

# KEY PREVENTION ACTIONS SINCE 2016



Victoria University has taken action to implement a coordinated, evidence-based approach to preventing gender-based violence on campus.

Underpinning our approach are informed, consultative plans and strategies. All actions embed a cultural safety and LGBTQIA+ inclusion lens:

1. [Respect and Responsibility Preventing Violence Against Women Ten Point Plan 2016—2019](#)
2. [Building Respectful Futures Together Preventing Gender-Based Violence Strategy 2021—2023](#).

## LEADERSHIP

- Employer of Choice accreditation from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency for the first time in 2018, reaccruited in March 2022
- Multiple written and in person commitments from Vice-Chancellor Professor Adam Shoemaker, former Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Dawkins and the Vice-Chancellor's Group that sexual harassment and sexual assault are unacceptable.
- VU partnered with AMES Australia in its ground-breaking Leadership Program in Preventing Violence Against Women in CALD Communities program from 2017 to 2019

## INFLUENCE & GOVERNANCE

- The University published its first ever [Sexual Harassment Response Policy and Procedure](#) and [Sexual Assault Response Policy and Procedure](#) in July 2019. The policies are noteworthy in that they explicitly embed a survivor-focused and trauma-informed approach.
- Reviewed the Student Groups and Leadership policy and procedure in 2020 to tie Student Clubs funding to completion of the Respect and Responsibility online training.
- Office for Researcher Training, Quality and Integrity developed training for HDR supervisors and candidates in line with the national [Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships](#).
- A Student Reference Group for Gender Equality has been convened every year since 2017, with more than 75 students from both HE and TAFE students involved to date. The Group guides and directs the University's actions, and provides leadership opportunities for students passionate about this work. They also supported the development of our [award-winning student online training](#).
- Establishment of the [Safer Community](#) function.
- Establishment of the Campus Shuttle Bus.
- Improvement of lighting and staffing on campuses.
- Establishment of the [National Student Safety Survey](#) Reference Group – a senior University Committee, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, to guide the University's readiness for and response to the Survey's challenges and opportunities.

## TRAINING FOR CHANGE

- Development of the VU SAFE App, which has been downloaded more than 5,000 times.
- The implementation of multiple, tailored training programs for staff and students in *Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment*
- Two [award-winning online modules](#) in *Consent and Respectful Relationships* and *Bystander Awareness and Action*, were co-designed with students over 2018—2019. They are compulsory for student leaders. A staff version of the latter module and further tailored training for a range of specific student and staff cohorts was also developed
- The University's contract with Allied Security requires all Security contractors to have attended face-to-face training provided by the University.
- Development and delivery of the [Bystander Awareness and Action module for staff](#)
- Integration of the Universities Australia/Australian Psychological Association [Sexual harassment and sexual assault: how can staff respond?](#) training into VU Develop

## PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- To date, 7,000 postcards and 3,000 brochures with key information supporting staff and students to respond to disclosures of sexual violence have been distributed across the University.
- VU partnered with HealthWest Primary Healthcare Partnership to deliver the ground-breaking Project Momentum Working Together With Men project in 2019 and 2020.
- VU have been a participating member of the Preventing Violence Together regional partnership since 2017. VU staff members currently chair the partnership's Executive Governance Group and its Engaging Men working group.
- Annually organise significant events to mark International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, including innovative and engaging community art projects.
- VU was also the first university to become a member of Gender Equity Victoria (GEN+VIC) in 2020.
- Actively participate in higher education sector conferences, networks and communities of practice.
- Co-design of the University's inaugural Respect Week with the Student Reference Group for Gender Equality
- Painting of the RESPECT mural at Footscray Park campus in partnership with the Student Union.
- Facilitating work placements within the Respect and Responsibility program for two Diploma of Community Services/Diploma of Community Development students from VU Polytechnic.

## EVALUATION OF IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

- Between 2016 and 2019, the Respect and Responsibility program attracted \$335,000 in research grant funding for projects that evaluated the impact of violence prevention programs.
- The Bystander Awareness and Action student online module was part of a randomised controlled trial research project conducted by the Behavioural Insights Team, supported by VicHealth.
- Quantitative and qualitative data on the actions implemented under the University's first and subsequent preventing gender-based violence strategies has been regularly reported to senior University committees since 2016, including University Council's Compliance Audit and Risk Committee, Academic Board and its Learning and Teaching Quality Committee and the Gender Equity Committee until 2020.
- VU contributes data to regional and sector-wide projects and evaluation.

## PLANNED AND UPCOMING ACTIONS

- Five-year partnership with Our Watch, a national leader of primary prevention of gender-based violence
- Establishing a permanent presence for WestCASA (Western Region Centre Against Sexual Assault) on campus
- Launching a new module for staff in how to support LGBTIQ+ students
- University-wide rollout of student-designed collateral that links to key support services
- Recruiting campus facilitators to deliver the 'Flip the Script' sexual assault resistance program for first-year women.