



Australian Catholic University  
Student Accommodation  
External Review

Response to Recommendation 9 from  
the 2017 Australian Human Rights  
Commission *'Change the Course'* Report

## Caution to the reader

**Please note, this report contains accounts of unacceptable behaviours and sexual harassment that some readers may find distressing. This report also discusses sexual assault.**

If you feel you would like to speak to someone for support or information in relation to these issues, please see details of Internal ACU and external support options on pages 58-9 of this report.

© ACU Student Accommodation

All material presented in this publication is proprietary information of ACU Student Accommodation with the exception of:

- photographs and images
- any branding or trademarks or where otherwise indicated.

In essence, you are NOT free to copy, communicate and adapt this report, unless you obtain written permission from ACU Student Accommodation, abide by their terms and credit Student Life Research.

Please cite use of this report as follows:

Student Life Research. (2022). Australian Catholic University Student Accommodation. Respect. Now. Always. External Review: Response to Recommendation 9 of 2017 AHRC Report. Sydney, Australia, Australian Catholic University Student Accommodation.

Commissioned by

The 'ACU Student Accommodation. Respect. Now. Always. External Review: Response to Recommendation 9 of 2017 AHRC Report' was completed by:

Student Life Research (PL).

Student Life Research would like to thank the following staff of ACU Student Accommodation:

<b>Dr Stephen Weller</b>	Chief Operating Officer & Deputy Vice-Chancellor
<b>Paul McJannett</b>	Director, Sport, Wellbeing and Residential Life
<b>Simone Gallo</b>	National Manager, Student Accommodation
<b>Taleah Neowhouse</b>	National Manager, Safeguarding and Student Safety

For further information about access to this publication please contact:

Simone Gallo, National Manager, ACU Student Accommodation  
Email: [simone.gallo@acu.edu.au](mailto:simone.gallo@acu.edu.au)

For further information about Student Life Research please contact:

Student Life Research  
St Andrews College  
19 Carillion Avenue  
Newtown NSW 2042  
Telephone: 95657300  
Email: [studentliferesearch@standrewscollege.edu.au](mailto:studentliferesearch@standrewscollege.edu.au)

# Foreword

The prevalence of sexual misconduct across the Australian community is disturbing. The impact of these experiences can be far reaching and disabling for individuals, their families, and our community. Universities are no exception to this issue.

In 2016, Universities Australia commenced the '*Respect. Now. Always.*' Initiative '*to prevent sexual violence in university communities and improve how universities respond to and support those who have been affected.*'<sup>1</sup> They commissioned the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to undertake a national research project of university students and their experiences of violence. This report; 'Change the Course' was published in 2017.

This report made nine overarching recommendations for the university sector and the Australian Catholic University (ACU) committed to implementing all the recommendations, including recommendation 9. This recommended university residential colleges and residences undertake independent, expert led reviews to assess student experience and factors that may contribute to sexual misconduct in their settings. Australian Catholic University (ACU) Student Accommodation which provides university student accommodation in four residences across three states implemented recommendation 9 by commissioning this Student Life Research report.

University residential colleges and residences are in a unique position. Given their live-in 24/7 structure, there is a risk they provide opportunity for sexual violence perpetrators. Conversely, they provide opportunity to build accommodation spaces that actively prevent this with a culture of accountability, inclusivity and respect for gender, sexuality, and diversity.

The research undertaken for this report is one of many positive steps towards that goal. It explores the experiences and perceptions of students at the four student residences to highlight progress and any aspects of ACU Student Accommodation residential life that may need attention.

It is pleasing to review the excellent progress ACU Student Accommodation has made in response to the recommendations of the AHRC report. There are extensive documents available to the general public and ACU students on the ACU website. ACU Student Accommodation has created site-specific documents for their residences that align with the university documentation. The sexual misconduct policy and response processes are clearly delineated, and ACU has employed staff with specific expertise in trauma-informed care to manage this important issue.

Our ACU Student Accommodation student experience research finds a group of students with a good sense of belonging to their residences, low levels of unacceptable behaviour and sexual misconduct, with a management that seeks continual improvement, supported by well-structured and comprehensive university policies and procedures.

This report is structured as two stand-alone sections; a summary of the research with findings and recommendations; and a full report of the data, findings, recommendations, and appendices of supporting documents.

It's hoped that the findings and recommendations in this report will assist further discussion, monitoring, and action to strengthen ACU Student Accommodation's culture of safety, inclusivity, and accountability.

---

<sup>1</sup> Universities Australia '*Respect. Now. Always.*' Initiative. <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/project/respect-now-always/?msclkid=31bed520a8ee11ecbbad12cbc9bda1cc>

# Summary

## Background

The aim of this research is to report on the outcomes for Recommendation 9 of the AHRC 'Change the Course' National Report, by undertaking an independent, expert-led review of ACU Student Accommodation, to assess the current experience of students living in ACU Student Accommodation and any factors which may contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in ACU Student Accommodation residences.

This includes ACU Student Accommodation responses to reports of sexual misconduct, ensuring a trauma-informed and rights-based approach. Assessing 'traditions', alcohol use, the level and nature of supervision, and adequacy of training for residential advisors (RAs) and whether these ameliorate the risk of sexual violence. In addition, ACU Student Accommodation sought to understand the student experience of their residence, including their sense of belonging, comfort and safety, student awareness of supports, reporting and sexual misconduct policies and student experience of sexual misconduct and other unacceptable behaviours.

This was undertaken by reviewing the support, access and understanding of ACU Student Accommodation policies, with a review of the documentation, an anonymous online survey, focus group and opportunity for one-on-one private interviews.

The research commenced in 2021. Sixty-nine students (29%) completed the survey, and four students, all RAs, took part in a focus group. No student elected to take up a one-on-one interview. The participants were broadly representative of the entire student population of 238 students. Students were more likely to be female and one in six were international students or had a disability. One in five had diverse cultural background, and one in four were the first in their family to attend university. Roughly half were in their first year at university and first year in residence.

The demographics of individuals and residences impact the student experience, support and training needs for each site.

See Chapter One for more details.

## ACU Student Accommodation support documents, student training and awareness of policies and procedures

The quality and breadth of the documents is excellent. Sexual misconduct policy and response processes are clearly delineated and there is clear evidence that a trauma-informed approach has been adopted.

The students undertake a range of training and ACU Student Accommodation is to be congratulated on the significant amount of work they have undertaken.

ACU Student Accommodation student level of knowledge is good and compares favourably to the level of knowledge for students in the specific section of the ACU AHRC survey undertaken in 2016. Ninety percent of students had some knowledge of where to seek support, 83% some knowledge of where to make a formal report, 77% had some knowledge of where to find the policy, and 81% had some policy knowledge.

Levels of knowledge were slightly lower in both Ballarat residences. Women reported less knowledge.

The information is easy to access, through a variety of pathways. However, the amount of information available could be daunting for someone who is accessing them at a time of high stress. A process of co-design with students could assist in creating a short document in student-friendly language. These students

could potentially be 'champions', giving the document legitimacy amongst students.

Focusing on the needs of particular cohorts, for example, RAs, younger students and women, with targeted, repeated messaging through a variety of mediums could increase awareness. Students attending non ACU universities and those of culturally and linguistically diverse background may need additional assistance to find appropriate documentation for their institution and in language.

See Chapter Two for more details.

### Recommendations

- Provide concise, practical information sessions with consistent terminology on an ongoing regular basis
- Specific groups in each residence may need a targeted approach i.e., women, first year students
- Engage students in a co-design process to create a one-page summary document of the policies to ensure it is 'student friendly' and to give it legitimacy and create student champions
- Ensure that students of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those who attend other universities, have access to information specific to their needs

## The role and experience of Residential Advisors (RAs)

RAs are students who live in residence and undertake an important pastoral and disciplinary role to support community engagement and the safety and wellbeing of all students resident in ACU Student Accommodation. They have a unique perspective and walk a tightrope between peer and staff member. The RA experience was variable across the four sites. The level of training, staff support, and RA numbers were lower in Ballarat.

The physical set-up of the Ballarat and Canberra residences is a challenge and the lack of a central point of staff contact for RAs and students has potentially led to some issues for the RAs working at these sites. Ideally RAs will have an understanding of the backgrounds of the students they support. They need to understand the particular needs of students depending on age, gender, life experience and background.

See Chapter Three for more details.

### Recommendations

- Strengthen communication and support between staff and Residential Advisors (RAs)
- Ensure ongoing training for RAs to build skills
- Continue to undertake debriefing and reflective sessions with RAs and senior staff after incidents
- Liaise with RAs and students to create safe private spaces in the residences where RAs can have confidential conversations with students
- Consider ways to create a 'staff front desk' for Ballarat and Canberra
- Ensure RA numbers are matched to student numbers and specific needs of residential cohort

## Student experience of their residence

This section covers student experience in their residence of

- Belonging and comfort
- Perceptions of safety
- Being labelled by their university
- Supports in place
- Alcohol and its impact on safety

The students in this study generally reported high levels of a sense of affiliation with their residence. They felt safe, supported in their residence and comfortable attending events. No student reported that they felt negatively labelled by their university because of where they lived. Alcohol was not a huge issue and did not appear to be a driver of a sense of lack of safety. Camillus, a residence of mostly first year, female, domestic students were more likely to report that they used alcohol to socialise. This group also reported they felt a strong sense of belonging and support and had very high levels of affiliation.

See Chapter Four for more details.

## Unacceptable behaviours and sexual misconduct

Four students reported in the survey that they had experienced unacceptable behaviours. No student made a formal complaint.

Two students reported in the survey that they had experienced sexual harassment. They did not seek support or make a formal complaint. One student reported knowing about the sexual harassment of another student. They recalled that they thought the incident was dealt with well.

No student reported sexual assault in the survey. Two students in the focus group reported knowing about two sexual assaults that had taken place in their residences. In both cases, students thought that the residences responded appropriately.

These results compare favourably with the results for the AHRC report published in 2017 and the 'Cultural Renewal at University of Sydney Residential Colleges' report (USyd Cultural Review). It appears the reported incidents were responded to efficiently and appropriately. ACU has created excellent policy and procedures and the residences are to be congratulated for implementing these ACU initiatives.

See Chapter Five for more details.

### Recommendations

- Continue to undertake ongoing training for all students, staff, and RAs
- Continue to flag zero tolerance to unacceptable behaviour and sexual misconduct
- Continue to send messages that highlight that it is acceptable and safe for students to ask for support and make reports of unacceptable behaviours and sexual misconduct to ACU Student Accommodation

# Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Background to the research at ACU Student Accommodation	9
Australian Catholic University Student Accommodation	11
Research approach	11
The research method	12
Anonymous online survey	12
Focus groups	12
Private and confidential one-on-one interviews	12
COVID 19 pandemic and the research	12
ACU participants	14
Summary	18
Chapter 2 – Review of ACU Student Accommodation sexual misconduct policies and procedures, student training and awareness of policies and procedures	19
ACU Student Accommodation support documents, policies, and procedures	19
The Handbook	19
Induction and training for ACU Student Accommodation students	21
Student knowledge of supports, reporting and policies	22
Increasing awareness of ACU Student Accommodation support services and reporting processes for unacceptable behaviours, misconduct, or sexual misconduct	26
Summary	28
Chapter 3 – The role and experience of Residential Advisors (RAs)	30
The experience of being an RA	30
RA training	31
Staff support for RAs	32
RAs and gender	32
Summary	33
Chapter 4 – Student experience of their residence	34
Student perceptions of belonging and being comfortable in their residence	34
Student perceptions of safety in their residence	36
Student perceptions of support at their residence	37
The role of alcohol and impact on safety and belonging	39
Being labelled or disparaged by University for living at ACU Student Accommodation	40
Summary	41
Chapter 5 – Unacceptable behaviours and sexual misconduct	42
Seeking support and reporting unacceptable behaviour	43
Sexual harassment	43
Witnessed sexual harassment	44

Sexual assault	45
Summary	46
Appendix 1 – Strengths and limitations of this research	47
Appendix 2 – Definitions	49
Appendix 3 – Consent and participant information statements	50
Appendix 4 – The online survey questions	61
Appendix 5 – Links	79
Link to the AHRC report	79
AHRC Change the Course Report. Profile of University Respondents UNIVERSITY: AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY ACU results	79
Implementation of recommendations from Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities	79
AHRC University student sexual assault and sexual harassment survey. Notes on reading institutional-level data	79



# Chapter One

## Background to the research at ACU Student Accommodation

In 2017, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) released their 'Change the course: national report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities' based on extensive research they undertook with 39 Australian universities in 2016.

