

UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Senate Legal And Constitutional Affairs Committee Hearing Thursday 27 July 2023

Question on Notice	From	Answer
<p>I'd like you to take on notice, please, Ms Jackson, the identity of the people who expressed concerns. Thank you for doing so.</p> <p>I would also like to know: what is the expertise in sexual violence prevention of those people that expressed an objection to the content of the original proposal?</p>	Senator Waters	<p>Universities Australia does not minute the names of members involved in discussions held during Plenary meetings.</p> <p>Like the CEO of any large organisation, Vice-Chancellors take advice from subject-matter experts when reaching decisions on behalf of their institutions.</p>
What was the size of the focus group?	Senator Waters	Ten focus groups were asked to test campaign material in May-June 2022. Each group contained five to seven participants.
What was the nature of their participation?	Senator Waters	Participants were asked to provide feedback on multiple versions of two different campaign concepts. Concepts were tested for their potential to meet the communication objectives of the campaign: to drive attitudinal and behavioural change of university students.
Were they students or some other body of individuals?	Senator Waters	Focus group participants were all university students.
Were they shown the original proposal to then pass judgement on it?	Senator Waters	Participants were asked to provide feedback on multiple versions of two different campaign concepts.
What was the date the last time this issue was discussed by the vice-chancellors?	Senator Waters	Prior to the Committee's hearing on 27 July 2023, the National Student Safety Survey was last formally discussed by Plenary in July 2022.

<p>Why doesn't that survey include all students on campus? About 58,000 17-year-olds attend university as students. Why are they excluded from the National Student Survey?</p> <p>Can the scope of that survey, if you decide to re-do it—I hope you do—be expanded to include those 17-year-olds?</p>	<p>Senator Waters</p>	<p>This is consistent with the Australian Human Rights Commission survey run in 2016.</p> <p>Any student who had studied at university within the previous five years was able to participate in the qualitative component of the survey.</p> <p>This matter will be raised as part of the development and design process for the 2024 survey.</p>
<p>I would like to know what measures universities have in place [to separate survivors and alleged perpetrators], or what you are going to do, to stop that from happening.</p>	<p>Senator Waters</p>	<p>Individual institutions are best placed to provide the Committee with detail about their own policies and procedures following disclosure from a student.</p> <p>In March 2023 UA released the revised Sexual Harm Response Guidelines which aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convey the importance of understanding that students' experiences and response to sexual harm may be diverse • provide an effective response, prevention, and policy framework to address sexual harm • take into account universities' role in educating the workforce of today and into the future. <p>The Guidelines are intended to identify good practice approaches for institutions and advises universities to apply the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness when assessing allegations of sexual harm.</p>
<p>I would also like to know what measures universities have in place to support survivors to finish their degrees and to make other reasonable accommodations, given the level of trauma they have experienced off and on campus.</p>	<p>Senator Waters</p>	<p>Individual institutions are best placed to provide the Committee with detail about their own policies and procedures to support students who have disclosed an incident of sexual harm.</p> <p>UA's revised 2023 Sexual Harm Response Guidelines advises on measures universities may put in place to support students and make reasonable adjustments that may be needed. The Guidelines list specific principles to guide policy responses which include: positive duty; trauma-informed care and practice; self-determination and empowerment; support and assistance; confidentiality and</p>

		privacy; acknowledging diversity and prioritising the needs of the student population; and natural justice.
I would also like to know what universities do to ensure that tutors and lecturers don't themselves have a history of sexual harassment and assault.	Senator Waters	<p>Individual institutions are best placed to provide the Committee with detail about their own policies and procedures with regards to recruitment.</p> <p>As standard practice, all potential staff seeking to work in the sector are required to provide police clearance and Working with Children's Checks prior to securing employment with their respective institutions.</p> <p>UA's 2023 Sexual Harm Response Guidelines advises that when a university receives an allegation of sexual harm perpetrated by a staff member, the university promptly advise the reporting student of the requirement for a formal report to be handled in conformity with that university's enterprise or collective bargaining agreement.</p>
<p>I want to give Universities Australia the opportunity to respond in more detail to some of the matters that have been raised, including on the End Rape on Campus Australia submission, the National Tertiary Education Union submission, and the National Union of Students submission.</p> <p>I invite you, if Universities Australia would like to take advantage of the opportunity, to provide any additional commentary or observations on those submissions.</p>	Senator Scarr (Chair)	<p>Universities Australia is aware of the deeply saddening case studies included within the submission of End Rape on Campus, as well as the shocking statistics presented by the National Tertiary Education Union.</p> <p>These submissions reinforce what Universities Australia has told the Committee: there is still so much work to be done to prevent sexual harm in all of our communities.</p> <p>Universities Australia has welcomed the governance taskforce established by the Minister for Education the Hon Jason Clare MP, as well as the appointment of Ms Patty Kinnerly to that taskforce. Universities Australia is committed to working with Ms Kinnerly and the government to stop the scourge of sexual harm at universities and in the community. It is a shared responsibility and one which we don't – and won't – shy away from.</p>