



# RESPECT AND SEXUAL HARM AT DEAKIN

2024 ACTION PLAN

# Deakin's Four-Year Focus

Our four-year focus outlines Deakin's approach to further support and nurture a safe, inclusive, and respectful university community. Five priority areas have been identified with the intent to build and extend upon activities and actions undertaken each year as part of annual rolling action plans.

## Priority Areas:

- Respectful Communities
- Sexual Harm, Gendered Violence, Consent, Power and Authority
- Academic Teaching and Learning
- Community Education, Partnerships and Engagement
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

### ESTABLISH 2021

This first phase will focus on the connection and coordination of respect and sexual harm prevention work at Deakin, consolidating past work and reviewing training, programs and existing initiatives to align with our future direction. We will deliver training and capacity building initiatives, engage with students as part of the National Student Safety Survey 2021 and implement pilot evaluation strategies. occurred in their private lives, with no direct nexus

### EMBED 2022

This second phase will continue our work with our students and staff to build a culture of safety and mutual respect. We will connect and integrate university-wide respect and sexual harm prevention work, building strong relationships, incorporating research findings of our academic staff. We will review, refine and where appropriate develop new training and capacity offerings and resources. We will develop and implement a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, promote activities and outcomes to the Deakin community and beyond.

### ENHANCE 2023

This third phase will focus on whole of community activities and actions. We will continue to monitor, analyse and report on evaluation outcomes, incorporate findings to ensure continuous quality improvement and increased impact of activities and initiatives. We will increase early engagement and prevention work with individuals and communities who have a greater risk of experiencing harm and those at higher risk of engaging in disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour.

### EVOLVE 2024

In this fourth phase we will identify remaining gaps, new evidence and areas for ongoing development, innovation and improvement. Our focus will be on incorporating evidence-informed preventative work with a strength-based approach. Our focus will be on the sustainability of initiatives and incorporating relevant initiatives into standard practice.



# 2024 Respect and Sexual Harm Plan Context

**Prevalence of Sexual Violence:** A 2022 ANROWS report<sup>1</sup> indicated that women, especially young women, experience sexual violence at a higher prevalence than previously understood or reported. This research indicates that the lifetime prevalence of experiencing sexual violence was 51% of women in their twenties (1 in 2); 34% (1 in 3) of women in their forties, and 26% (1 in 4) of women aged 68 to 73. The research also highlights how diverse groups of women, including women with disabilities; women from ethnic minorities, First Nations communities and those who identify as LGBTIQ+ and intersex, may experience higher levels of sexual violence. In addition, a recent study from Monash University<sup>2</sup> outlined the prevalence and persistence of sexual harassment in workplaces with 60% of those who experienced sexual harassment, experiencing sexual harassment at least weekly.

**Sexual harm prevention in universities:** In university settings, the need to prevent and respond to sexual harm continues to be a key focus. Amidst calls for increased transparency and ongoing improvements in areas such as data collection and incident response, universities remain committed to fostering safe and respectful environments for students and staff, and to delivering effective sexual harm prevention and response measures. This work is guided by the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency's Higher Education Standards Framework<sup>3</sup>.

**Senate Committee on current and proposed sexual consent laws in Australia:** In November 2022, a National Senate Inquiry was initiated to explore the range of consent laws in Australia and consider options for nation-wide harmonisation of consent laws. The inquiry also considered matters relating to judicial processes, research, and consent education. The report<sup>4</sup> was released in September 2023, and included 17 recommendations, four of which were directly relevant to universities, namely: funding for prevalence research, the continuation of the NSSS every three years, an independent taskforce with stronger oversight of universities, and a review of the Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency responses to sexual violence.

**Universities Accord:** The *Australian Universities Accord Interim Report* was released in July 2023. As part of the report, the issue of sexual harm in universities contexts was considered, and specifically, the need for improvements in institutional governance to ensure student safety<sup>5</sup>.