The report highlighted the devastating effects of sexual harassment and sexual assault on students – physically, emotionally, and psychologically. The findings included:

- 1.6% of students were sexually assaulted in a university setting.
- 21% of students were sexually harassed in a university setting.
- Women were three times as likely to have been sexually assaulted, and twice as likely to be sexually harassed compared to men.
- Trans-gender and bisexual students were particularly vulnerable.
- 25% of students had witnessed another student being sexually harassed and 1.1% had witnessed another student being sexually assaulted in a university setting. Most did not act because they didn't think it was serious enough or didn't know what to do.
- The vast majority of students who experienced sexual assault or harassment on university campuses did not make a formal report. This was most commonly because they didn't think it was serious enough or didn't know what to do.
- Students living in university colleges and residences were found to be at increased risk. 34% of the students who reported sexual assault and 17% of those who reported sexual harassment were living in university-owned or affiliated accommodation. 12% of women and 3% of men sexually assaulted at university said it occurred at a university residential college or residence.
- The report noted four contributing factors that increased risk; attitudes towards women, alcohol, abuse of power by the perpetrator and residential settings. In the residential setting, including university residential colleges or residences, access to bedrooms facilitated sexual harassment and sexual assault.

The report also confirmed that university colleges, residences and universities themselves had a duty of care to their students and staff to provide a safe and supportive environment, and a culture that promoted **'inclusiveness, gender equality, respectful behaviour and accountability.'**<sup>2</sup>

Only 6% of students surveyed felt that their university was doing enough to **'provide and promote clear and accessible information on sexual harassment procedures, policies and support services,'**<sup>3</sup> while only 4% thought that their university was doing enough in the case of sexual assault.

---

2 Australian Human Rights Commission. Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities. August 2017 Pg 5

3 Ibid Pg 118

The report noted:

*‘...universities needed to do more to prevent such abuse from occurring in the first place, to build a culture of respect and to respond appropriately by supporting victims of abuse and sanctioning perpetrators’<sup>4</sup>*

The Australian Catholic University was one of the institutions that took part in the AHRC study.

- 774 students took part (3% of the ACU student population).
- 1.1% had experienced sexual assault.
- 48% had been sexually harassed.
- Very few sought support or made a formal report or complaint.
- The majority of students (49-54%) had some knowledge of where to seek support and assistance regarding sexual assault or sexual harassment at ACU.
- 49% had some knowledge of the university’s policy of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

The survey in this research did not give any insights into the student experience at ACU university residences.

The AHRC Commission received 203 submissions that described sexual harassment and sexual assault in residential colleges. The report identified hazing practices and other ‘traditions’ that involved elements of sexual assault and sexual harassment. These were carried out as initiation for new students and were characterised by pressure to participate, excessive alcohol consumption, and humiliating or degrading acts.

**Recommendation 9, a key recommendation of the AHRC Report, recommended university-owned, or affiliated student accommodation undertake their own research to understand the current environment and to assess the effectiveness of implementation of the AHRC report’s key recommendations.**

In response, the Australian Catholic University Student Accommodation (ACU Student Accommodation), commissioned Student Life Research to explore the student experience in their residences.

**This research reports on the outcomes of an independent, expert-led review of ACU Student Accommodation, to assess the current experience of students living at ACU Student Accommodation and any factors which may contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in their settings.**

The scope of the research considered:

- appropriate responses by ACU Student Accommodation to reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment
- a trauma-informed and rights-based approach in a situation in which an allegation of sexual assault has been made
- the ways that hazing practices and ‘traditions’ facilitate a culture and the likelihood of sexual violence
- the role of alcohol in facilitating a culture and the likelihood of sexual violence
- the level and nature of supervision in a 24-hour residential setting in which large numbers of young people are living away from home, and
- the level and adequacy of training required to equip residential advisors to serve as first responders or in response to matters of sexual assault and harassment.

---

<sup>4</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission. Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities. August 2017 Pg 1

In addition, ACU Student Accommodation wanted to better understand students’:

- feelings of belonging, comfort, and safety at the ACU Student Accommodation residences
- knowledge and access to sexual misconduct policies and procedures
- opinions on, and awareness of, the level of support and supervision their residence makes available should they need to report or discuss an incident of sexual assault or sexual harassment, and
- experience of other unacceptable behaviours.

## Australian Catholic University Student Accommodation

ACU Student Accommodation is made up of four residences for university students across three Australian States. These residences provide accommodation for 352 students. All ACU Student Accommodation students have access to a residential support team, including staff and student Residential Advisors (RAs). ACU Student Accommodation reports that it has five focus areas for students: health and wellbeing; academic; spiritual; social and cultural; and community. These are promoted via the ACU Life platform. The four residences are:

- **Ballarat Camillus Residence– Regional Victoria.** This accommodation is a group of 16 homes close to the Ballarat university campus. The homes have shared facilities and four to seven bedrooms. There is a recreation room, communal lounge room and media facilities.
- **Ballarat Managed Residences– Regional Victoria.** These homes (three to ten bedrooms) cater to students who are looking for more independent living close to the Ballarat university campus. There are no communal facilities, however members of these residences can access the communal spaces at Camillus.
- **Canberra Managed Residences– National Capital Australian Capital Territory.** These houses are close to the university campus in Canberra with communal lounge and media facilities.
- **Sydney Miguel Cordero Residence – State Capital New South Wales.** This single residence provides studio apartments and multi-share apartments in one three-storey building in Camperdown, Sydney. While this residence is not close to any one ACU campus, all are accessible by public transport.

## Research approach

Student Life Research first met with the ACU Student Accommodation team in October 2019 to agree on the objectives of the research.

There were two parts to the research conducted by Student Life Research:

1. A review of existing ACU Student Accommodation residences’ sexual misconduct policies and procedures and students’ understanding of these, and
2. Student experience in their residence, including unacceptable behaviours and sexual misconduct

This report outlines the research findings and makes recommendations to address key issues.

## The research method

This research had three parts.

1. online anonymous survey
2. focus groups, and
3. confidential one on one interviews.

The research was due to commence in 2000, but was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It commenced in June 2021 with an invitation to participate in the anonymous online survey, focus groups and one-on-one confidential interviews. This was emailed to all students at the four ACU residential facilities by ACU Student Accommodation staff. Posters, flyers and reminders were sent to encourage participation. The research was approved by the ACU ethics department. (Application Number 2021 – 20H).

## Anonymous online survey

The anonymous online survey was based on the AHRC *'Change the Course'* survey,<sup>5</sup> as discussed above, and the *'Cultural Renewal at University of Sydney Residential Colleges'* report<sup>6</sup> (USyd cultural renewal review). The USyd cultural renewal review was carried out by Elizabeth Broderick and Co. to look at the culture of the independent Sydney University Colleges. Our survey was further developed in collaboration with ACU Student Accommodation staff and ACU staff. Where possible, the results are compared with results from the previous two surveys.

## Focus groups

Focus group research was planned to build on the survey data to more deeply understand student experience. This research was shifted from face-to-face to online via zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions. Unfortunately, there was limited interest in being part of a focus group and only one focus group of four participants took place.

## Confidential one-on-one interviews

The researchers offered the opportunity for one-on-one interviews for any student who wished to give private feedback about their experience. This would allow students to give feedback confidentially and directly to the independent external research team. No student elected to do this.

## COVID-19 Pandemic and the research

This research was affected by the pandemic in the following ways;

- Delayed commencement of research
- Reduced student numbers in all ACU Student Accommodation residences
- All research undertaken virtually

---

5 Australian Human Rights Commission. *Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities*. August 2017 Pg 194-221

6 <https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/news-opinions/Overarching%20Report%202017.pdf>

Potentially the pandemic may have also resulted in;

- Higher rates of stress and a lower sense of safety – due to uncertainty and potential health risks
- Decreased sense of belonging and support due to lack of face-to-face interactions within the residences and at university
- Decreased student social interactions – both within residences and at university due to Covid restrictions and online learning

ACU Student Accommodation in Sydney also provided emergency accommodation for international students stranded in Australia due to border closures in 2021. These students were included in the research as they were residents. They added to the diversity of the sample.

## ACU participants

At the time of the survey in 2021, ACU Student Accommodation residences were running below full capacity. Overall student numbers were reduced from 352 to 238, with the Sydney residence most affected at 33% capacity.

Sixty-nine students (29%) completed the survey. (See Table 1). They lived across all four residences.

It was only possible to run one focus group. This group gave some insights; however, the group was small with only four students, all of whom were Residential Advisors (RAs), and this presents some limitations to the research findings.

**Table 1 - Student numbers in residence**

ACU Residences	Full capacity of residence	Students in residence in 2021	2021 Students surveyed per residence	Residence participation of all 238 students available
<b>Ballarat Camillus Residence</b>	81	76 94%	20 26%	8%
<b>Ballarat Managed Residences</b>	96	90 94%	24 27%	10%
<b>Canberra Managed Residence</b>	23	22 96%	9 41%	4%
<b>Sydney Miguel Cordero Residence</b>	152	50 33%	16 32%	7%
<b>All residences</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>238 68%</b>	<b>69 29%</b>	<b>29%</b>

Of the 69 students who completed the survey, the majority were female (75%), 22% were male, 1 nominated as 'other' and 1 'preferred not to say'. This gender split is consistent with the percentage of 76% women in the overall 2021 ACU Student Accommodation residences cohort. This is also consistent with the rates in the AHRC ACU 2016 survey. At this time ACU was made up of 71% female students and 64% of respondents to their survey were women. (See Table 2)

The majority of students attended ACU (88%), however 50% living at the Sydney residence were studying at other universities. Nearly half the students were in their first year of university (48%) and just over half were in their first year in residence (55%). Ninety percent of students residing at Ballarat Camillus were in their first year in residence and 95% were in their first year in university. (See Table 2)

Most of these first-year students were living away from home for the first time. Depending on their age and experience, they may need more support than older students.

***'I think it's definitely a maturity thing amongst students, and you see it every year. You get some that are independent and some... (for whom living in ACU Student Accommodation is)... a socialising experience.'***

**Table 2 – Demographics of surveyed students**

ACU Residences n=69	Female	Male	First year in residence	First year at university	Studying at ACU
<b>Ballarat Camillus Residence</b>	18	2	18	19	20
<b>Ballarat Managed Residences</b>	16	8	8	6	24
<b>Canberra Managed Residence</b>	9	0	3	2	9
<b>Sydney Miguel Cordero Residence</b>	9	5	8	6	8
<b>All residences (% full capacity)</b>	<b>52 (75%)</b>	<b>15 (22%)</b>	<b>38 (55%)</b>	<b>33 (48%)</b>	<b>61 (88%)</b>

One quarter of respondents were the first person in their family to attend university. A student who is the ‘first in family’ may have specific challenges. They may be from lower socioeconomic, rural or remote locations or from diverse cultural backgrounds and do not have family members who have had first-hand knowledge and experience of university to support and guide them.<sup>7</sup> As a result, they may need and benefit from more support and guidance in their university and residential setting.<sup>8,9</sup> (See Table 3)

7 O’Shea, Lysaght, P., Roberts, J., & Harwood, V. (2016). Shifting the blame in higher education - social inclusion and deficit discourses. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 35(2), 322–336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1087388>

8 Warren, MJ. Helping first-in-family students navigate their university ‘journey’ <https://educational-innovation.sydney.edu.au/teaching@sydney/helping-first-in-family-students-navigate-their-university-journey/>

9 Groves, & O’Shea, S. (2019). Learning to “be” a university student: First in family students negotiating membership of the university community. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 98, 48–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2019.08.014>

**Table 3 – Demographics of nationality, language, disability and first in family students**

ACU Residences n=69	International student	Speak a language other than English	Disability	First in family to attend university
<b>Ballarat Camillus Residence</b>	0	1	3	4
<b>Ballarat Managed Residences</b>	2	7	2	6
<b>Canberra Managed Residence</b>	0	0	2	2
<b>Sydney Miguel Cordero Residence</b>	9	6	4	5
<b>All residences</b>	<b>11 (16%)</b>	<b>14 (20%)</b>	<b>11 (16%)</b>	<b>17 (25%)</b>

Nearly 1 in 6 respondents reported a disability, a chronic physical or mental health issue, or learning disability. This group may need more support to ensure their health and wellbeing.

The respondents were a diverse group with 16% from overseas and 20% speaking a language other than English. (See Table 4). There were no international students at Camillus or Canberra. Most were living in the Sydney residence, with two at Ballarat Managed Residence. International students, separated from their families and living in a foreign culture, may face additional challenges.<sup>10</sup> Their COVID-19 experience with border closures may have exacerbated these experiences. As a result, these students may need more support from their residence.

