

RESPECT. NOW. ALWAYS

National student survey of sexual assault
and harassment in university communities

Melbourne survey results briefing

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In late 2016 the University of Melbourne, along with 38 other Australian universities, participated in a national student survey of sexual assault and harassment commissioned by Universities Australia.

The survey was conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

A sample of 9775 Melbourne students was surveyed and 2305 responded. A total of 30,930 students responded across the nation. The University of Melbourne had one of the highest university response rates at 24 per cent.

Survey results released publicly by AHRC on Tuesday 1 August

- National AHRC report
- Individual university reports

Major media coverage, national and international

Range of responses from our own community and beyond confirms complexity and sensitivity of these issues

Key Melbourne survey findings

The national findings reveal the unacceptable incidence of sexual assault and harassment on Australian university campuses.

The prevalence of harassment and assault in university settings reflects the scale of the problem within the wider community. Universities must take a leadership role in social change.

The Melbourne findings follow the broad patterns in the national findings. We should take no comfort from this.

Key Melbourne survey findings

Sexual assault

1.5 per cent of respondents reported being sexually assaulted *at university*. A much higher proportion of female respondents reported being victims than males (1.9 per cent compared with 1.1 per cent). Domestic students reported significantly higher incidences than international students and undergraduates reported significantly higher incidences than graduate students.

6.2 per cent of Melbourne respondents reported being sexually assaulted (at university or elsewhere) in 2015 and/or 2016. A much higher proportion of female respondents reported being victims than males. Domestic students reported significantly higher incidences of assault than international students. Undergraduates reported significantly higher incidences of assault than graduate students.

Key Melbourne survey findings

Incidence of sexual harassment

27 per cent of respondents reported being sexually harassed *at university*, including on transport to and from university. **If travel is excluded, this proportion drops to 20 per cent. Female respondents reported being sexually harassed at higher rates than males. Domestic students reported much higher incidences than international students and undergraduates reported higher incidences than graduate students.**

29 per cent of respondents reported witnessing sexual harassment at university in 2016. Female and male respondents reported witnessing harassment in comparable proportions (29 per cent and 28 per cent respectively).

Key Melbourne survey findings

Nature of sexual harassment and of the perpetrators

The most prevalent forms of sexual harassment were staring or leering (36 per cent), sexually suggestive comments or jokes (18 per cent) and intrusive questions about private lives or physical appearance (13 per cent) that made individuals feel intimidated or offended.

Sexual harassment in 'university settings' occurred most frequently on public transport to and from university, on university grounds including carparks, walkways and gardens, and university teaching spaces.

Key Melbourne survey findings

Nature of sexual harassment and of the perpetrators

68 per cent of respondents who were sexually harassed identified students of the university or those living at their place of residence as the perpetrators.

Six per cent identified 'tutors or lecturers' (using the terminology of the questionnaire).

Four per cent identified 'non-academic university staff members' (again, using the term used in the survey).

Males were the perpetrators in 86 per cent of the incidents of sexual harassment reported by respondents. Females were the perpetrators in 19 per cent of incidents. (Some incidents involved both male and female perpetrators.)

Key Melbourne survey findings

Three per cent of those who experienced sexual harassment sought support and assistance. Two per cent made a formal report/complaint. Typically, respondents did not believe the incident was serious enough or they did not feel the need for help. Other reasons included not knowing who at university could provide support/assistance; thinking it would be too hard to prove; and not wishing to hurt the offenders or get them into trouble.

Awareness of university policy, of where to seek support/assistance and of where to make a complaint

Respondents reported low levels of knowledge or awareness of their options for seeking support or assistance within the University. The overwhelming majority of Melbourne respondents indicated they had little or no knowledge of University policy on sexual harassment and assault; of where to seek support/assistance; and of where to go within the University to make a complaint.

The University does not have findings on ...

The University has been provided with findings on the percentage of respondents who reported being victims of sexual assault or witnessing sexual assault in a university setting or elsewhere. **It has not been possible for the AHRC to provide the University with findings on the nature of the perpetrators, specific locations, and whether or not incidents were reported or formal complaints were made.**

We do not have Melbourne findings for LGBTI identifying students.

We do not have findings for Indigenous students.

We do not have findings for students with a disability.

The national findings show generally higher incidences of sexual harassment and assault for these groups of students than other students. (There is some detail to be unpacked here – see the national report.)

