

## Safer Communities 2015-2018

Three years of initiatives to prevent and respond to sexual assault and harassment at the University Sydney.

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# Overview

This presentation is designed to:

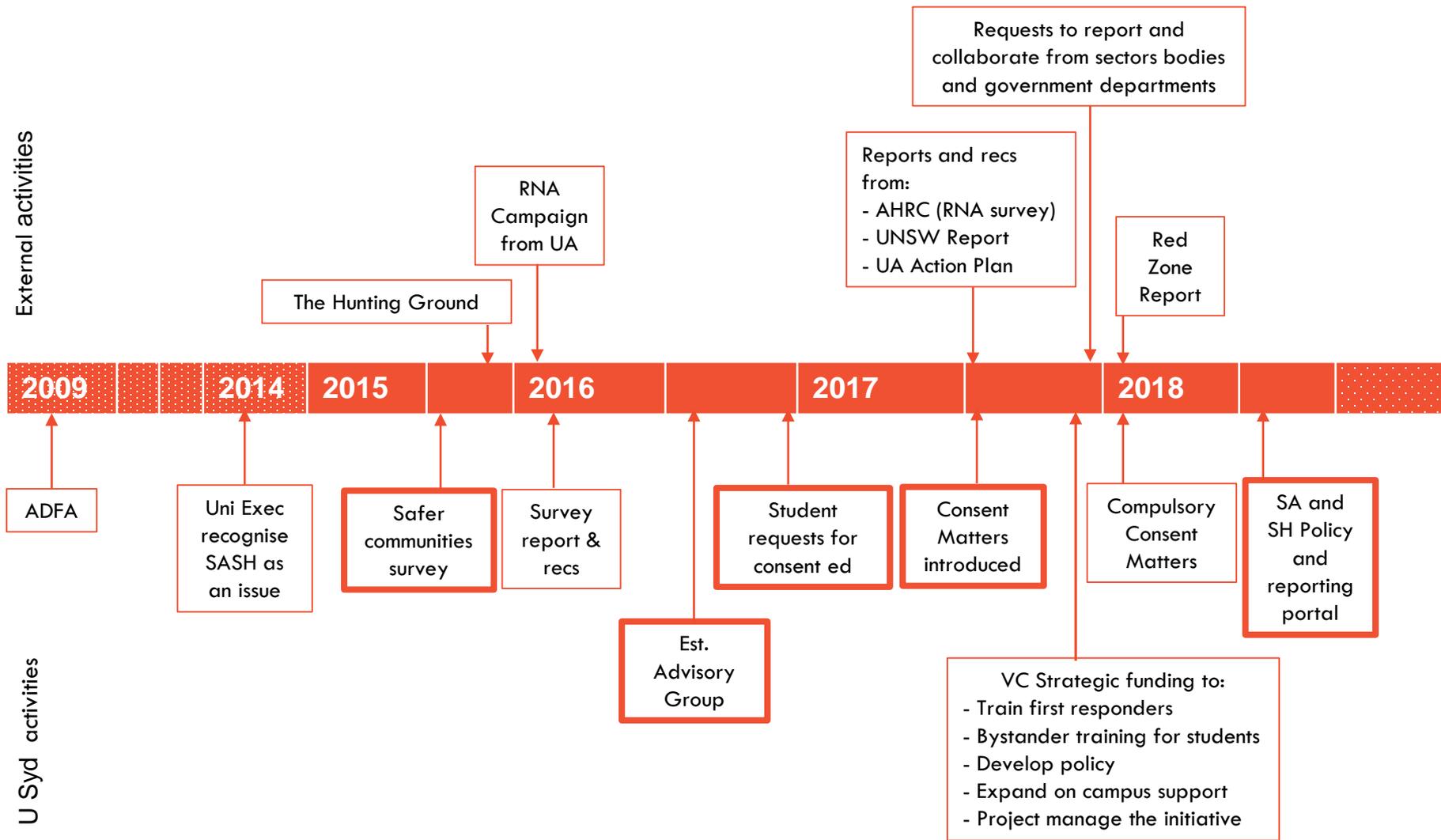
- Outline the initiatives of our Safer Communities project to prevent and respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment.
- Showcase key points along the way where we have partnered with students over the last three years.
- Share our experiences and lessons learnt as we embarked on a new and challenging program of student support and cultural change.