---

<sup>10</sup> Poyrazli, & Grahame, K. M. (2007). Barriers to adjustment: needs of international students within a semi-urban campus community. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 34(1), 28.



**Table 4 - Languages spoken by participants**

Language group	Specific language	Number of students	Camillus	Ballarat MR	Canberra	Sydney
<b>Auslan</b>		1	1			
<b>Chinese</b>						1
	<b>Mandarin</b>	1		1		
	<b>Cantonese</b>	1				
<b>Indian</b>						1
	<b>Konkani</b>	1		1		1
	<b>Hindi</b>	2		1		1
	<b>Marathi</b>	2				1
	<b>Punjabi</b>	1				
<b>Japanese</b>		3		1		2
<b>Filipino</b>		1		1		
<b>Vietnamese</b>		1		1		
<b>Arabic</b>		1		1		
<b>Urdu</b>		1				1
<b>overall numbers</b>		16 <sup>11</sup>	1	7	0	8

---

11 Some students reported that they spoke multiple languages

The characteristics of all the students resident in ACU Student Accommodation in 2021 is broadly comparable to the group who undertook the research. (See Table 5) The survey participants were more likely to be in their first year in residence at 56% compared to all residents (46%).

**Table 5 - Comparison of characteristics of all students in residence and survey participants**

Demographics	All students in residence n=238		Survey participants n=69	
<b>Male</b>	58	24%	15	22%
<b>Female</b>	180	76%	52	75%
<b>Domestic</b>	209	88%	60	87%
<b>International</b>	29	12%	9	13%
<b>First year in residence</b>	109	46%	38	56%
<b>Subsequent year in residence</b>	129	54%	31	44%

## Summary

Out of a group of 238 students, 69 completed the survey and 4 students took part in the focus group. The survey participation rate of 29%. This is in contrast to the 2016 AHRC ACU survey participation rate of 3%.

Importantly, the group who took part in the research are broadly representative of the whole ACU Student Accommodation student community. More women took part and this is consistent with the overall number of women both in ACU Student Accommodation and in ACU itself.

More than half our respondents were in their first year of residence and nearly half were in their first year at university. At Camillus Residence, the rate of first year in residence and first year in university was 90% and 95% respectively. Most students were attending ACU. One in six were international students and a similar number reported they had a disability. One in five had diverse cultural background, and one in four were the first in family to attend university.

New students have little understanding of the residence and its culture before they arrive. They bring their values and ideas of social relationships with them and some of these may not accord with the values of ACU Student Accommodation. This creates a need to train and create cultural fit for new students every year.

# Chapter Two

## Review of ACU Accommodation policy, student training and policy awareness

### ACU Student Accommodation conduct and sexual misconduct policies and support documents

ACU Student Accommodation students have access to extensive information, in a variety of forms, that cover respectful relationships and highlight policies and procedures for code of conduct and sexual misconduct. They are detailed below. To access some of these, students need to log into the ACU student portal. It was not in the scope of this review to undertake a full evaluation of the effectiveness, quality, content, or appropriateness of the material. The purpose of identifying this list is to understand what is available for students and their awareness of these resources.

### The Handbook

Each residence has a Handbook. The Handbook highlights behaviour, respectful relationships and ACU Student Accommodation's approach to training and supporting students. It lays out the responsibilities for each student and the residences. It clearly states ACU Student Accommodation's zero tolerance to sexual harassment, sexual assault, bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

The Handbook also describes university support services, including counselling, disability, and international student services.

The Handbook links to;

#### **1. ACU Student Conduct Policy<sup>12</sup>**

The ACU Student Conduct Policy includes a list of behaviours that constitute misconduct including sexual misconduct. It lays out the principles, definitions, and penalties and describes the composition of the disciplinary committee. This values-based code details expected conduct through the principles of respect, honesty, courage, and sustainability and gives details of these. It does not lay out processes for how a student seeks support or makes a complaint.

#### **2. Managing Student Misconduct Procedures<sup>13</sup>**

The Procedures document provides information on what happens when a student makes a complaint and when a student has a complaint made against them. It links to the Student Advocacy Service webpage.

---

12 ACU Student Conduct Policy <https://www.acu.edu.au/handbook/handbook-2021/policies-and-general-information/student-conduct-policy-and-procedures/student-conduct-policy>

13 ACU Managing Student Misconduct Procedures <https://www.acu.edu.au/handbook/handbook-2021/policies-and-general-information/student-conduct-policy-and-procedures/managing-student-misconduct-procedures>

### **3. Student Advocacy Service webpage<sup>14</sup>**

This page lists the resources available to students, including a range of supports for academic progress, legal matters, student complaints and the feedback process.

### **4. ACU Student Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure<sup>15</sup>**

The Policy is substantial with extensive information to support it. It gives explicit details and definitions of consent, sexual assault and sexual harassment.

### **5. ACU Reporting Protocol under the Student Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure<sup>16</sup>**

The Protocol considers reporting options and flags a trauma-informed approach. Reporting options include an online reporting form for sexual assault and sexual harassment. A person who makes a report is assigned a university staff member to support them through the process and signpost the internal and external supports available to them.

### **6. ACU Respect. Now. Always. webpage<sup>17</sup>**

This webpage provides information on keeping safe on campus. It includes emergency numbers for campus security. It has a short video on consent which covers aspects of consent, including ethical bystander intervention. The webpage has information about how to report an incident or concern and details of what happens when a report is made, providing a number of FAQs. This webpage links to the ACU student portal where students can contact the counselling service and the ACU sexual misconduct report form.

### **7. ACU sexual misconduct report form<sup>18</sup>**

This interactive form allows anonymous reporting as well as the option for students to give their identifying information as part of their report. The form requests details of the incident(s) and the alleged offender(s).

### **8. The SafeZone App<sup>19</sup>**

This free app can be downloaded to any smartphone and links directly to the ACU security team when a person is in a safe zone area. This allows the user to get help in an emergency. Incidents can also be reported through this app.

### **9. ACU Counselling Service and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

Students can book a counsellor through the ACU student portal. An EAP is available for staff including Residential Advisors (RAs).

---

14 ACU Student Advocacy <https://www.acu.edu.au/student-life/student-services/student-advocacy>

15 ACU Student Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy [https://policies.acu.edu.au/student\\_policies/student\\_sexual\\_misconduct\\_prevention\\_and\\_response\\_policy\\_and\\_procedure/student\\_sexual\\_misconduct\\_prevention\\_and\\_response\\_policy](https://policies.acu.edu.au/student_policies/student_sexual_misconduct_prevention_and_response_policy_and_procedure/student_sexual_misconduct_prevention_and_response_policy)

16 ACU Reporting Protocol under the Student Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure <https://policies.acu.edu.au/-/media/policies-site/student/reporting-protocol-ogcv8-16-november-2020.pdf?la=en&hash=53EF15C63C37FBA43E305B1F9A1ABC9F>

17 ACU Respect. Now. Always <https://www.acu.edu.au/emergency-and-safety/respect-now-always>

18 ACU sexual misconduct report form <https://www.acu.edu.au/emergency-and-safety/respect-now-always/sexual-misconduct>

19 SafeZone <https://safezoneapp.com/>

## 10. External support services

There are links to external state and national support services.

## 11. ACU staff conduct policy

This covers staff and Residential Advisors (RAs) at ACU Student Accommodation. It describes the context and details of the policy (this is consistent with the student policy) as well as reporting options.

## 12. Guide to assisting disclosures and reports

There is a staff guide to understanding sexual assault and sexual harassment and how to support a student through disclosure. It provides definitions and details of sexual harassment, sexual assault and understanding consent. It is a practical guide for staff to assist them to support students who disclose or report sexual assault or sexual harassment. Taking a trauma-informed approach, it suggests helpful and less helpful ways to respond. It flags the potential negative effects of negative responses to disclosure. It provides contact details for further information and support.

## 13. Links to support from ACU Student Accommodation student portal

The ACU student portal links to all the documents above. All ACU Student Accommodation students are given access to the portal.

# Induction and training for ACU Student Accommodation students

Before their enrolment is confirmed, ACU Student Accommodation staff conduct an interview with each student to assess their suitability to live in residence.

Upon acceptance into residence, each student is given a copy of the ACU Student Accommodation Handbook. As part of the formal lease documents, each student must sign acknowledgement of their receipt of the Handbook. This confirms their acceptance and understanding of the conditions outlined in the Handbook.

The Handbooks are site specific and are periodically reviewed to ensure alignment to the ACU Conduct Policy and Procedures and the *Respect. Now. Always.* initiative.

All residents of ACU Student Accommodation receive a letter from the ACU Senior Executive each year that states the organisation's 'zero tolerance' of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

In 2022 ACU Student Accommodation students undertake the following training;

1. **Respect. Now. Always. online training.** This focuses on the ACU Student Accommodation's zero tolerance for sexual harassment and sexual assault.
2. **Face to face inductions.** This is undertaken during orientation week and as required. This session highlights key rules and understanding of 'community spirit.'
3. **ACU consent video.** All new students are required to watch the ACU consent video<sup>20</sup> before being allowed access to the ACU Student Portal.
4. **Compulsory Training Day.** All students attend a compulsory training day that explains consent, definitions of sexual assault and sexual harassment and explains reporting and the policy and complaint procedure.

---

<sup>20</sup> Let's talk about consent. ACU Respect. Now. Always <https://www.acu.edu.au/emergency-and-safety/respect-now-always>

5. **Alcohol & Drug Education Specialists.**<sup>21</sup> An external provider delivers alcohol and drug education and wellbeing training for all students. It provides information on alcohol, drugs and mental health/wellbeing issues and how students can support themselves and others.
6. **Brochures.** These summarise how to get support, make a report and where to find the sexual misconduct policies; they are offered to all students.
7. **MATE Bystander Awareness Training.**<sup>22</sup> This training gives participants ethical bystander skills. All RAs and staff attend this session each year, and attendance is encouraged for all students.

Students noted that they had training on arrival at their residence.

*'...we had a Respect Now Always compulsory seminar... at the start of the year, they 'bribed' everyone to come with food... they just made everyone come down sit there, watch it, look and (understand) consent, behaviours and stuff'*

This was not the experience in Ballarat where transition of management led to disrupted programs in 2021.

*'Ah no we just didn't get it... No, it's been really hard for us this year because we've had a transition of management, about three times. So, we have had a very big write off over the year...'*

## Student knowledge of supports, reporting and policies

In this research, students were asked if they knew where to seek support or assistance within their residence and where to disclose, make a complaint or formally report if they experienced unacceptable behaviours, misconduct or sexual misconduct.

Students were also asked if they knew where to find the ACU Student Accommodation Student Conduct Policy and links to support services and reporting processes at their residence, and how knowledgeable they were about the ACU Student Accommodation Conduct Policy.

Student knowledge of where to go for support and assistance or where to go to disclose, make a complaint or formally report was excellent across all residences. Ninety percent had at least some knowledge of where to go for support or assistance, while 83% had at least some knowledge of where to go to report, complain or make a disclosure. Nearly half reported that they had of knowledge of where to go for support (49%) and 40% reported of knowledge of where to go to report, complain or disclose.