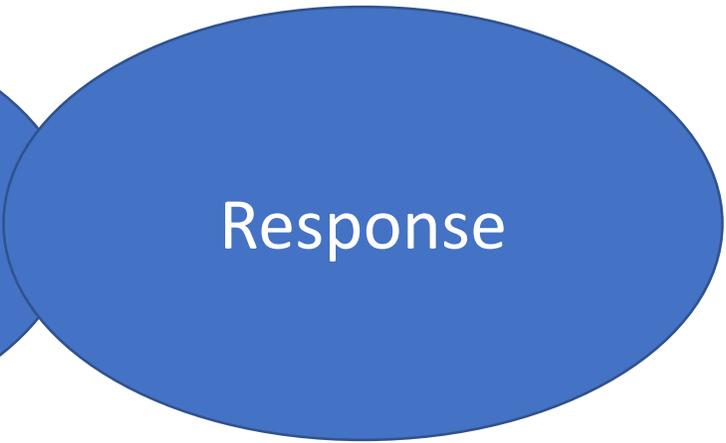
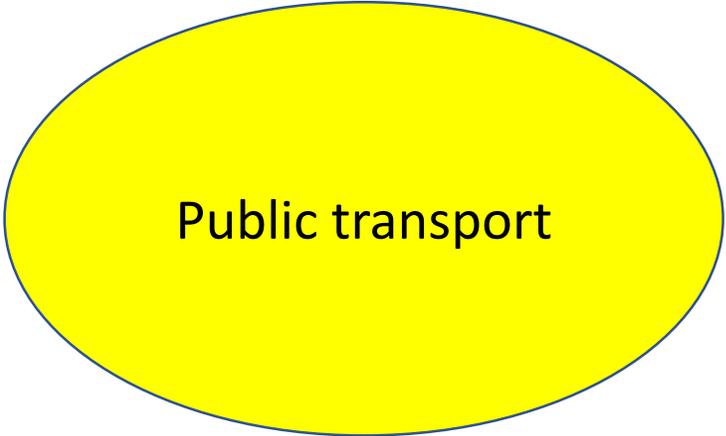
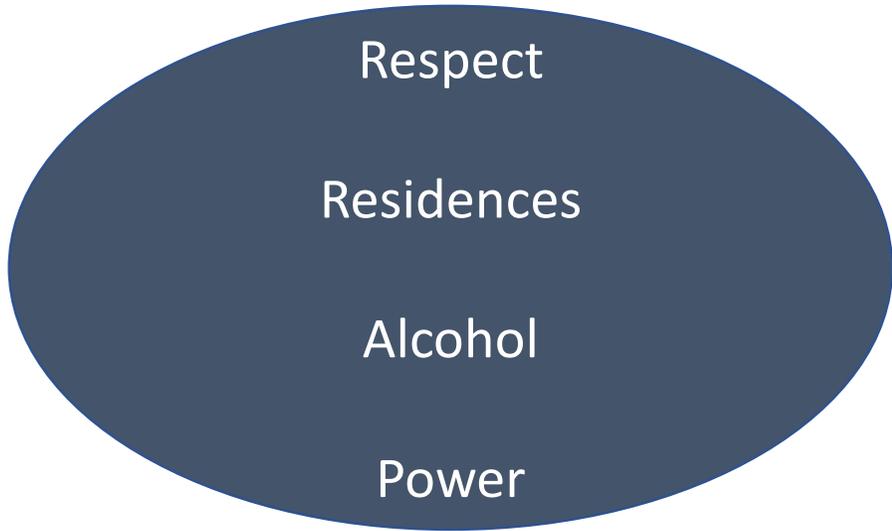
RECURRING THEMES

Respect for all, respect for women in particular

The higher risks around residences

The role of alcohol

Abuse of authority/power





Respect. Now. Always

If you need help, help is at hand

If you've experienced sexual assault or harassment, to receive support, information and advice

Go to

The Safer Community Program

▶ safercommunity.unimelb.edu.au

📞 +61 3 9035 8675

✉ safer-community@unimelb.edu.au

Current and former students

Staff

Go to

Your Human Resources team

Or

The Inappropriate Workplace Behaviour Line
(You can report anonymously)

▶ mustaffcontactline.com.au

📞 1800 685 463

24/7 on the spot help

📞 University Security
+61 3 8344 6666

Urgent or life threatening

📞 Victoria Police 000

Our commitments as a starting point:

- Greater visibility of the problem and the University's values on campuses
- Communication, training and educational materials on matters such as consent
- Building student (and staff) confidence in making reporting harassment and assault
- Improving overall accountability and transparency

