

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was written in response to the Australian Human Rights Commissions (AHRC) Report, *Change The Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities (2017)*. The University of Newcastle (UON) partnered with the University of Wollongong (UOW) to conduct an independent audit in response to Recommendation 7 of the AHRC Report. This Audit Report reviews UOW's capacity to provide adequate responses to students disclosing incidences of sexual assault and sexual harassment (SA/SH), and outlines recommendations to improve the support response.

The Audit framework and project plan was developed in collaboration with UON and UOW stakeholders including the Safe & Respectful Communities Advisory Group (SARCA Group). The Audit method incorporated a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach. The data was obtained via the following methods:

- Staff survey were sent via email to a selection of professional, leadership and academic staff, including heads of schools, program and course coordinators, teaching staff, enquiries staff, support services, etc. A total of 157 survey invitations were emailed and a response rate of 43.50% (N=67) was achieved.
- Individual interviews were completed during the on-site Audit visit and conducted with a range of personnel from the support and administration services likely to receive disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment, or responsible for referring students following a disclosure and or implementing support responses. Fifteen staff members attended interview sessions, which were conducted by UON audit team.
- During the on-site visit, the UON Audit team reviewed UOW website pages and obtained examples of staff and student communications to promote training opportunities including; webpages, information sheets, brochures, poster, social media campaigns, newsletters, targeting emails, social events, promotional events/activities
- UOW Counselling staff and service data was obtained via correspondence and interview with the Manager, UOW Counselling Service.

The current report reviews the extensive work UOW has undertaken to achieve best practice, particularly with respect to UOW commitment to preventing SA/SH and include the following:

- Establishment of The UOW Safe and Respectful Communities Advisory Group (SARCA Group) to address the recommendations issued in the AHRC Report.
- UOW promotes Support First model, which is evidence of trauma-informed practice.
- Consequently, UOW has implemented a single point of contact for trauma support and, a single point of contact for formal reporting, investigation and an institutional response.
- First Level Responder Training has been developed in consultation with the specialist service Violence Abuse Neglect Service (VANS). The program is evidence-based and aims to enhance skills to manage disclosure, increase understanding of trauma and trauma responses , highlight the referral pathways to appropriate services, provide information about Consent Matters, clarify UOW processes.
- UOW Counselling Service staff have had opportunities to attend specialised training to further their clinical skills to work with students who disclose incidences of SA/SH
- UOW Counselling Service can provide priority appointments within 24hours for students who seeking support following SA/SH. However, this model does place extra demand on the service and can impact on staff resourcing and appointment availability

The University has been largely successful in meeting the support requirements that were set out to ensure students who experience incidents of SA/SH are provide timely, trauma informed support. It

was also recognised there is scope to improve current practice and approaches. Recommendations discussed in the following report include:

- Messaging and programs should target other minority and increased risk student population.
- Consider options to increase uptake of training and programs for staff and students
- Ensure provision of specialised training for Counselling and SA/SH service staff
- Consider future funding opportunities to ensure provision of specialist roles and supports
- Broaden and maintain working relationships with external community services
- Review internal search engine to improve accessibility to relevant information.

The following report outlines the findings of the Audit into UOW's capacity to provide an effective support response. The UON Audit Team provides recommendations to build on the existing initiatives.

Summary of Recommendations – 2018 Counselling & Support Services Audit

The following table provides a summary of the review’s seven recommendations.