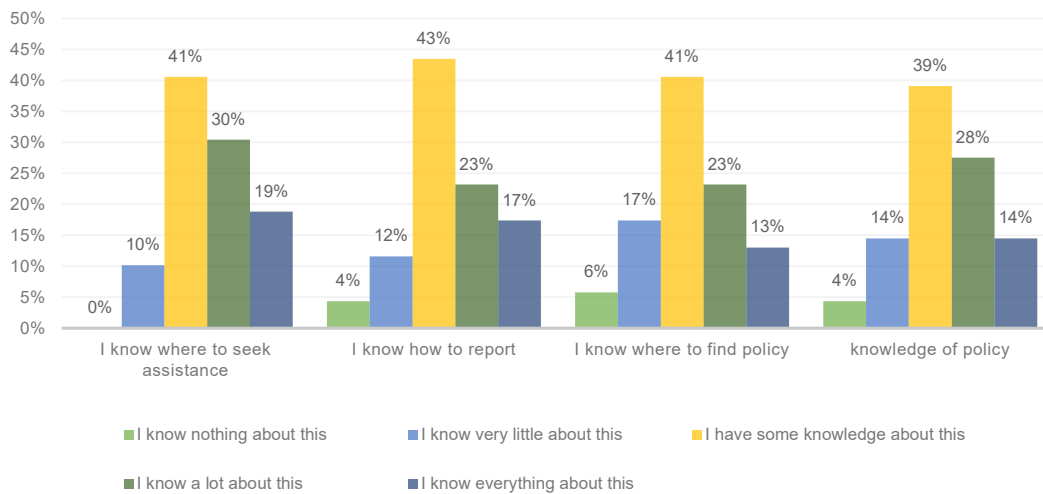
Seventy-seven percent of students had a least some knowledge of where to go to find the ACU Student Accommodation Student Conduct Policy and 81% reported that they had at least some knowledge of the contents of the policy. Thirty-six percent of students reported that they had high level of knowledge about where to find the policy and 42% had high level of knowledge about the contents of the policy. (See Graph 1)

---

21 Specialised Alcohol, Drug & Well-Being Education Programs <http://adesaustralia.com/>

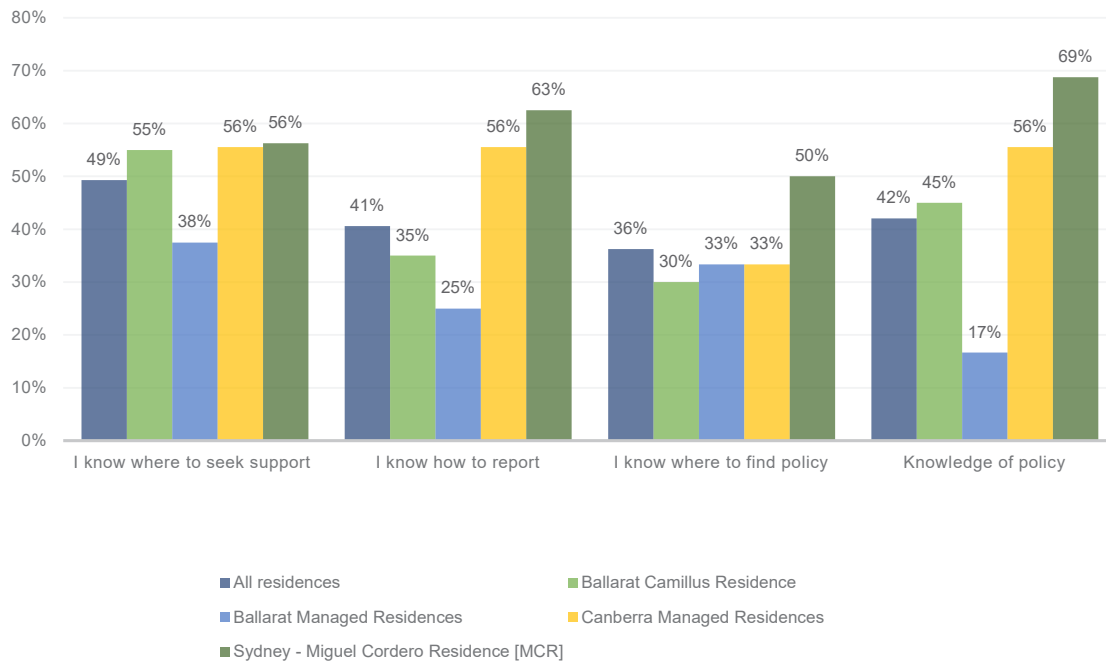
22 Motivating Action Through Empowerment. Training for ethical bystanders. <https://matebystander.edu.au/>

**Graph 1 – Level of knowledge -where to go to seek assistance, make a complaint or report and finding and understanding the ACU Student Accommodation Conduct Policy by all students**



Compared to other residences, students from Ballarat Managed Residence reported less knowledge about the contents of the ACU Student Accommodation Conduct Policy, less knowledge about where to go for support and where to go to disclose, complain or report. Both Camillus and Ballarat managed residences had generally lower knowledge of where to find the Policy. (See Graph 2) This suggests that increasing awareness of supports, reporting and policy may need to specifically engage with the Ballarat residences.

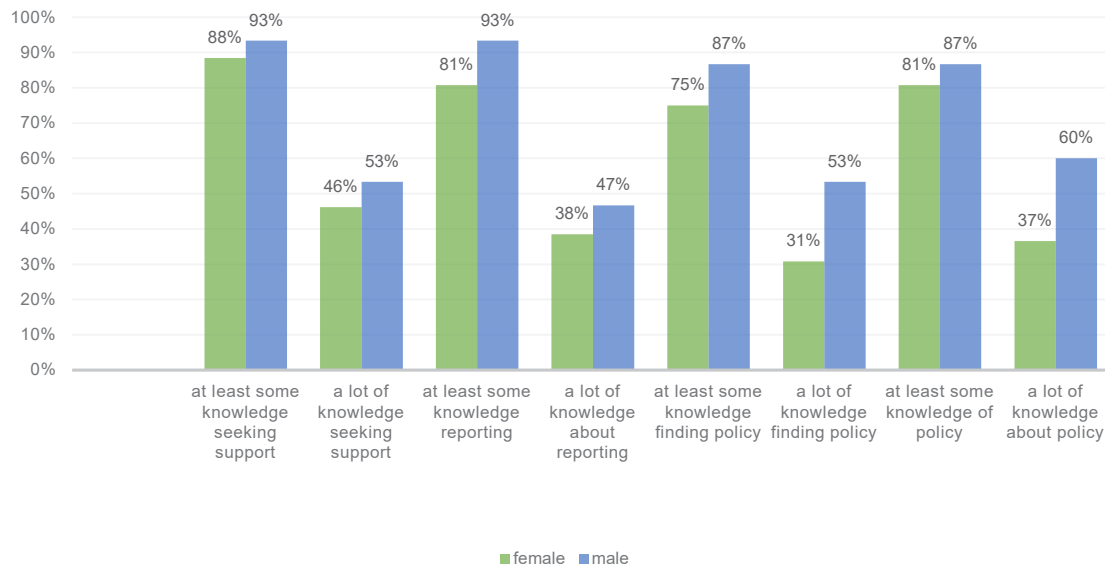
**Graph 2 - Seeking support, reporting, finding and understanding ACU Student Accommodation Conduct Policy by residence ('I know a lot/ everything')**



Female students reported being less knowledgeable about where to seek support, reporting, where to find the ACU Student Accommodation Conduct Policy, and policy knowledge compared to male students. (see Graph 3) This suggests that increasing awareness of supports, reporting and policy may need to specifically engage with women.



**Graph 3 - Where to seek assistance, report, find policy and knowledge of policy by gender ('I have at least some', 'a lot of knowledge' or 'I know everything')**



Students noted that they could access support or make a complaint via an online website but weren't sure if this was open to all students or just RAs. Students suggested there was a handbook, posters and flyers but were unsure about this.

*'I think we do have a handbook (to) read before moving in that can be accessed through a ACU website... I don't know how in depth it is.'*

*'... I know that there are flyers. I'm not sure. But I also know that there are posters on the board in the hallway where everyone has to ...actually walk past.'*

The ACU Student Accommodation data compare favourably with ACU AHRC data that suggest that students at ACU in 2016 had lower levels of knowledge of where to go for support, to report or for policy knowledge.<sup>23</sup> (See Table 4)

<sup>23</sup> When comparing these data, the following caveats apply. The ACU AHRC data is 5 years older and did not ask students about their knowledge of where to find the policy.

**Table 4 - Comparison of knowledge of supports, reporting and policy between ACU AHRC in 2016 and ACU Student Accommodation in 2021**

	Level of knowledge	Seeking support and assistance	Making a formal report	Policy knowledge
ACU AHRC in 2016	Medium*	62%	45%	50%
	High**	15%	13%	15%
ACU Student Accommodation 2021	Medium*	90%	83%	81%
	High**	49%	40%	42%

\*I have some knowledge or know a lot or know everything about this

\*\* I know a lot or everything about this

## Increasing awareness of ACU Student Accommodation support services and reporting processes for unacceptable behaviours, misconduct, or sexual misconduct

Twenty-six students gave feedback on what they thought their residence could do to ensure students knew about the ACU Student Accommodation policies, support services and reporting processes for unacceptable behaviours, misconduct or sexual misconduct. Nearly half (10) of the students who commented on ensuring awareness were from Camillus. Some students suggested the current approach was adequate and were complementary.

***‘Camillus is very good at approaching its residents and having a casual atmosphere but having serious conversations about important topics and regulations and rules aren’t neglected.’***

Other respondents suggested a flyer or tab on the residence website, emailed information, or making this accessible through the student portal. This information needed to be easily readable, short, with key points. Cards in common areas for residents to take away, posters on communal walls, or notice boards around the residences were also thought to be helpful. Making these directly accessible would ensure students who didn’t feel comfortable asking staff could access them.

***‘... posters can be put up at times and create different seminars for residents to sign up for to learn more about the services, ... put out cards around common areas so residents can go pick them up when they need to and not feel uncomfortable as there are people at the reception most of the time’***

Respondents suggested that there should be mandatory awareness programs and quizzes that emphasise a strong stance against unacceptable behaviours. They suggested face-to-face sessions that were engaging, with trivia and food to ensure residents come along and pay attention.

***‘It’s best not to necessarily get them to just watch something or just send them a link. To be realistic... you’ve got to reward them for being there, and I’d do that by food, because it’s free, it’s great.’***

One student suggested that sessions that discussed sexual misconduct might work well if split by gender.

***‘... girls have a night... and guys... make those friendship groups make sure that no one is left out. I know that I’d be more open to discussion (in a gendered session)...’***

Students had varying definitions of sexual misconduct; sexual harassment and sexual assault. Some flagged that it was anything that was not consensual, being forced upon the person, anything that they’re not comfortable with. Students were concerned that different students had varying understandings of the

definitions and that this was dependent on their maturity, background and education.

*'...each person has a different understanding of it, and I think that's ... a very big concern.'*

*'It depends on the student, because I feel like it very much comes down to how they have been raised or what they're aware of and educated, some students are definitely a lot more mature than others and can really see clear-cut lines. And then others don't really know...'*

Some were concerned about ensuring the balance was right and not creating a stressful environment where students feel they have to be careful about every behaviour.

*'... As far as I can tell, both the men and women here are kind and open to one another. Furthermore, most appear to be very smart and concerned with their studies, they don't seem the type to commit sexual harassment or misconduct... I do not wish for our residents to feel as though they are under a microscope ..... I know that some people can get stressed out if they manifest the idea that every aspect of their behaviour is being monitored, and that even the slightest mistake could cause them trouble. Simply put, I do not wish that this issue creates a culture in which we residents are walking on glass, worried that it might break...'*

Addit.

The 2021 National Student Safety Survey was released on 22 March 2022, along with an infographic from ACU. This showed little change in levels of student knowledge about where to go to make a complaint about sexual harassment or sexual assault compared to the AHRC study.<sup>24</sup>

Thirty-nine percent and 43% had at least some knowledge of where to go to make a complaint about sexual assault or sexual harassment respectively. While 48% and 52% had some knowledge of where to go to seek support and assistance for sexual harassment or sexual assault respectively.

---

<sup>24</sup> National Student Safety Survey 2021. ACU Infographic [https://www.acu.edu.au/-/media/feature/pagecontent/richtext/emergency-and-safety/nsss\\_infographic\\_australian-catholic-university.pdf](https://www.acu.edu.au/-/media/feature/pagecontent/richtext/emergency-and-safety/nsss_infographic_australian-catholic-university.pdf)

## Summary

The Australian Catholic University and ACU Student Accommodation have extensive documents covering sexual misconduct available to the general public and ACU students on the ACU website. ACU Student Accommodation has created site specific documents for their residences that align with the university documentation. The sexual misconduct policy and response processes are clearly delineated, and the university has employed staff with specific expertise in trauma-informed care to manage this important issue. The quality and breadth of the documents is high.

Students undertake compulsory sessions on commencement each year. There is a good range of education on offer, and ACU Student Accommodation uses external providers who are expert at delivering specific education for university-aged young people. It is possible that students who enter residence at other times miss out on these.

Students reported some confusion about definitions, and this was supported by the number of students who responded in the survey that they were unsure if they have experienced misconduct. (See Chapter 5 for more information on this).

Students reported generally good level of knowledge about where to go for support and assistance, make a disclosure, complaint or report and where to find the ACU Student Accommodation Conduct Policy. They also reported good knowledge of the policy. However, there appeared to be some uncertainty about what was actually available. The students offered suggestions of what could be done to ensure they knew where to go for support, to report or read the policy. Many of these were already in place and perhaps they were unaware of what was currently available.

Students were concerned that constant reminders of these might upset and annoy students. Indeed, awareness-raising campaigns should be carefully thought through using evidence-based methods. ACU Student Accommodation may find a partnership with academics in ACU with expertise in this area useful.

