

Ursula Hall Residents' Committee Recommendations

In response to: Australian Human Rights Commission Survey into Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment on University Campus 2017

Compiled by student representatives from the 2018 Ursula Hall Residents' Committee, with direct correspondence from the 2017 ANUSA Women's Officer and the 2017 Johns XXIII President, and in alignment with the Australian Human Rights Commission Survey into Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Recommendations, the End Rape on Campus Australia Recommendations, and the 2017 ANUSA and PARSA Recommendations.

Introduction

These recommendations have been created as a response by the 2018 Ursula Hall Residents' Committee, following the 2017 Australian Human Rights Commission University and Sexual Assault and Harassment Survey (hereafter 'the Survey'), and the 2018 Australian National University External Review into Residential Colleges (hereafter 'ANU External Review').

We recognise the work already done by the Australian National University (hereafter 'the ANU'), and Deputy Heads and Heads of Hall, and we acknowledge that we are an Australian National University Hall of Residence. Due to our hall status, we understand there are limitations to the way in which we are able to respond to, and implement, policy change. However, we believe that, despite falling under University policy, Ursula Hall is not powerless, and not immune to endogenous change. It is our intention through presenting these recommendations that we create change, and encourage the relevant Staff to advocate on behalf of Ursula Hall Residents in circumstances where the views of the Ursula Hall Residents' Committee, and our intentions to create change, may not be given the opportunity to be heard by the ANU.

We acknowledge the unpaid, and indeed underpaid, work of student advocates, and the disparate burden on survivors to seek their own support, and to advocate for themselves. We believe all survivors have the right to safety and support within our community, and that current policies and procedures are inadequate in providing this. It is therefore our request that the relevant Staff and first responders to disclosures of sexual assault take consideration of the following recommendations.

Note: in this document, we refer to 'sexual violence' and 'sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH)' interchangeably. We believe that sexual violence is a continuum of unacceptable behaviour.

Short to medium term recommendations (within 6 months)

1. Head of Hall to make a public apology to all survivors

We ask that current Head of Hall, Dave Segal, acknowledge and formally apologise for any past or present mishandling of sexual violence disclosures committed by Ursula Hall.

KPI: Head of Hall, Dave Segal, to organise a formal apology to all survivors of sexual violence, no later than the 31st of August (conclusion of Term 3 teaching period).

2. Clear encouragement of Ursula Hall participation in ANU External Review

We believe the ANU External Review is an important part of changing the current status quo surrounding SASH in residential colleges. We urge that there is clear and strong encouragement of Ursula Hall residents to participate in the ANU External Review, and that residents are made explicitly aware of what information the review is collecting, as well as the cultural changes and connotations that come with the results. We urge that all relevant support is given to community members during this time, and also request the public release of review results to the Ursula Hall community.

KPI: Electronic and in-person continual encouragement of Ursula Hall residents to participate in the ANU External Review, through pastoral care team, URC and Hall Staff. This encouragement should also refer to the information being collected within the Review, and imply the need for cultural change that we expect the ANU External Review will highlight in its recommendations.

KPI: Ursula Hall residents are made aware of internal and external support systems before, during, and immediately following the commencement of the ANU External Review. This is including but not limited to ANU Access and Inclusion, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, Disability Students Association, ANU Counselling, and various helplines.

KPI: ANU External Review results and all recommendations to be made publicly available to all residents.

3. Increased residential awareness of on-campus and off-campus services

We recognise that under circumstances of sexual violence, peer-to-peer support is often utilised. This places a disparate burden on student advocates and survivors. We also recognise that the Hall's pastoral care system relies largely on students and the Head and Deputy Head of Hall. Therefore, we seek to create increased awareness of on-campus and off-campus support services such as the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, and the ANU Counselling Centre, to give outlets to both survivors and student advocates seeking relevant support.

It is also essential that survivors also be made aware of their reporting rights outside of the Hall. We acknowledge that there are internal reporting structures within Ursula Hall and all ANU Residential Halls, however, we believe survivors should also have the right to pursue external action if they so choose. This can include, but is not limited to: reporting to the ANU through the Dean of Students;

reporting to the Australian Federal Police; and undertaking a reporting process through the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre. We believe that a resident's preference to report through external structures over reporting through internal Hall processes should not impact how the resident is viewed by the Hall, particularly with regards to future or current leadership opportunities, and returners policies.

KPI: Following disclosures, survivors are recommended to not only seek support within the hall, but also externally. This includes, but is not limited to the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, Access and Inclusion, and ANU Counselling.

KPI: Following disclosures, it is made explicitly clear that survivors are able to make reports of their sexual assault external to or in replacement of Ursula Hall procedures, beyond initial disclosure.

Medium term recommendations (6 months – 1 year)

4. Continued Sex and Consent training for both Student Leaders and Residents

All residents, including all student leaders, should be continuously engaged in Sex and Consent training. We urge that this training occur consistently throughout the year, not only within the training period held prior to commencement of Orientation Week and the Academic Year, and during student Induction Sessions.

Student Leaders:

We recognise that Student Leaders are given appropriate training through Interhall Senior Residents' and Interhall Residents' Committee training. However, we believe this training should also be made available to leadership positions including but not limited to: Gender and Sexuality Advocates; International Advocates; and Access and Inclusion Residential Ambassadors.

We also believe a component of this training should explicitly cover vicarious trauma, and that all training be re-delivered prior to the commencement of Semester 2.

Residents:

We recognise the work put by from Head and Deputy Head of Hall, Dave Segal and Rowena Wedd, to encourage residents to complete the Consent Matters module. However, we believe this is only a starting point. For any real change to occur within the community, we urge that staff should work with the Ursula Hall Residents' Committee, Senior Residents Team, and Gender and Sexuality Advocates to organise and fund a third party provider to do continued Sex and Consent training that meets the needs of Residents.

