

19 July 2024

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

Inquiry into Criminal Code Amendment (Deepfake Sexual Material) Bill 2024

Dear Committee

**Submission to the inquiry into the Criminal Code Amendment (Deepfake Sexual Material)
Bill 2024 [Provisions]**

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry into the Criminal Code Amendment (Deepfake Sexual Material) Bill 2024 [Provisions]. I will be appearing at the public hearing on 23 July 2024 at the Committee's request, but I want to make it clear at the outset that Universities Australia does not have in-house legal expertise in this area and, therefore, is not in a position to comment specifically on the legislation.

Our sector, however, does not condone the sharing of sexually explicit material, including digitally created content, without consent. This is a damaging and deeply distressing form of abuse that no one should ever experience.

Universities, along with parents, guardians, schools and workplaces, have a role to play in teaching right from wrong and it is a responsibility we take seriously. Our members are deeply committed to fostering safe and respectful environments for all students, staff and campus users. In support of this commitment, many universities have established online learning modules to educate students and staff on respectful relationships and sexual consent. These courses are mandatory in many cases. Universities also have policies on technology-facilitated abuse. Respect at Uni Week is another initiative our members participate in as a way of engaging with students and staff to explore what respect means and the role everyone can play in creating safer and more respectful communities.

At a whole-of-sector level, Universities Australia has partnered with eSafety to combat online abuse and its impact on students and staff at universities. Our [Toolkit for Universities](#) aims to help university communities be safer online by building greater awareness of online safety risks, providing guidance on how to prevent, prepare for and respond to online safety incidents, and supporting student and staff wellbeing. The Toolkit contains resources to help create university communities that are well-informed about online safety risks, proactive about online safety measures and prepared to implement best practice responses to online safety incidents.

Universities Australia also has a long-standing partnership with Our Watch. Our organisations continue to work closely on initiatives aimed at preventing sexual harm in university settings. This includes developing toolkits and frameworks on primary prevention and hands-on work on campus to drive change. Additionally, we are working with the Department of Education on the design of the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence.

If it is helpful for the Committee, Universities Australia would be happy to recommend sector experts to further advise on the extensive work the sector undertakes to educate students on the importance of consent and in fostering safe and respectful relationships.

Yours sincerely

Luke Sheehy
Chief Executive Officer, Universities Australia