## Increasing student awareness of supports, policies and reporting

Despite the excellent documentation, and favourable comparison with AHRC ACU data, there is room for improved student awareness of supports, reporting and policy. Some of the suggestions respondents to the ACU Student Accommodation survey offered to improve policy awareness are already being undertaken by ACU Student Accommodation residences, however students appear unaware of these. Targeted and repeated messaging through multiple channels throughout each year may increase this awareness. This can be supported by links to the excellent information available at ACU and by the posters and leaflets already available in the residences. This messaging could be targeted for specific groups, i.e., RAs and staff need high levels of awareness, so they know how to assist students who ask them for help. Students at Camillus residence and female students may need specific targeting.

It is important to understand that people may not take in these messages if the issue discussed is not of immediate concern for them at the time the message is being delivered. Repeated, targeted messages to the students resident in ACU Student Accommodation can ameliorate this.

## Ease of access

The documents are easy to access, are comprehensive and link to each other, often in a circular fashion. If these are being accessed at a time of stress and trauma, it is possible that students might feel overwhelmed by this. Engaging students in a co-design process to create a landing page that summarises and links to relevant resources written in student-friendly language could help aid accessibility. The advantage of student engagement in this process is that it also creates a group of student 'champions' who are across the information. This not only ensures information is student-friendly, but also gives it legitimacy and creates a group of students who can provide informal information to their cohort.

## Students attending non-ACU institutions

Some of the residents in ACU Student Accommodation communities are not attending ACU. They can of course access what is publicly available and the support available through their own university. ACU Student Accommodation might consider ensuring staff have an understanding of these options and can link students into the support available through their institution.

## Multicultural needs

There do not appear to be foreign language documents. This may not be considered important given students with non-English speaking backgrounds are expected to have excellent English literacy. However, at times of trauma and stress, offering first language options may be important. In addition, counselling options in first language may be helpful. For example, the Transcultural Mental Health Centre in NSW,<sup>25</sup> Victoria<sup>26</sup> and ACT<sup>27</sup> offer mental health support for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

### Recommendations

- Provide concise, practical information sessions with consistent terminology on an ongoing regular basis
- Specific groups in each residence may need a targeted approach i.e., women, first-year students
- Engage students in a co-design process to create a one-page summary document of the policies to ensure it is 'student friendly', give it legitimacy and create student champions
- Ensure that students of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those who attend other universities have access to information specific to their needs

---

25 Transcultural Mental Health Centre <https://www.dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/transcultural-mental-health-centre>

26 Victorian Transcultural Mental Health <https://vtmh.org.au/>

27 Multicultural health in the ACT <https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/multicultural-health-act>

## Chapter 3

# The role and experience of Residential Advisors (RAs)

Members of the Residential Advisor Team (RAs) are students who live at ACU Student Accommodation. RAs are responsible for developing and delivering the Residential Life Program. This program consists of regular in-house and online events aimed at ensuring each student has ‘a positive and enjoyable experience living in residence’.

The RAs are also on hand to assist with any enquiries. If a student needs to contact an RA, they do this via the duty phone.

The ACU Student Accommodation Handbook states that; ‘RAs are chosen for their leadership skills, community participation, and demonstrated commitment to improving student life in ACU’s Living and Learning Communities.’

Each RA team runs regular events to ‘provide opportunities for personal development and connection with peers’. These are advertised on the ACU Life platform.

### The experience of being an RA

There were differences in RA experience between Ballarat and Sydney. RAs in Sydney reported that they had good support and guidance from staff and older RAs.

***‘...the big difference here at Sydney is because we have the reception team. And even though I’ve only just come on as an RA, we have seven RAs so I have a lot more support and guidance of what to do and ... I’m not just on my own trying to figure out how to do it ... definitely having older RAs to show you the ropes ... is helpful’***

RA numbers were low in Ballarat with three RAs for a population of more than 150 students. The physical set-up of Ballarat made it difficult for RAs and other students to get to know each other.

***‘...that’s probably one of the negative things about Ballarat is that it’s very hard to keep tabs on everyone and to make sure everyone’s okay, other than phone calls but they’re spread-out all over Ballarat, like you can find some people on one side and then 20 kms the other way. So, it is very hard in that respect to ... get relationships with those people. It is very difficult.’***

One RA noted that it felt hard to get support as an RA in Ballarat. They suggested that a senior RA or staff RA team leader who had more experience could be a good support for RAs at Ballarat.

***‘...it’s really hard because it’s not like we can just walk to another house and get support, ...a lot more responsibility goes back on us,...it is good to have some responsibility because we do understand the student’s needs and wants and everything, but I don’t think it would be the worst idea in the world to have a team leader, or something like that.. to have that person who is a little bit higher than everyone else ...’***

The issue of a confidential space for RAs to chat to other students was raised by RAs. This is likely to be more of an issue for the residences that are made up of separate houses.

***‘Having a safe space... creating a little bit of a beanbag room or something like that, where people are actually comfortable... they’re more likely to talk to you, rather than just sitting in someone’s house and worrying that someone is going to overhear.’***

In Sydney the RAs felt that things were going well. The support between staff, RAs and students was good and it was easy for anyone to seek help.

***‘I can’t really think of any major improvements to be honest. I think here it’s really good... [there’s a] close kind of family vibe between our RAs and reception staff, and students know that they can come to anyone.’***

Concerns were raised that RAs in their first year might not have the required skills for the role. It was noted that this depends on the maturity of the individual. This supports the need for robust interviewing for each potential RA and the core function of ongoing support and training.

No RA from Canberra was involved in this research, however one student reported on their adverse experience with an RA in Canberra. The student felt that the RA was not able to assist them with their concerns due to peer relationships the RA had with other students.

Covid restrictions led to issues with student behaviours including illegal gatherings of students. One RA remarked that managing student behaviour within Covid restrictions was difficult and this was adversely affected by their lack of training and support for enforcing these restrictions.

## RA training

The student RAs recalled mental health first aid training and ongoing training throughout the year, including vicarious trauma training and responding to someone who has experienced a stressful event. There are protocols, policies, and procedures for RAs to go to if they have any questions. They noted how useful a training session with scenarios and practice writing incident reports was for building their skills and requested additional training.

***‘...I think that it’d be really beneficial getting some training done for the RAs more around conversations and steps...’***

RAs undertook planning and debriefing sessions as needed. This allowed RAs to understand the complexity of any incidents that were unfolding and to share general information about this informally with other students without giving specific or confidential details. This way they could reassure other students that an issue was being appropriately managed. This is important as it signals that an issue will be dealt with and raises awareness about this process.

***‘...they debrief us on the situation... and then they just give us straight facts, ...this is what is known, there’s an investigation going on. And then that would equip us to understand and if anyone asks us about it...(we can say)... ‘This is what’s happened and, yeah, we’ll deal with it from here, don’t talk about it.’***

There were differences in the level of RA support across residences. Due to staffing issues in 2021, Ballarat had less support and guidance available for RAs and issues with RA retention. ACU Student Accommodation management were aware of these issues and by 2022 this was improved with the recruitment of 8 RAs located across both Ballarat residences.

## Staff support for RAs

RAs saw a benefit in the support they received from staff and the need to, at times, outsource student issues to others who were not caught up in peer relationships. Being both an RA and a peer was useful as RAs were seen as approachable and able to give support and see things from a student perspective. As peers, RAs knew what is going on, but it could be difficult to be both a friend and manage discipline, safety and the smooth running of the residence.

*‘...it’s very easy ... to get too close and too friendly with the students so that you think they’re your friends and you might want to let them go with that or (think) I’m going to ignore that...’*

RAs valued the capacity to ask for assistance with after-hours issues. One recalled an incident that occurred at 11pm, where they called a staff member and asked for advice.

*‘...it was at 11 at night and I was able to actually call up my supervisor...and then she actually led me through the entire process on how to deal with it, which is really good’*

## RAs and gender

The residential space offers particular challenges for RAs supporting their fellow students. Given the gendered nature of sexual misconduct; the fact that victims are more likely to be female and perpetrators more likely to be male, RA gender is important. Some students may prefer to seek assistance from a female RA while others may feel more comfortable seeking assistance from a male RA. Male RAs can assist to lead a culture of gender equality and equity by role modelling this to other students. Male RAs need to consider the risk of misinterpretation by students who are seeking support and assistance or if they are helping someone to ensure that they are safe. For example, helping an intoxicated student after a night out. This may mean going into another student’s room or bedroom to assist them to bed. This should always be done with the assistance of a female student of the residence.



## Summary

RAs undertake an important pastoral and disciplinary role to support community engagement and the safety and wellbeing of all students in ACU Student Accommodation. They are core to the smooth running of the residences. As peers, they have a unique perspective that helps them to connect with other students making it easier for students to seek support when needed. They are integral to creating a student culture of zero tolerance to sexual misconduct and creating an easier pathway for students to report incidents of unacceptable behaviour and sexual misconduct. This unique position of student peer and staff member can be complex for RAs to navigate and requires ongoing support and training.

It appears the number of RAs, level of staff support, and RA training were variable across the four sites. RAs at the Sydney residence felt supported by staff and by each other. Other sites were impacted by staff turnover and the geographically distant physical set-up. Staff support after hours and the ability for RAs to access advice at any time they need it, is core to this role. RA gender may impact on interactions with other students. This needs to be taken into account in their training.

RAs need ongoing support and training to help them manage the nuances of being a peer and a staff member. Training that is trauma-informed with practical applications, involving practice sessions, case studies, report writing sessions, are particularly useful. The importance of 'debriefing' reflective sessions after an incident were highlighted by RAs. These may need to be both group and individual sessions based on the skills and exposure to trauma that RAs may experience in the course of supporting another student. Reflective sessions help build their expertise and awareness and can help them walk the tightrope of being both a peer and a staff member.

Where residences are made up of geographically separate housing, it is difficult to create a central place or focus for students to seek support. Creating private and comfortable spaces for RAs to have conversations with students may assist with this. The role of staff support is important. The Sydney residence has the front desk and this creates an easy point of contact and sense of safety. The physical set-up of the other residences is a challenge, however creating a central point with staff available for support who have requisite training, would benefit both Ballarat and Canberra.

It's important to ensure RA numbers are proportionate to student numbers. This needs to take into account the particular needs of a student cohort, i.e., younger students may need more support. Students with diverse backgrounds may find it easier to connect with students who understand their background.

### Recommendations

- Strengthen communication and support between staff and Residential Advisors (RAs)
- Ensure ongoing training for RAs to build skills
- Continue to undertake debriefing and reflective sessions with RAs and senior staff after incidents
- Liaise with RAs and students to create safe private spaces in the residences where RAs can have confidential conversations with students
- Consider ways to create a 'staff front desk' for Ballarat and Canberra
- Ensure RA numbers are matched to student numbers and specific needs of residential cohort

# Chapter 4

## Student experience of their residence

The section covers student experience of their residence of;

- Belonging and comfort
- Perceptions of safety
- Being labelled by their university
- Perceived level of support by peers, staff and RAs
- Alcohol and its impact on safety

### Student perceptions of belonging and being comfortable in their residence

Belonging and connectedness to others is important to an individual's sense of identity and wellbeing.<sup>28</sup> A university residential setting can help provide this by creating environments that support academic and social connectedness.<sup>29</sup> In this survey, students rated their level of belonging, comfort, safety and perceived levels of support in their residential setting.

According to the feedback, 72% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of belonging with the community in their residence, and 70% were comfortable taking part in activities and social events organised at their residence. This was highest at Camillus, where 95% felt a sense of belonging and 90% felt comfortable attending activities and events in their residence. Other residences had an adequate sense of belonging and comfort. Sydney had the lowest level of belonging at 50%. (See Graph 4.)