**National Student Safety Survey:** The 2024 NSSS is due to be undertaken by Universities Australia in the second half of 2024<sup>6</sup>. The survey collects data on university student experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault and seeks to inform university responses and prevention strategies.

**Affirmative Consent Legislation:** New affirmative consent laws, referred to as the *Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Act 2022*<sup>7</sup>, came into operation in Victoria on 30 July 2023. The changes require people to actively seek consent; improve clarity about when consent cannot be present; and better reflect the complexities of online environments.

**National plan to end violence against women and children 2022 – 2032:** In October 2022, the Federal Government launched the second National Plan for joint implementation by Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments<sup>8</sup>. In 2023, two action plans were released - The *First Action Plan 2023-2027*<sup>9</sup> which outlines ten actions over the next five years to progress the National Plan objectives; and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025* which recognises the unique and ongoing impacts of colonisation, intergenerational trauma, and systemic racism on family and sexual violence<sup>10</sup>.

**Positive Duty:** The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) released its new *Guidelines for Complying with the Positive Duty under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*<sup>11</sup> on 10 August 2023. These guidelines detail what organisations can do to ensure a proactive approach to eliminating sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and victimisation.

**Gender equality:** Building on the outcomes of *The Safe and Strong: Victorian Gender Equality Strategy (2016)*, the Victorian Government has released *Our Equal State: Victoria's Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027*<sup>12</sup>. This plan recognises the drivers of gendered violence and highlights the impact of gender equality in preventing violence against women and improving broader life outcomes. At a national level, the Office for Women is currently developing a *National Strategy for Gender Equality*<sup>13</sup> which will seek to guide whole of community approaches to improving gender equality across a range of domains.

# 2024 Respect and Sexual Harm Action Plan

Priority Area	Activities
<b>Respectful Communities</b> <i>Review, refine and enhance activities which support the creation of a safe, inclusive, and respectful community.</i>	1.1 Engage and partner with students, including those from diverse backgrounds/incorporating an intersectional approach, to guide respect and sexual harm programs of work.
	1.2 Coordinate and deliver tailored respect and sexual harm prevention awareness-raising campaigns.
	1.3 Review and enhance student, staff and public facing communication to ensure clarity and accessibility
	1.4 Deliver extensive and tailored training and community building opportunities to ensure a respectful residential community
<b>Sexual Harm, Gendered Violence, Consent, Power and Authority</b> <i>Increase knowledge of gendered violence, intersectionality, consent, and implications of power, control, and authority</i>	2.1 Continue to engage staff, managers, senior leaders and Executive, raising awareness and compliance with Deakin’s respect and sexual harm programs, policies and procedures
	2.2 Deliver and evaluate the male allyship program
	2.3 Continue to build awareness of online safety, including technology facilitated abuse and available support services
	2.4 Engage the Deakin community to prepare for and raise awareness of the 2024 Student Safety Survey
	2.5 Refine and enhance Deakin’s approach to the prevention and response of workplace sexual harassment
	2.6 Explore opportunities to incorporate legislative changes and educational materials relating to affirmative consent and OH&S.
<b>Academic Learning and Teaching</b> <i>Explore opportunities to incorporate the gendered drivers of violence into academic teaching and learning.</i>	3.1 Enhance student safety and awareness of sexual harm, power and authority during internships and placements
	3.2 Continue expansion of Guest Lecture program, raising awareness and upskilling students and academic, promoting DEI and increasing engagement with capacity building offerings.
	3.3 Collaborate with the Graduate Research Academy to enhance education and awareness raising activities with HDR students and supervisors
<b>Community Education, Partnerships &amp; Engagement</b> <i>Cultivate strong, positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders to enhance our culture of respect at Deakin.</i>	4.1 Share good practice, collaborate and partner with stakeholders and teams across the University
	4.2 Review, enhance and relaunch the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training and capacity building program to continue efforts to ensure greater awareness and engagement
	4.3 Engage with, contribute to, and lead collaborative projects across the sector, partnering with expert organisations and community groups to enhance Deakin’s respect and sexual harm program of work
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting</b> <i>Establish baseline data and develop and apply a formal robust evaluation framework.</i>	5.1 Raise the profile of the respect and sexual harm program of work, positioning Deakin as a leading institution in primary prevention in the tertiary sector
	5.2 Plan and prepare for the development of a new four-year Respect and Sexual Harm Plan to launch in 2025.