We also advocate for the co-operation from Ursula Hall Staff to actively encourage residential participation in the Consent Matters module during both Semester 1 and Semester 2 of the Academic Year, as well as additional training carried out by a third party provider. We suggest that current policies and procedures be explained to the community as part of the Consent Matters module training.

KPI: Sex and Consent training to occur for all Student Leaders including but not limited to: Senior Residents; Ursula Hall Residents' Committee; Gender and Sexuality Advocates; International Advocates during the N-Week training period, and again at least 1 week prior to Semester 2 Orientation Week.

KPI: Training for Student Leaders to explicitly include information about vicarious trauma. Not to be substituted with 'Self-care and Boundaries' training – but to be delivered in conjunction.

KPI: Delivery of Sex and Consent training from a third party of specialist and professional educators within the first 3 weeks of either Semester 1 or Semester 2 of the Academic Year. Third party to be engaged by the Hall with direct consultation from the Student Body.

KPI: Active engagement of the Ursula Hall community, through electronic and in-person means, in order to encourage completion of a 'refresher' of the Consent Matters module in Semester 2.

KPI: During the active engagement of the Ursula Hall community to encourage completion of the Consent Matters module, a representative of the Hall – either the Deputy Head of Hall, Head of Hall, or Community Coordinator, should explain current reporting and disclosure policies and procedures employed by Ursula Hall specifically.

5. Support for Student Leaders

Alongside Sex and Consent and vicarious trauma training for all student leaders, including advocacy positions, we also advise that adequate support systems be established for student leaders who are involved with handling disclosures of sexual violence and providing peer support for those who have experienced sexual violence. Student leaders who engage in these activities, however, are not always in formal pastoral care roles. Instead, this work often also falls to advocacy positions and Residents' Committee members. This is because emotional labour disproportionately lies with marginalised people, due to the nature of the advocacy work they often engage with out of necessity.

We therefore advise that formal group debrief sessions with a trained professional in vicarious trauma and support for those who have received disclosures, external to the Hall, be conducted regularly and made available to student leaders who feel they have undertaken such processes while supporting their peers.

KPI: Formal group debrief sessions to be conducted at least once a term by a trained professional in vicarious trauma and support for those who have received disclosures, and who is external to the Hall, and to be made available to any student leader who feels they would benefit from such sessions. Suggestions for where to source such a professional include the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre.

6. Creation of a Student Safety Policy

Sexual violence within a residential context may create many safety concerns for Residents who may be living with their perpetrator, or forced to interact with a known alleged perpetrator. All Residents have the right to feel safe within their community. Based on the immediacy of these risks, and unknown period of time that investigative and reporting procedures may occur, we urge that the Hall create a specific policy to ensure the immediate safety of affected Residents.

The Student Safety Policy should include options to set physical boundaries (for example, 'no go zones'), access increased pastoral support, and restricted access of alleged perpetrators to events organised or run by Ursula Hall and Ursula Hall Leadership groups, including sports trainings. We would also suggest that the Student Safety Policy discourages alleged perpetrators from representing the Hall in Interhall events. This policy should extend to ex-resident and alumni events, and place the responsibility on the alleged perpetrator to relocate or restrict their physical boundaries.

KPI: An Ursula Hall-specific Student Safety Policy to be written by the completion of the 2018 Academic Year.

KPI: The Student Safety Policy should be written or reviewed in consultation with Student Advocates including but not limited to: Ursula Hall Residents' Committee; Senior Residents; and Gender and Sexuality Advocates.

KPI: The Student Safety Policy should explicitly address residents' safety concerns and provide strategies to address these concerns.

Long term recommendations (1 year – 3 years)

7. Hall staff to advocate on behalf of Ursula Hall Residents

There is a strong reliance on student advocates, including general residents, representatives from student leadership groups, and pastoral care givers, to advocate for change to occur. However, as an elected student body, the Ursula Hall Residents' Committee recognises that there may be some circumstances where student advocates are not able to fully represent the needs of the community, or the needs of survivors. For example, student representatives are not given the same opportunity to sit in a room with each Head of Hall to represent the views of the residents.

It is therefore essential that Ursula Hall Staff advocate for the needs and rights of residents under circumstances where the Ursula Hall Residents' Committee, or any other student advocate, is not given the opportunity to represent the residential body.

KPI: Before any prominent meetings where the views of the Ursula Hall community are not able to be represented by the Ursula Hall Residents' Committee, a meeting should be held with the Ursula Hall Residents' Committee President and any other relevant student advocate stakeholders, to ensure advocacy of issues relating to sexual violence within the residential colleges occurs on behalf of the residents.

8. Commitment to periodic review

Under the 2017 ANUSA and PARSA Recommendations, we suggest that periodic reviews of sexual assault and sexual harassment reports, policies, and procedures are undertaken by Ursula Hall. We suggest these reviews include the collection of feedback, as well as consultation, in order to ensure a fair representation of community views.

KPI: Ursula Hall to partake in periodic reviews as listed under the Strategic Plan on Reducing Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment on campus, and under the Healthy Universities operational – as presented by ANUSA and PARSA.

9. Restore the voice of change and empowerment to survivors.

We believe that all survivors have a right to be heard. We believe it is essential that all survivors be given the voice of change and empowerment. We believe that this voice deserves to be listened to.

It is therefore our recommendation that survivors are given the opportunity within the Ursula Hall community, and wider ANU community, to engage in restorative processes, and have a say in policy and procedural change. It is essential that we advocate for survivors' right to be heard.

KPI: If they explicitly indicate their desire to do so, survivors should be consulted whenever the opportunity arises for policy, procedural, or community change relating to that of sexual assault and sexual harassment.