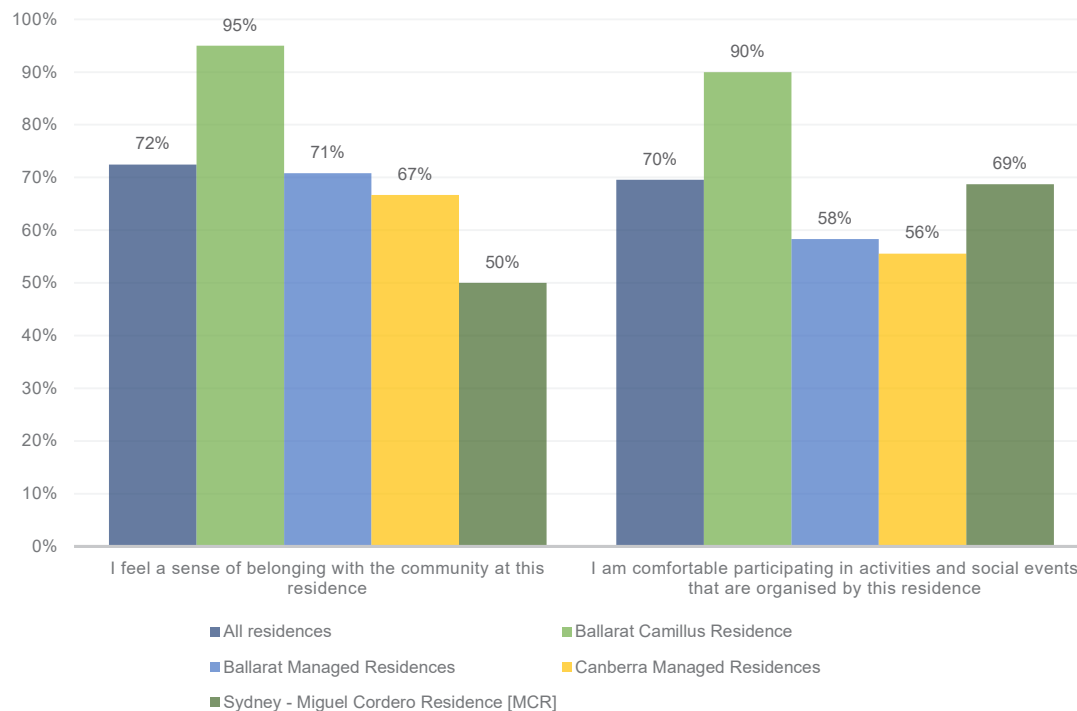
***'...living here I have had a pretty positive experience...going to the events makes a massive difference about whether you feel ... lonely or you're making friends ... and so I try and go to a lot of those... it's good here, I find it's a really easy balance between work and ... social, because you have your own room... so you can just go study and then ... socialise down at events or go to the common rooms...'***

---

28 Carlson, N.R. and W. Buskist, Psychology: the science of behaviour. 5th ed. 1997, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. 683.

29 Inkelas, K.K., et al., Living-learning communities that work: A research-based model for design, delivery, and assessment. 2018: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

**Graph 4 - Belonging and Comfort by residence (% 'agree/strongly agree')**



Students described the benefits of living in a residential community as a stepping stone to independent living.

***‘It’s been really good, because it’s a middle ground between living on your own and being at home which I think is a really positive experience for students’***

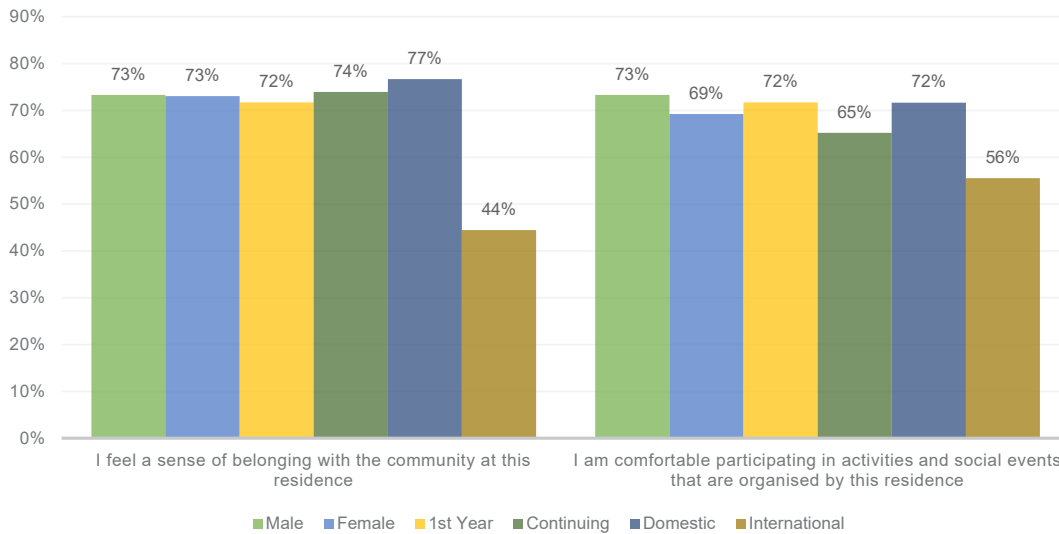
***‘I’ve found it’s a great experience for being like an ‘in-between’***

The sense of belonging and comfort for students of ACU Student Accommodation was similar across years, by gender and for domestic students, while international students were less likely to agree they felt a sense of belonging and were less comfortable participating in activities and events at their residence. (See Graph 5)

In comparison, the USyd cultural renewal review found that on average across five residences, 86% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of belonging to their residence.<sup>30</sup>

30 Cultural Renewal at University of Sydney Residential Colleges Report Pg 23. <https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/news-opinions/Overarching%20Report%202017.pdf>

**Graph 5 - Belonging and Comfort by gender, years in residence and domestic/international status (% 'agree/strongly agree')**



## Student perceptions of safety in their residence

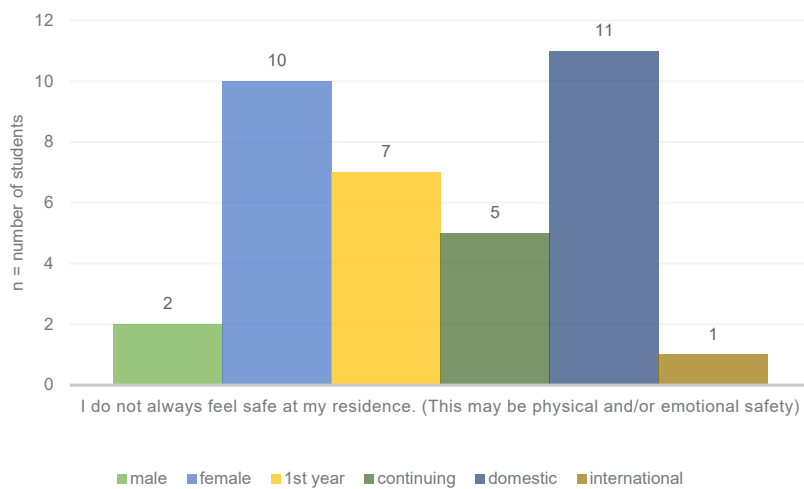
Twelve students (17%) reported they did not always feel safe at their residence. This included physical or emotional safety. This was similar across all residences (See Graph 6). Only one international student reported that they did not always feel safe. Women, domestic and first year students were more likely to report they didn't always feel safe. (See Graph 6)<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> 12 students reported that they didn't feel safe. This graph does not =12 as students fit into multiple categories i.e. a female, domestic, first year student.

**Graph 6 – Student perception of safety by residence**



**Graph 7 – Student perception of safety by gender, year in residence and domestic/international status**



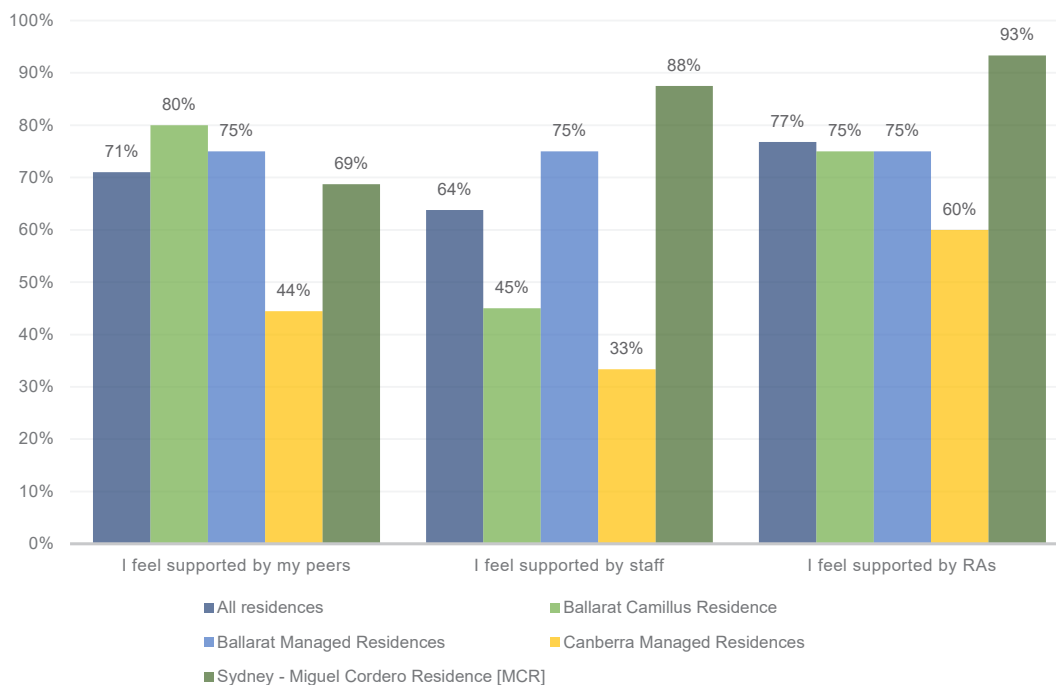
One student noted;

*‘(Sydney ACU Student Accommodation Campus) feels like a really safe place, especially the level of security at the front desk, people are always there for us. You always know who’s in the building... So, it feels like a very safe place.’*

## Student perceptions of support at their residence

Across all residences the majority of students agreed that they felt supported by staff, peers and RAs. Perceptions of support by staff and RAs were outstanding for the Sydney residence at 88% and 93% respectively. Students at Ballarat Camillus felt high levels of support from peers and RAs and perceived less support from staff at 45%. Residents at Ballarat Managed Residence felt good levels of support from peers, RAs and staff, while Canberra residents indicated lower levels of support from peers (44%) and staff (33%). The sense of support from RAs at Canberra was adequate at 60%, but lower than other residences.

**Graph 8 - Sense of support by residence (% 'agree/strongly agree')**

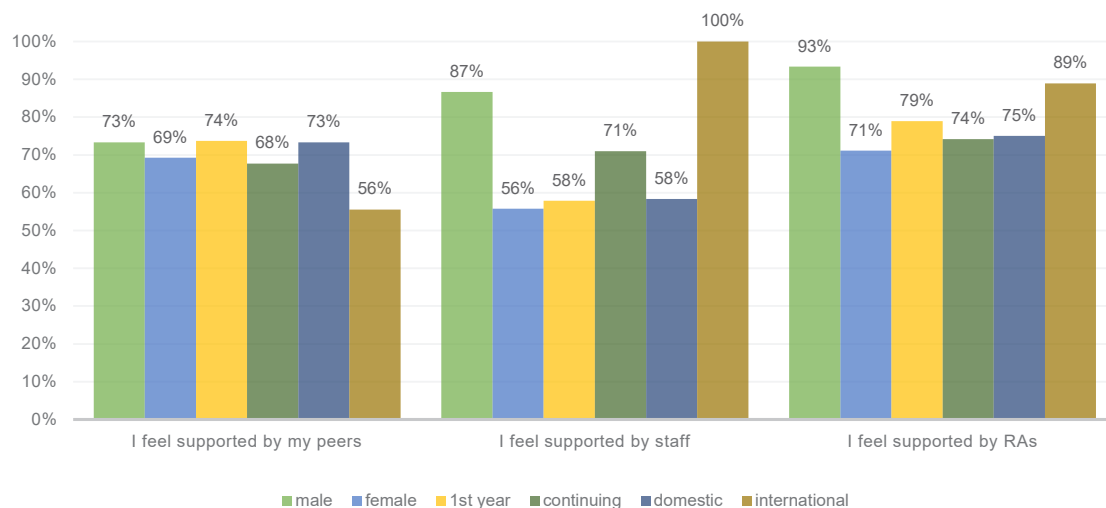


Support by peers was agreed to be positive regardless of gender and by students in their first year and subsequent years. International students perceived less support by peers. In contrast they felt highly supported by staff and RAs as did male students. Students felt well supported by RAs, regardless of gender, year in residence or being a domestic or international student. (see Graph 9)

Negative RA power was not an issue for any student in this survey and no student thought that RAs had too much power over students. This contrasts with the USyd cultural renewal review which found that 11% of students thought that student leaders had too much power over other students.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Cultural Renewal at University of Sydney Residential Colleges Report Pg 14

**Graph 9: Support by gender, year in residence and domestic/international status (% 'agree/strongly agree')**



## The role of alcohol and impact on safety and belonging

University is a time of transition, and for many students entering the university residential setting coincides with greater freedoms, including being of legal drinking age and diminished parental control. This may lead to alcohol taking a unique and important place in the lives of students.