AUDIT REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED FOR SUPPORT	SUGGESTED UOW RESPONSE
<p>Recommendation One: <i>The capacity for the University to provide timely access to Support Services for students who report incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UOW Counselling and Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) Service is annually assessed in relation to demand and response effectiveness with the aim of ensuring these services are adequately resourced and able to work effectively to respond to disclosures of SASH and mental health issues. Assessment of the service should consider the ratio of staff numbers to students, wait times, and evaluate student feedback. • Continue to provide priority appointments for presenting students reporting SASH. Consider working with staff communication teams to ensure other professional and academic staff are aware of referral pathways, service options and supports, avoiding inaccuracies and staff assumptions. • Review resource allocation and consideration of future funding opportunities. 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implemented ▪ Implemented ▪ Adopted in principle; Business case submitted to PVCS for 2020 Budget Bid for Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Specialist to receive recurrent funding
<p>Recommendation Two - <i>The capacity to provide access to trauma-informed support and treatment services to students who report sexual assault and sexual harassment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider embedding modules (face to face or online) within staff induction design and continuing professional development. This applies to both front facing professional staff and teaching academics. ▪ Continue to address reported gaps in knowledge and confidence of non-support staff regarding students seeking support or disclose incidents of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment. The vast majority of staff were aware of UOW Counselling services, however there was a lack of addition knowledge of services such as academic support, financial assistance, medical treatments, emergency accommodation, legal services, etc. This may be achieved with direct and recurrent communications and future professional development opportunities. 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopted in principle; Briefing paper submitted to SARC Working Party on review of First Level Responder Training. UOW awaits release of Universities Australia on-line staff training modules ▪ Implemented – refer to Safe and Respectful Communities Action Plan

LEGEND: ✓ Proposal recommended

- Proposal not endorsed

AUDIT REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED FOR SUPPORT	SUGGESTED UOW RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognition of the potential risk of vicarious traumatisation or re-traumatisation (for those who have also experienced sexual violence themselves) for staff receiving disclosures of SA/SH. Targeted communication provided to managers and supervisors in assisting staff in accessing these supports, e.g. EAP, specialised professional supervision. ▪ Ensure any staff member involved in investigating reports of SASH, are trained in trauma informed support and trauma responses, including review of practice professional experts ▪ Explore further opportunities to review and evaluate of security responses to reports of sexual assault. ▪ Provision of post-case review opportunities for staff and students who receive SA/SH disclosures, in order to evaluate effectiveness of support responses, training and identification of gaps. ▪ Explore potential increased health provision for international students health insurance providers, in providing access to a 24/7 multilingual student advice line that also includes access to trauma counselling. 	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be adopted & Partially implemented – First Level Responder Training provides information to staff in supports available to them; All front line staff who receive disclosures (in SST) are provided clinical supervision and access to EAP ▪ Implemented ▪ To be adopted ▪ Implemented ▪ Implemented
<p>Recommendation Three - <i>The level and nature of support accessible to students in a twenty-four hour residential setting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide, promote and encourage opportunity for debrief/psychological first aid sessions to all residents, student leaders, and security staff, who receive disclosures of sexual assault in a timely manner ▪ Ongoing promotion and communication of evidence-based 24 hour support services ▪ The evaluation of current training in measuring effectiveness, and identify areas for continuous improvement in the residential settings. 	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopted and partially implemented ▪ Implemented ▪ To be adopted

LEGEND: ✓ Proposal recommended

- Proposal not endorsed

AUDIT REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED FOR SUPPORT	SUGGESTED UOW RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess and review procedures relating to SASH. This may include opportunity for focus groups with residents and student leaders for service gaps within 24-hour residential settings. Consider a specific review of student accommodation in regards to prevention, and response, creating a culture towards zero SASH. Further recommended actions suggest an evaluation of security responses to reports of sexual assault within residential setting ▪ Review and update UOW Living pages to direct residents to the relevant procedures and support services with minimal clicks or links. 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be adopted and partially implemented ▪ To be adopted
<p>Recommendation Four - <i>The level and adequacy of training required to equip support staff to service students who report incidents of sexual assault and harassment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to provide regular First Level Responder Training based on positive feedback from staff who have attended. ▪ Assess the need of an advanced or applied responder training package ▪ Development and facilitation of face-to-face training, which although being resource intensive, can be provided via online modules. However, online modules would not be a substitute for face-to-face program but would be viewed as a pre-workshop preparation or appropriate for non-student facing roles. Consider compulsory training as part of induction of new UOW staff and revision of continuing staff at regular intervals (i.e. biennial). ▪ Provision of diversity training for staff including awareness of the specific challenges experienced the needs of diverse social and student cohorts in relation to sexual assault, including International students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the LGTTIQ communities, those with disabilities, and how these social and cultural characteristics intersect. ▪ Continue to provide programs for Higher Degree Research (HDR) supervisors and convenors. Further training targeted at HDR convenors and supervisor should focus on responding to disclosures of SASH, t as well as the review of guidelines and code of conduct for staff in regards to respectful relationships between students and supervisors. 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implemented ▪ Partially implemented and to be adopted ▪ Face to face training Implemented Compulsory Induction content Adopted in Principle ▪ Implemented ▪ Adopted