# 2024 Respect and Sexual Harm Action Plan

The following activities previously introduced with continue at Deakin throughout 2021 – 2024.

Priority Area	Activities
<p><b>Respectful Communities</b>  <i>Review, refine and enhance activities which support the creation of a safe, inclusive, and respectful community.</i></p>	<p>Continued delivery of existing online education modules which meet Deakin compliance obligations and seek to ensure that staff and students are equipped to become active bystanders and respond appropriately. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Respect at Deakin’ Module</li> <li>• ‘Respect at Deakin HDR’ Module</li> <li>• ‘Respectful Behaviours’ Module (Staff)</li> <li>• ‘Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Harm’ Module (Staff)</li> <li>• ‘Respect at Deakin’ Student Leader Workshop</li> </ul> <p>Continued delivery of detailed training for Residential Leaders and broader residential students, ensuring that all students understand our RESPECT values, consent and expected behaviours.</p> <p>Risk mitigation at all Deakin Residential Services (DRS)-organised events</p>
<p><b>Sexual Harm, Gendered Violence, Consent, Power and Authority</b>  <i>Increase knowledge of gendered violence, intersectionality, consent, and implications of power, control, and authority</i></p>	<p>Facilitation of financial wellbeing workshops</p> <p>‘Real talk’ events for residential students covering gender inequality and respectful relationships</p> <p>Grievance processes, in particular those related to sexual harm, continue to be implemented, supported and improved.</p> <p>Continue to implement, support and improve the Harassment and Discrimination Contact Officer (HDCO) Network as an avenue through which staff and students can seek advice and support in relation to instances of sexual harm</p>
<p><b>Community Education, Partnerships &amp; Engagement</b>  <i>Cultivate strong, positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders to enhance our culture of respect at Deakin.</i></p>	<p>Provide DEI training and capacity building interactive workshops to students and staff.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting</b>  <i>Establish baseline data and develop and apply a formal robust evaluation framework.</i></p>	<p>Critical analysis of qualitative and quantitative feedback informing review and revision of content, format and delivery of training workshops and modules.</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration between DRS and Safer Community to monitor sexual harm incidents and management</p>



# Student and Staff Support and Report Services

To report a behaviour of concern or to make a disclosure of sexual harm (recent or historical, on or off campus) contact [Deakin's Safer Community Services](#). SaferCommunity can be contacted via phone on 03 9244 3734 (9am-4pm, Monday to Friday) or via email [safercommunity@deakin.edu.au](mailto:safercommunity@deakin.edu.au). All assistance is confidential.

For support external to Deakin contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732). This is a 24/7 phone and online counselling service.

If you are a staff member and wish to inquire about the complaints process or to make a complaint of sexual harassment against another staff member contact [eeo@deakin.edu.au](mailto:eeo@deakin.edu.au) You may also raise your concern or complaint through the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Complaints Form](#).

For advice or support relating to student conduct, please contact [studentconduct@deakin.edu.au](mailto:studentconduct@deakin.edu.au) For any reports of student conduct or student complaints, please complete the relevant online reporting form via the [Student Conduct webpage](#) or the [Student Complaints webpage](#).



## Contact:

For information about Deakin's Respect or Sexual Harm program of work or for questions relating to this Action Plan please email: [respect@deakin.edu.au](mailto:respect@deakin.edu.au)

For further information, please visit the Deakin website at [deakin.edu.au](http://deakin.edu.au)

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