In this study, nine (13%) of female domestic students reported that alcohol helped them to fit in, socialise and make friends at their residence. Eight were in their first year in residence and in their first year at ACU. Seven lived at Camillus, one at Ballarat Managed Residence and one at Sydney. Only one of these students suggested that they did not always feel safe in their residence and only one of these students thought there was too much focus on alcohol at their residence. Seven agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of belonging and all were comfortable taking part in activities and events at their residence.

Three students reported that they thought there was too much focus on alcohol in their residence. All were female domestic students, two from Camillus and one from Canberra. One agreed that they used alcohol to help them fit in. One agreed that they did not always feel safe at their residence. All agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of belonging and were comfortable taking part in activities and events at their residence.

One student who reported being pressured to drink, also reported not always feeling safe.

While the numbers are small, these data suggest that there is not a strong correlation between safety, belonging and comfort and alcohol use to fit in.

The data suggest that continuing students, who may have established social connections, have less reliance on alcohol compared to new students. International students also appeared to have little reliance on alcohol, this may be due to significant cultural views and is mirrored in broader Australian data that found the people

of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds drink less than other Australians.<sup>33</sup>

Males and international students suggested they had no concerns about alcohol focus in their residence.

Camillus figures strongly in this alcohol data. This residence of largely first year, domestic students had a high sense of affiliation. This reflects the findings of a study by Duke University (California State, US). This report noted that *'alcohol use and misuse play a complicated role in social life'*. For these students, drinking was associated with *'highly active social life and lower levels of social anxiety'*.<sup>34</sup>

The ACU Student Accommodation results contrast favourably with the USyd cultural renewal review that found 49% of students used alcohol to help them socialise<sup>35</sup> and 13% experienced pressure to drink or take drugs when they didn't want to.<sup>36</sup>

The AHRC study suggested that alcohol was a key factor contributing to sexual assault and sexual harassment on university campuses. The USyd cultural renewal review found that the drinking culture and binge drinking contributed to *'feeling unsafe'*.<sup>37</sup>

## Being labelled or disparaged by University for living at ACU Student Accommodation

There was no evidence that any student who responded to the survey felt that their university labelled or disparaged them for living at their residence. This is in sharp contrast to the University of Sydney Cultural Renewal Report where 51% of students reported *'feeling stigmatised by University of Sydney students and staff because I go to college'*.<sup>38</sup>

---

33 AIHW. Alcohol, tobacco & other drugs in Australia. Canberra: AIHW; 2020. [https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/priority-populations/people-from-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-backgrounds#alcohol\\_consumption](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/priority-populations/people-from-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-backgrounds#alcohol_consumption)

34 Asher, S.R. and M.S. Weeks, Social Relationships, Academic Engagement, and Well-Being in College: Findings from the Duke Social Relationships Project. 2012, Duke University: Durham, North Carolina USA. p. 54.

35 Cultural Renewal at University of Sydney Residential Colleges Report Pg 22. <https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/news-opinions/Overarching%20Report%202017.pdf>

36 *ibid*

37 Cultural Renewal at University of Sydney Residential Colleges Report Pg 37. <https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/news-opinions/Overarching%20Report%202017.pdf>

38 Cultural Renewal at University of Sydney Residential Colleges Report Pg 24. <https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/news-opinions/Overarching%20Report%202017.pdf>



## Summary

Students generally had good levels of affiliation (sense of belonging, comfort and support) across the residences. Camillus, a residence of mostly female, domestic first year students had very high levels of affiliation but felt low levels of support from staff. This is consistent with the staffing issues in play at this time. Students in the Canberra residence felt less supported by staff and peers. This small group of female students mostly in their second year in residence and in their subsequent year at university or above may feel less need for support from ACU Student Accommodation, however further research is needed to understand the reasons for the less positive responses in this group of students.

The vast majority of students feel safe at their residence. A small group, mostly female domestic students, who reported not always feeling safe, had good levels of affiliation and felt supported by their residence. A small group of female first year students, most at Camillus, reported that alcohol helped them to fit in and socialise. This group also reported good levels of affiliation and safety with their residence. These data suggest that alcohol, while part of many students lives, was not core to many, and there do not appear to be strong links between alcohol use, safety, and unacceptable behaviours or sexual misconduct.

Students did not report any issues with RAs misusing their position to exert power over students and generally reported they felt well supported by RAs and by their peers.

International students in Sydney had lower levels of affiliation, however they felt safe and highly supported by staff. The affiliation of this group, many of whom were new to the residence, is consistent with the low numbers in residence at the time of the survey, the impact COVID-19 had on social opportunities as well as being a more culturally diverse cohort attending other universities. It should be noted that this group of students included a cohort who came into residence as a result of the NSW Government International Student Crisis Accommodation Scheme which housed students for up to 20 weeks in 2021. ACU Student Accommodation staff, aware that the residential experience could be difficult for some of these students, arranged weekly meetings for this group with staff. This initiative sought to support them to create a plan for their future accommodation needs and how they were going to achieve this. This staff initiative would appear to have been effective leading to a very positive sense of safety and extremely high perception of support from staff.

## Chapter 5

# Unacceptable behaviours and sexual misconduct

Students were asked if they had experienced any of the following unacceptable behaviours;

- Pressure to drink alcohol
- Pressure to take recreational drugs (cannabis, ecstasy, stimulants, sedatives, hallucinogens, etc.)
- Bullying or coercion
- Pressure to join in activities that demeaned or frightened you or other students
- Participating in rituals or traditions organised by the students of this residence
- Being excluded by students or staff at this residence
- Had mean or hurtful rumours spread about you
- Feel that in order to be accepted by other students I should be open to having sex
- I feel like I have to hide or deny my sexual orientation so that I 'fit in'
- Been the target of homophobic insults
- Been the target of racist insults
- Been the target of sexist comments
- Other

Four students (6%) (three women and one man) reported that they had experienced unacceptable, often multiple, behaviours at their residence (Ballarat, Canberra and Sydney). Two noted that this was undertaken by a student/s at their residence. One student reported that the unacceptable behaviour was undertaken both by a student/s from their residence and a student/s from their university. One student preferred not to give details of the person/people who undertook the behaviours.

These behaviours were undertaken by male and/or female students in the same year, lower and more senior years. The most recent incident occurred for three of the students in the first half of 2021, while the other student reported that they experienced the most recent incident in the second half of 2020.

The unacceptable behaviours experienced are listed below.<sup>39</sup>

- Pressure to drink alcohol
- Pressure to take recreational drugs (cannabis, ecstasy, stimulants, sedatives, hallucinogens, etc.)
- Bullying or coercion (experienced by two students)
- Pressure to join in activities that demeaned or frightened you or other students
- Being excluded by students or staff at this residence (experienced by two students)
- Had mean or hurtful rumours spread about you
- Feel that in order to be accepted by other students I should be open to having sex
- Been the target of sexist comments
- Other – (no details given)

---

<sup>39</sup> Some students experienced multiple unacceptable behaviours

No student reported that they had been the target of homophobic insults, racist insults, needed to hide or deny sexual orientation or felt pressured to participate in rituals or traditions organised by the students of their residence.

All the students who reported experiencing unacceptable behaviours reported *'not always feelings safe at their residence.'* Three of these students reported that they did not feel a sense of belonging and one did not feel comfortable participating in activities and events at their residence. The student who suggested they had experienced 'other' unacceptable behaviours reported that they felt a sense of belonging.

Eight students reported that they were 'not sure' if they had experienced any of the unacceptable behaviours listed above and one 'preferred not to answer.' All these students were domestic female students. They were a mix of first year and continuing students across all residences. It is not possible to judge these answers either positively or negatively.

## Seeking support and reporting unacceptable behaviour

One student at the Canberra residence did not seek support, another preferred not to answer. The other two students sought support from multiple sources including *'someone employed at their uni'* (2), *'friends or family'* (2), *'Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this residence'* (2), an *'employee at the residence'* (1) or *'another student'* (1). One reported being very satisfied with the support they received while the other was very unsatisfied.

No student in the survey reported that they made a formal report.

One student in the survey reported being very dissatisfied with an RA's response to an interpersonal conflict between the student and others in the residence. They suggested that the RA found it difficult to separate their role as a friend and peer from their RA role and as a result were ineffective in managing their concerns.

## Sexual Harassment

Students were asked about their experience of sexual harassment. This included the following issues;

- Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing
- Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated
- Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body
- Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended
- Sexually explicit pictures, posters or gifts that made you feel offended
- Repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates
- Intrusive questions about your private life or physical appearance that made you feel offended
- Requests or pressure for sex, or other sexual acts
- Received or seen any sexually explicit emails or SMS messages
- Repeated or inappropriate advances on email, social networking websites or internet chat rooms
- Inappropriate commentary, images or film of you distributed on some form of social media without your consent
- Other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature

Two respondents reported that they had experienced sexual harassment. Both were female domestic students in their first year at their residence. They reported the following behaviours;

- Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing

- Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated
- Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body
- Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended
- Intrusive questions about your private life or physical appearance that made you feel offended
- Inappropriate commentary, images or film of you distributed on some form of social media without your consent

Student one reported *'Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated'* and *'Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended.'* The most recent episode occurred within a month of completing the survey at her residence and was undertaken by a student known to her, in her year. She did not seek support as she *'thought it would be too emotionally difficult.'*

Student two experienced *'Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing'*, *'Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body'*, *'Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended'*, *'Intrusive questions about your private life or physical appearance that made you feel offended'* and *'Inappropriate commentary, images or film of you distributed on some form of social media without your consent.'* The most recent episode occurred within six months of completing the survey, by a male student known to her, in her year. She did not seek assistance as *'I did not think it was serious enough'* and *'I was worried I might not be believed.'*

Two respondents reported that they *'preferred not to answer'* the question about experiencing sexual harassment. It is not possible to infer with any certainty what these answers indicate in relation to the prevalence of sexual harassment.

These two reported incidents give a prevalence of 3%. This is in contrast to the AHRC ACU results from 2016 that suggested 21% of students experienced sexual harassment at ACU and nationally. The Australia-wide results of the AHRC survey suggested that 14% of students who reported being sexually harassed lived in residential halls or colleges.<sup>40</sup> The USyd cultural renewal review suggested that 19% of college students were sexually harassed during their period of study.

Addit.

The 2021 National Student Safety Survey released on 22 March 2022, along with an infographic from ACU. This suggests that 11.9% of students had been sexually harassed since starting university (5.8% in the last year) and 2.5% had been sexual assaulted since starting university with 0.5% in the last year.

## Witnessed sexual harassment

One focus group member described the sexual harassment they witnessed. This issue was raised with staff and dealt with efficiently.

***'I was ... really surprised, .. how quick ... it was sorted out and how supportive the (staff were)... making sure everyone that was part of it was really okay. And just being really supportive and there to talk to. So, yeah, that was really good.'***

Five survey respondents, four females and one male, reported that they were not sure if they had witnessed sexual harassment. It is not possible to infer with any certainty what these answers indicate.

In contrast, the ACU responses to the AHRC survey suggest that 25% of students witnessed sexual harassment at university in 2016.

---

40 Australian Human Rights Commission. Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities. August 2017 Pg 187

## Sexual assault

No student in the survey reported that they had experienced an indecent or sexual assault.

No student in the survey reported that they had witnessed an indecent or sexual assault.

The focus group participants discussed two incidents of sexual assault. One was complex as the allegation of sexual assault was raised by the alleged female victim following exclusion from their residence for serious breaches of the code of conduct. The police were involved, and the university undertook an investigation. This incident caused some conflict in the student community and greatly lengthened the investigation time.

The second incident was managed at the residence after the alleged female victim raised it with staff. The police were not involved. She was able to access support from RAs and friends in the residence and, while the stress of this lingered for some time, she was able to let people know she didn't feel safe. The student noted that they didn't think this was an issue particular to the residence and that it was a difficult situation with one person's word against another. The response of the residence was swift and the alleged perpetrator was asked to leave.

***'I don't think it really had too much to do with being in ACU Student Accommodation like it could have, I feel like that kind of incident could have happened .. anywhere... it was just two people by themselves. And it's just that one person's word versus the other, that kind of thing. But I think they did the right thing here... getting rid of the student, and they weren't able to live here anymore so the person, the girl felt a lot safer here, because they were not allowed on the premise or anything as well, so they sorted it out very quickly and had the investigation done within a couple of weeks.'***

Four students reported that they *'preferred not to say'* if they had experienced indecent/sexual assault.<sup>41</sup> It is not possible to infer with any certainty what these answers indicate.

