stakeholders, • Stakeholder engagement schedule implemented	Respectful Communities Coordinator	Ongoing

FOCUS AREA THREE:
PREVENTION (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY)

EDUCATION | CULTURE CHANGE | EVALUATION | RESEARCH

Key community concerns:
- Consent education such as Consent Matters is not enough
- The need for engaging and ongoing consent, ethical bystander, sex and relationship education, ensuring affirmative consent laws are included in education programs
- Consultation with students regarding education programs
- Responding to Disclosures training for student-facing staff
- Training for Club executives
- Specific education for residents
- Resources

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME
3.1. Mandatory training for Clubs and Societies executives	• Consult with UNSA for review of current training for Clubs and Societies executives • Deliver report with recommendations for C&S training program • Implement recommendations	UNSA General Manager	Medium
3.2. Review and update training for all staff	• Review current staff training • Report completed with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed and final recommendations provided • Implement recommendations	Associate Director, Wellbeing, Health and Safety	Medium
3.3. Review event framework for on-campus events	• Consult with relevant stakeholders to determine existing event frameworks across the university • Review existing frameworks and report on recommendations if required • Implement recommendations	Associate Director Student Engagement, General Manager Student Living, UNSA General Manager	Medium
3.4. Review student Onboarding and orientation experience; suggested name change to 'Welcome Week'	• Reviewer engaged • Report on onboarding and orientation experience with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed and final recommendations provided • Implement recommendations	Associate Director Student Engagement	Short

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME
3.5. Review and improve the 2022 Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) Program at Student Living	• Create cross-portfolio team to review Student Living SRE Program • Report completed with recommendations if required • Program updated to incorporate recommendations	General Manager Student Living	Short
3.6. Create and implement Safe and Respectful education content on MyUni app	• IT to provide recommendations on adding educational content to app • If content addition is feasible content created as required • Development of appropriate educational content for MyUni app • Uploading of content to app • Promotion of content to students	IT Partner, Respectful Communities Coordinator	Medium
3.7. Develop and deliver education/support training module for all students before placement/field trips	• Form education/training module development team with relevant stakeholders • Development of educational/training module • Delivery of module to students	Respectful Communities Coordinator, Senior Manager Education and Innovation (College of Human and Social Futures/College of Engineering, Science and Environment/ College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing)	Medium
3.8. Develop suite of contemporary, evidence-based primary prevention education programs including targeted education for key population groups: Residents/Club Executives/CALD students/International students	• Form primary prevention education program project team • Develop primary prevention education programs to build on Consent Labs • Deliver programs to students • Evaluate programs	Respectful Communities Coordinator	Medium
3.9. Creation of a University-wide sexual assault and sexual harassment/gender-based violence Prevention strategy	• Form project team • Develop University-wide sexual assault and sexual harassment/gender-based violence Prevention strategy	Respectful Communities Coordinator, Director, Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education	Long
3.10. Consult and engage with multiple and diverse student groups including: UNSA, SRC Collective Convenors, Clubs and Societies, Residents/Student Living, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, general student body and staff	• Schedule for stakeholder engagement - including focus groups - is created in consultation with key stakeholders, • Stakeholder engagement schedule implemented	Respectful Communities Coordinator	Ongoing