LEGEND: ✓ Proposal recommended

- Proposal not endorsed

AUDIT REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED FOR SUPPORT	SUGGESTED UOW RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of specialised training for Counselling and SASH Service staff at a regular interval to maintain skills and current knowledge. ▪ Evaluation of training to measure effectiveness and identify areas for ongoing improvement 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implemented ▪ Implemented
<p>Recommendation Five – <i>The effectiveness of current student marketing and awareness raising activities to promote incident reporting and support services focused on sexual assault and sexual harassment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embed the “Support First Model” in staff knowledge for those who participated in survey and/or interview, UOW messaging, and organisational literacy. It is important that this messaging is promoted continually, especially targeting seasonal academics, casual contract staff and changing student cohort. ▪ Provision of single point of contact for Trauma Support (SASH Service) and formal reporting, investigation and an institutional response (SARC Manager). This is a relatively new service model, further campaigns and communication with staff and students are strongly supported. ▪ Liaise with IT, Student Communication and HR to review and improve the internal search engine to ensure support services and options are readily available and easily accessible. Student consultation process links, design and literacy relates to the students population. ▪ Additional messaging and programs should target international students and other minority increased risk student populations such as LGBTIQ, raising awareness, encourage disclosures, increase sexual health, improve safety in relationships, including or with student consultation. ▪ Continue to seek opportunity to develop social campaigns and workshops to compliment online module for students, which would focus on consent, increase bystander approach, reduce stigma and encourage disclosure and reporting. ▪ Review of organisational literacy regarding SA/SH messaging, literacy and communication strategies. 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implemented ▪ Implemented ▪ To be adopted and partially implemented ▪ Implemented ▪ Implemented ▪ To be adopted

LEGEND: ✓ Proposal recommended

- Proposal not endorsed

AUDIT REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED FOR SUPPORT	SUGGESTED UOW RESPONSE
<p>Recommendation Six - <i>The appropriateness and accessibility of referral pathways to specialised Community Services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing working relationship with external bulk billing GPs and private practitioners are experienced in working SASH. These referral options work along VANS and may provide alternative options during period of long wait list. • Explore NSW Victim Services as an additional referral option. Further communication strategies can be arranged to provide more information. • Consider the need for a comprehensive UOW-focused resource, for staff to provide students who do not wish to engage with UOW services directly. This to be reviewed annually and updated frequently to ensure accurate and current information • Review student accommodation resources, messaging and literacy to ensure clear referral pathways for reports, to external services such as the Police Assistance Line, VANS, NSW Rape Crisis Line when an informal confidential disclosure, or when a disclosure or incident occurs after hours. 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be adopted ▪ Implemented ▪ Implemented ▪ To be adopted
<p>Recommendation Seven - <i>The effectiveness of current reporting and review processes to monitor demand for support services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of single points of contact (e.g. SASH Service and SARC Coordinator) to ensure trauma informed practice is maintained. This evaluation should include service user feedback. ▪ Review collection and storage of data with IT services. 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be adopted ▪ To be adopted