## Our approach – multi faceted and comprehensive

Safer Communities is a strategic project supported by the VC  
Initiatives include:

- Safer Communities Advisory Group
- Consent education
- Bystander training for students
- First responder training
- On campus support – Student Liaison Officers
- Student Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy 2018
- Online reporting form

# Timeline | External activities and University of Sydney activities



# Goals and objectives of the Safer Communities project

- To develop a deeper understanding of the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment on our campuses
- Mobilise resources: specialist staff and on the ground training for staff and students
- Cultural change

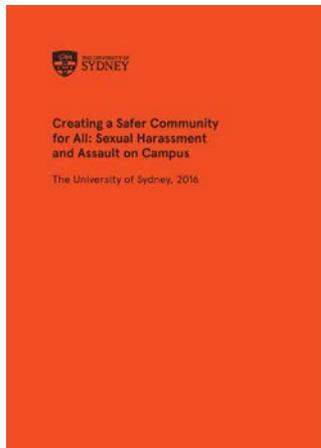
## 2015 – Student Survey

### Creating a Safer Community for All: Sexual Harassment and Assault on Campus

- After senior leadership recognised sexual assault and harassment as an issue in 2014, we started to focus efforts and sought to formally listen to students via a survey.
- Aimed to gather information about student experiences of sexual assault, sexual harassment as well as their experiences with and perceptions of existing institutional procedures for reporting.
- In September 2015, all currently enrolled students were invited to complete the survey.
- 1,926 students completed the survey.
- Student involvement on the survey working group.
- The majority of students who completed the survey had not themselves experienced an incident, indicating that there is a strong student interest and engagement in this issue.

# Survey recommendations

- Clear statement from the University regarding acceptable behaviour
- Clearer communication about student responsibilities and support options
- Review of incident and complaint handling – simply points of contact
- Review of campus security
- Adjustments to internal staff helpline – to provide guidance on appropriate responses to sexual assault and harassment



## 2016 - Implementation of survey recommendations

- Implementation of the recommendations of the survey report – beginning to focus efforts and make changes based on consultation with students via the survey.

*“Behaviour that is intimidating, abusive, disrespectful or threatening, including any instance of sexual harassment or assault, is absolutely unacceptable within our community or on our campuses.”*

- Vice-Chancellor, Dr Michael Spence

- Participation in the UA/AHRC survey – Respect. Now. Always.
- Formation of the Safer Communities Advisory Group, originated from the survey working group. Students already very engaged in SA and SH.
- Students requesting consent education.

# Safer Communities Advisory Group

## Purpose

- Channel to consult with students on policy matters, programs and campaigns
- Forum to identify emerging risk and issues
- Reports directly to the VC Student Consultative Committee
- Bimonthly (and as needed) meetings
- Staff representation (Student Support, Student Affairs, Security, Safer Communities, Student Communications)
- Student representation (SRC, Union, SUPRA, Colleges, Accommodation, SUSF)

## Student engagement

- Students very engaged with SA and SH.

## Challenges

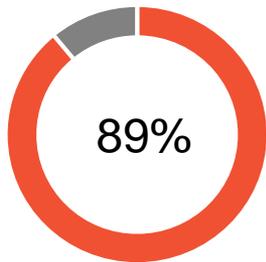
- Broader student representation (ie not from the traditional representative groups)
- Churn in student representation (annual cycle for student leaders)

## Consent education

- Students requesting consent education through the Safer Communities Advisory Group in 2016 and early 2017.
- Advisory Group trialled *Consent Matters* along with some other options in early 2017 and agreed to the *Consent Matters* module contingent on enhancements to the off the shelf product.
- Enhancements were driven by the students and included:
  - pass mark of 100%
  - additional quizzes
  - review by an external subject matter expert
  - A clear and strong exemption process to protect student survivors
- *Consent Matters* endorsed and made available initially in 2017, and then rolled out as a compulsory requirement in 2018.

# Consent Matters – student uptake

- Consent Matters is compulsory requirement for all new commencing UG and PG students as of Semester 1, 2018
- Delivery via internal platform allowed us to tailor the module and include the enhancements requested by students plus link to information about support services available at the University.
- **31,293** students have completed and passed the module in 2018



Students enrolled in the module completed and passed.



## Boundaries, respect and positive intervention

In this educational module, you'll learn about sexual consent through animations, articles, interactive activities and scenarios. The Consent Matters module will help you to understand:

- what sexual consent is and how to identify when consent has been given
- the situations and circumstances in which consent can't be given
- what contributes to a respectful relationship
- how to step in and assist when you are concerned that someone is not able to provide consent.

The module is open for all students at the University of Sydney to complete. For students commencing in 2018, Consent Matters is compulsory and must be completed by 31 August 2018.

For continuing students, Consent Matters can be completed at any time.

You may also do the module more than once if you'd like a refresher. It is strongly recommended that all students complete the module as early as possible.

Our community is made up of students from a diverse range of backgrounds. For some students, this may be your first introduction to formal sexual consent education; the module will take you through the content in ways that is logical and easy to understand. For other students, Consent Matters will be a useful refresher and will ensure that we're all playing an informed and active role in continuing to build a healthy, safe and respectful campus community.

**Content warning:** This module covers some sensitive topics that may cause some distress.

Please visit our [support page](#) for more information on the content covered (including a detailed content warning), support services, and how to apply for an exemption. [Link to this page is available at all times on the menu to the left of the main content.](#)

The module will take about an hour to complete, but doesn't all need to be completed at once - your progress will be saved as you go. The module includes a content warning, three quizzes and an end of course quiz. At the end of the module you will receive a completion badge and be marked as completed. Additional information about consent and this module is available at all times on the [FAQ](#) page found via the module menu to the left of the main content.