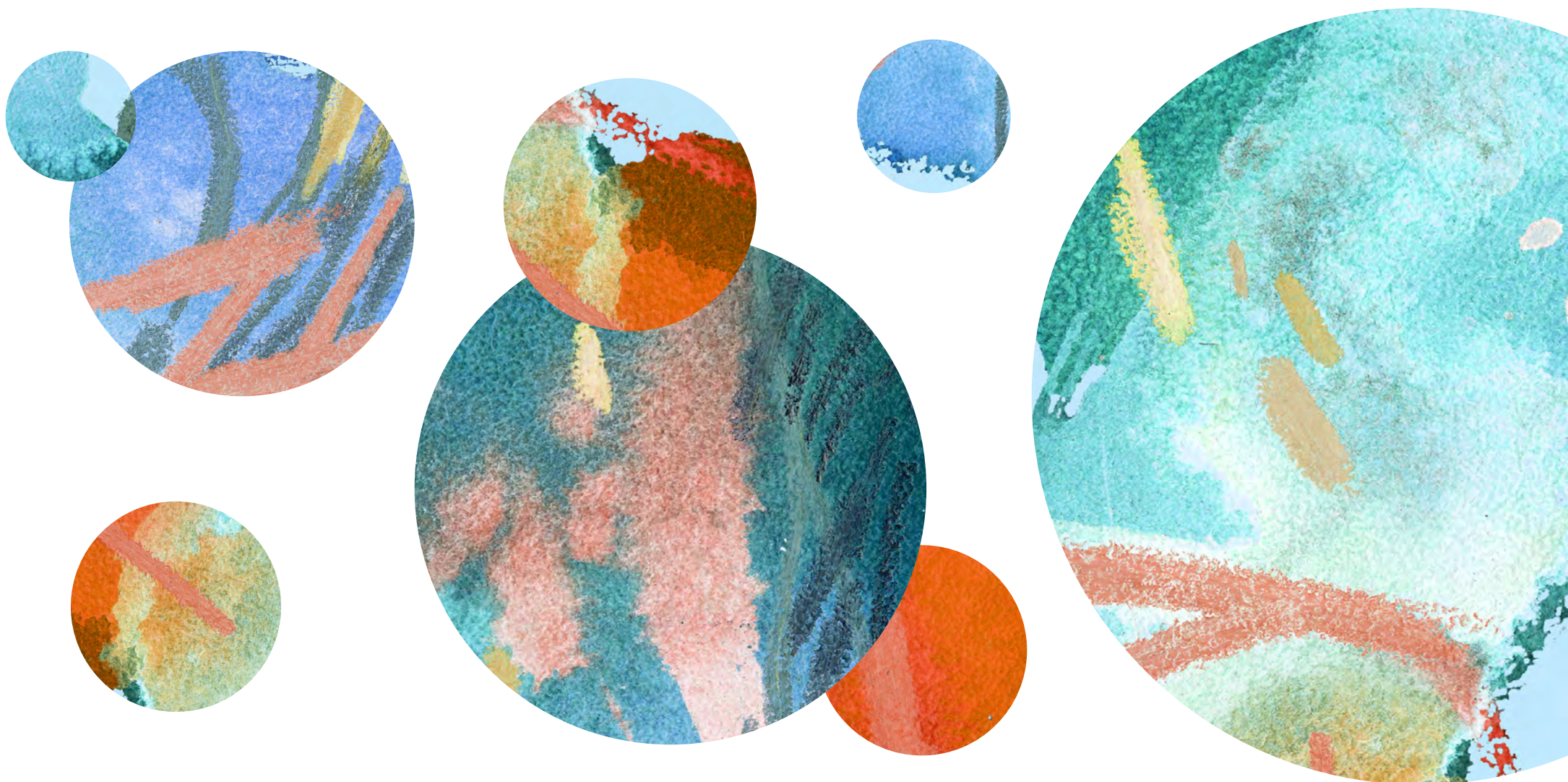# FOCUS AREA FOUR:
AWARENESS

ENGAGEMENT | COMMUNICATION | CONTENT

Key community concerns:
- Language and content is not Inclusive, accessible language and content is required
- Website is hard to navigate
- Communications need to be trauma-informed
- There is not enough communication around reporting and issues associated with sexual violence

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME
4.1. Review, evaluate and update No Room For campaign site according to current best victim/survivor centered practice and contemporary communication/social marketing principles and trends	• Form project team with Student Comms and Web team and other relevant stakeholders including CAPS, Campus Care and Student Living to review No Room For website • Report completed with recommendations • Recommendations implemented	Respectful Communities Coordinator, Manager Student Information and Communications, Web Manager	Short
4.2. Review, evaluate and update all relevant sexual assault and sexual harassment/sexual health/respectful relationships web pages according to current best victim/survivor centered practice and contemporary communication/social marketing principles and trends	• Form project team with Student Comms and Web team and other relevant stakeholders including CAPS, Campus Care and Student Living to review all relevant web pages • Report completed with recommendations • Recommendations implemented	Respectful Communities Coordinator, Manager Student Information and Communications, Web Manager	Short
4.3. Research and implement 'quick exit' button for relevant web pages	• Web team provide information re feasibility of 'quick exit' button • Relevant web pages for 'quick exit' button identified • "Quick exit' button added to relevant web pages	Respectful Communities Coordinator, Web Manager	Short
4.4. Develop an "Always On" Safe and Respectful Communities Communications campaign (staff and student audiences)	• Engage with Student and staff communications teams to develop 'always on' SARC communications plan • Plan implemented	Manager Student Information and Communications	Short - Medium
4.5. Engage accessibility expert for web content	• Engage external expert reviewer • Report completed with recommendations if required • Recommendations assessed internally and final recommendations provided • Updates completed as per final recommendations	Web Manager	Medium

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME
4.6. Develop and implement Safe and Respectful Community education content on MyUni app (as per item 3.6)	• Development of appropriate educational content for MyUni app • Uploading of content to app	IT Partner, Respectful Communities Coordinator	Medium
4.7. Consult and engage with multiple and diverse student groups including: UNSA; SRC Collective Convenors; Clubs and Societies/; Residents/Student Living; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; general student body; staff	• Schedule for stakeholder engagement - including focus groups - is created in consultation with key stakeholders, • Stakeholder engagement schedule implemented	Respectful Communities Coordinator	Ongoing

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