Please update to the newest version of your preferred browser to ensure that the content displays properly.

[Start module](#)

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## Consent Matters - Student feedback and evaluation

- All students who completed the module were invited to complete a separate feedback and evaluation survey.
- **12,435** students completed the survey. This represents **40%** of the 31,284 students who completed the module.
- Overall the feedback has been positive and includes constructive advice.
- Student feedback from Semester 1 guided the improvements we made to the Semester 2 module and provided confirmation that the module was a positive initiative.

# Consent Matters – Student feedback and evaluation

## Overall impressions

Percentage of students who completed the survey that they had **positive or very positive** impressions of the module:

78% in Semester 1

82% in Semester 2

- *For the first time ever, I felt that I actually learnt something of value from a compulsory, non-academic course.*
- *Great concept and I understand the need to have education about consent.*
- *I'm glad this was introduced and made compulsory for all commencing students (and some graduating students). It would have made a huge difference in my life 7 years ago; hopefully it will prevent others from ending up in bad situations.*

# Consent Matters – Student feedback evaluation

## Effectiveness

Percentage of students who completed the survey that thought the course was **effective or very effective** in improving their understanding of the subject:

72% in Semester 1

78% in Semester 2

- *It increased my confidence in handling problem situations in future with safety but higher probability of a positive outcome.*
- *Very informative and easy to use, I'm proud to go to a uni that makes this course a requirement, because it shows that the uni prioritises student safety and wellbeing.*

# Consent Matters – Student feedback evaluation

## Relevance

Percentage of students who completed the survey that said the course was **relevant** to themselves and their needs:

57% in Semester 1

63% in Semester 2

- *great especially for international students who are not be given these kind of education in their country and during their former study.*
- *I felt like the module was targeted towards a much younger demographic, who potentially didn't have experience in relationships or sexual relationships, which is not representative of an overall university demographic.*

## Consent Matters – Student Feedback evaluation

The survey asked for general comments and feedback. In total 2,229 written comments were received.

- Semester 1: 1,584
- Semester 2: 640

	Semester 1	Semester 2
<b>Comment category</b>	Count (%)	Count (%)
<b>Positive about the content of the module and the initiative</b>	<b>956 (60%)</b>	<b>422 (66%)</b>
<b>Negative about the compulsory requirement and the University's initiatives to prevent sexual violence</b>	<b>168 (11%)</b>	<b>37 (6%)</b>
<b>Negative about the module content</b>	137 (8%)	31 (5%)
<b>Length of module being too long</b>	107 (7%)	27 (4%)
<b>Technical issues with the module</b>	73 (5%)	18 (3%)
<b>Age/relevance (mostly of a negative nature)</b>	65 (4%)	16 (3%)
<b>Module content (suggestion for additional content)</b>	56 (4%)	45 (7%)
<b>Neutral (comments that don't provide guidance on improvement or support)</b>	19 (1%)	44 (10%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,584</b>	<b>640</b>

## Consent Matters – International Student Focus Groups

Two focus groups were held with international students (male and female) about Consent Matters.

Key themes from the focus groups:

- Many international students, especially those from China, have had very minimal sex education and would welcome an optional sex education component on conjunction with the module.
- More information on how to recognise some forms of sexual harassment that may occur in a social setting.
- Advice on what to expect of Australian social culture
- More video content and/or memes (when asked how they would like to receive this kind of education).
- Would like peer stories about consent, sexual assault and how to be a bystander.
- Information about where to go for support needs to be stronger.

# Student Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy

New Standalone policy released on 1 August 2018 following lobbying by students and AHRC/UA recommendations.

Dedicated student engagement in development of policy and reporting portal resulted in a much stronger policy and more student focused portal.

Key concerns for students in policy development were:

- Clear and transparent reporting mechanisms
- Clear messages about where to go for support

Advice from students resulted in a reporting portal that:

- is more inclusive
- uses easier to understand terminology
- is more student survivor friendly
- has a 24 hour turn-around time for a response

# On campus support - expanded in 2018

## Support for student survivors

- Student Liaison Officers providing case management and advocacy for student survivors
- Very well received by the student community

## Input into the Safer Communities Project

- Through directly supporting student survivors the SLOs are able to provide invaluable input into the strategic direction of the project.

## Areas for further development

Expanded support and more detailed information for groups at higher risk including:

- LGBTIQ students \*
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
  - Students with disabilities
  - International students
  - Postgraduate students and domestic violence \*
  - HDR students/supervisors
- \*2015 Survey

# Support and engagement across the University

**Safer Communities campaign was a large and significant project with leadership, guidance, advice and service provision from internal and external stakeholders**

- Vice Chancellor
- University Executive
- Deans and Academic Deans - Student Life
- First year study coordinators
- Residential facilities and Colleges
- Student Voices
- Media team
- Government partners and UA
- Internal partners (Communications, Education Innovation, ICT)
- External partners (subject matter experts, training providers, online platforms)

**Thank you and questions**