The AHRC data suggest that 1.6% of respondents were assaulted in the university setting. Overall, 7% of those who took part in the survey were living in residential halls or colleges and 34% of those who were sexually assaulted were living in university affiliated residences. They also noted that 12% of women and 3% of men sexually assaulted at university said it occurred at a residential college or hall. The USyd cultural renewal review found that 4% of students reported sexual assault and 8% of students reported that they had witnessed sexual assault.<sup>42</sup>

Addit.

The 2021 NSSS found that 30.6% of respondents had been sexually assaulted at least once in their lifetime, 4.5% had been sexually assaulted in an Australian university context and 1.1% of students had been sexually assaulted in an Australian university context in the past 12 months.<sup>43</sup> The ACU specific data reported that 2.5% of 1,621 respondents from ACU reported that they had been sexually assaulted since starting university and 0.5% had experienced sexual assault in the past 12 months.<sup>44</sup>

---

41 Three of these four students gave their gender as female, while one preferred not to state this. They were from all residences, all years and half were domestic students.

42 Cultural Renewal at University of Sydney Residential Colleges Report Pg 51. <https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/news-opinions/Overarching%20Report%202017.pdf>

43 Report on the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault among university students in 2021. National Student Safety Survey 2021. Pg 30. [https://assets.website-files.com/61c2583e4730c0d5b054b8ab/623ba530bc6676dfcdb1d5dc\\_2021%20NSSS%20National%20Report.pdf](https://assets.website-files.com/61c2583e4730c0d5b054b8ab/623ba530bc6676dfcdb1d5dc_2021%20NSSS%20National%20Report.pdf)

44 National Student Safety Survey 2021. ACU Infographic Pg 30. <https://www.acu.edu.au/emergency-and-safety/respect-now-always/national-student-safety-survey-2021>

## Summary

Four students reported in the survey that they had experienced unacceptable behaviours. Only two students sought support from multiple sources with varying levels of satisfaction with the support provided. No student made a formal complaint.

Two students reported in the survey that they had experienced sexual harassment. No student sought assistance or made a formal complaint. They suggested that they didn't seek assistance or report as they thought it would be too emotionally difficult, they would not be believed or that it was not serious enough. One student reported knowing about the sexual harassment of another student. They recalled that they thought the incident was handled well.

No student reported that they had experienced sexual assault in the survey since they became resident of ACU Student Accommodation. Two students in the focus group reported knowing about two sexual assaults that had taken place in their residences. In both cases the residences responded appropriately.

Alcohol does not appear to be a strong factor in these incidents. Students who experienced unacceptable behaviours or sexual harassment were less likely to feel safe or have a sense of belonging to their residence. These adverse effects demonstrate the impact of these experiences on individuals. The levels of reporting and support seeking while higher than the national surveys are a concern.

These compare favourably with the results for the AHRC report and the USyd cultural renewal review. It appears that reported incidents were responded to efficiently and appropriately. ACU has created excellent policy and procedures and the residences are to be congratulated for implementing these ACU initiatives.

## Recommendations

- Continue to undertake ongoing training for all students, staff and RAs
- Continue to flag a zero tolerance to unacceptable behaviour and sexual misconduct
- Continue to send messages that highlight that it is acceptable and safe for students to ask for support and make reports of unacceptable behaviours and sexual misconduct to ACU Student Accommodation

# Appendix 1

## Strengths and limitations of this research

### Strengths

This research was undertaken by external independent researchers. The researchers have experience of previous research in this sector and excellent understanding of the unique position of university residences. The survey was based on previous surveys undertaken by AHRC and the USyd cultural renewal review. It was piloted and reviewed by ACU staff working towards building awareness of Respect. Now. Always. and in the sexual misconduct policy space. It was approved by ACU ethics. The anonymous nature of the survey supported students to answer freely and frankly. The focus group allowed the free flow and exchange of ideas to build on issues amongst the peer group involved.

The survey response rate of 29% was good and suggest that repeated encouragement to take part through multiple channels over some 6 weeks and a prize draw of Uber Eats vouchers supported participation. The respondent's demographics were representative of the entire population of students at ACU Student Accommodation. All students who commenced the survey completed it. This suggests that the format and 'skip logic' used was effective in preventing dropout and fatigue while undertaking the survey.

### Limitations

The participants in this research are a group who were motivated to respond and take part. People who have experienced unacceptable behaviours, sexual harassment or assault may be either more motivated to respond or may have chosen not to respond as this may feel traumatic. These issues may impact the accuracy of the results.

Only 69 students took part in the survey and four students attended the focus group. These small numbers limit the utility of inferential statistics and as a result our analysis was limited to descriptive statistics.

### The options 'unsure' and 'prefer not to answer.'

A number of respondents answered with 'unsure' or 'prefer not to answer'. It is not possible to know what the student experience is in these cases.

In sensitive research such as this, ethically, it is important to allow respondents options that feel safe. These options tell respondents that it is acceptable to say they have no information with which to answer a question. These options may either encourage respondents without information to admit it or may discourage people who do have information from expressing it.

Most often, choosing these options may result from ambivalence, question ambiguity, task difficulty, respondent ability, motivation, intimidation, or self-protection.<sup>45</sup> This non-committal choice may have been influenced by the sensitive nature of the research, the knowledge that the community of people able to take

---

45 Krosnick, J.A. and S. Presser, *Question and Questionnaire Design*, in *Handbook of Survey Research*, P.V. Marsden and J.D. Wright, Editors. 2010, Emerald Group Publishing Limited: UK. p. 263-313.

part is small and a perception that research encouraged by the organisation itself may not be anonymous.

As a result, it is difficult to make any judgement on the meaning behind these answers.

The AHRC research makes no comment on the number of respondents who preferred not to answer the 'yes/no' sexual harassment and assault questions, even though this is one of question choices. They do however report this answer in other segments of the research.



## Appendix 2

# Definitions

**Sexual Assault:** This describes the forced penetration of the vagina or anus of any person with any part of the body of another person, or any object, against their will or consent. It also includes oral sex.

**Indecent Assault:** Describes the unwanted touching of a person's body (mouth, breast, bottom or genitals) by another person. For example, it can include kissing or inappropriate touching of a person's breasts, bottom or genitals.

**Sexual Harassment:** This covers unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and /or intimidated, where a reasonable person would anticipate that reaction in the circumstances. This does NOT include any activity that includes touching or penetration of, or by, sexual parts of the body (mouth, breasts, bottom or genitals).

**Unacceptable Behaviour:** A form of misconduct undertaken by a student or group of students who deliberately behave in a way that is inconsistent with the ACU Student Accommodation Conduct policy, or breaches the regulations, rules or procedures of ACU Student Accommodation. This includes and is not limited to, bullying, intimidation, pressure to undertake activities that the participant does not want to do, being excluded or isolated, homophobic or racist slurs, hurtful rumours and other behaviours that make the participant feel uncomfortable.

# Appendix 3

## Consent and participant information statements

### Participant Information Statement for On-line Survey

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in an online survey to assist Australia Catholic University's Living and Learning Communities (LLC) in evaluating the current cultural environment experienced by residents.

*What is the project about?*

The research project investigates the current culture of students within Australia Catholic University's Living and Learning Communities (LLC) in Sydney, Ballarat and Canberra. The aim is to obtain feedback from current students at ACULLC as to their experience of the culture at ACULLC. Based on the research feedback we aim to provide recommendations as to how best ACULLC can improve and support their students. This is important not only for the current students but for those that follow you. By sharing your views you provide ACULLC with current first-hand information of what you are experiencing. With this information ACULLC can develop processes and procedures that address identified issues thereby ensuring that your voice is heard now and in the future. Your experience at ACULLC matters!

There are two parts to this project; 1) On-line Survey. 2) Online Focus Groups. This document discusses the On-line Survey.

*Who is undertaking the project?*

This project is being conducted by Student Life Research Pty.

*What you will be asked to do?*

- You have been invited to participate in an anonymous online survey using the link provided by ACULLC.
- The survey take's most people about 15-30 min to complete depending on your answers.
- By submitting the survey it is deemed that you have given your consent for Student Life Research to use the data in an aggregated report that has NO personal identifiers.

*Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?*

As with any project this research project carries some risk. Two key possible risks have been identified; loss of anonymity and emotional distress. To reduce possibility of these risks, Student Life Research (SLR) will address the issues in the following way.

Anonymity

- To ensure anonymity NO personal data such as name, contact details, or IP address will be collected.
- Should any identifiers slip through in open ended comments, the Lead Investigator will remove them before analysis begins.
- SLR will ensure the survey is hosted on a secure server and the survey will be removed from the

hosting service once the data has been collected.

- ACULLC will provide you with a direct link to the survey.
- The survey and responses will be backed up to a standalone storage device and securely held by the lead investigator during analysis.
- On completion of the project all source data will be handed over with the final report to the ACULLC coordinator be stored for the mandatory 5-year period by ACU. Thereafter ACU may continue to store or deleted the data in accordance with the ACU Data Retention Policy.
- While your data will be stored securely and confidentially, in the event illegal activity is disclosed the researchers cannot guarantee a third party could not use some legal process to gain access to the data (e.g., subpoena or search warrant).

#### Emotional distress

It is possible that some survey questions may cause you unanticipated distress. To address this Student Life Research have provided the following support.

- There is general contact information for support supplied at the end of this information sheet.
- There will also be a fixed link in the header bar of the survey to the same support information.
- An image link to the same information will be placed next to questions that are potentially more distressing. The link will take the user directly to support information.
- In addition to this you may contact us directly (Details below).

#### *What are the benefits of the research project?*

- The most important benefit of this project is that it gives you an opportunity to anonymously voice your views about the residential culture and more specifically about your experience at ACULLC.
- Armed with your feedback from this project Student Life Researchers will identify areas at ACULLC that are working well and make recommendations for improvement.
- A general benefit of this research is to provide an impartial evaluation of the culture at ACULLC in 2021 that can be used to identify trends that may help in long term planning.
- A specific benefit to participation in the survey is that your information provides statistical data to support identified cultural issues and trends facing students attending ACULLC. The survey gives statistical weight to your views.
- It should be noted that you may not personally benefit from participation in this project as cultural change is of its nature a process that takes time. You can however rest assured that your participation will be part of the recorded report that contributes to ACULLC's approach to improving processes and procedures that help students at ACULLC.

#### *Can you withdraw from the project?*

- Participation in this project is completely voluntary.
- You are not under any obligation to participate.
- Once you have submitted your survey you cannot withdraw, as surveys are non-identifiable.

#### *Will anyone else know the results of the project?*

- The results of the project will NOT be published to the wider community by Student Life Research.
- The results will be submitted to the ACULLC coordinator in the form of a report.
- The ACULLC coordinator will then distribute the report to the appropriate persons within Australian Catholic University's Residences.

#### *Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?*

- [student.life.research.info@gmail.com](mailto:student.life.research.info@gmail.com)

*What if I have a complaint or any concerns?*

The project has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (2021- 20H). If you have any complaints or concerns about the conduct of the project, you may write to the Manager of the Human Research Ethics and Integrity Committee care of the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

Manager, Ethics and Integrity  
c/o Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)  
Australian Catholic University  
North Sydney Campus

PO Box 968  
NORTH SYDNEY, NSW 2059  
Ph.: 02 9739 2519  
Fax: 02 9739 2870  
Email: [reethics.manager@acu.edu.au](mailto:reethics.manager@acu.edu.au)

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Student Life Research.

## Consent Form for Online Survey

This is an anonymous survey for Australia Catholic University's Living and Learning Communities (LLC).

Student Life Research are undertaking a survey, on behalf of Australia Catholic University's Living and Learning Communities (LLC). This survey examines LLC students' experience, and opinions in regard to issues around sexual misconduct. The purpose of this research is to provide better support for students at Australia Catholic University residences. We would appreciate your participation in this research by completing the short anonymous survey below which takes most people 15 to 30 minutes to complete.

- This survey operates under the provisions of the Privacy Act and we do not have access to your contact details.
- The survey is not compulsory and is completely anonymous.
- None of the information collected in the survey can be used to identify you.
- Your answers will remain strictly confidential and will be combined with information from other students of Australia Catholic University residences.
- The survey is being conducted under Australian Catholic University Ethics Committee approval (2021- 20H).

The full Participant Information Statement can be obtained here. Please read it and feel free to email us if you have any questions or concerns.

[Click here to create an anonymous login](#) or click NEXT to proceed

This is an anonymous survey for Australia Catholic University's Living and Learning Communities (LLC). The survey takes most people about 15-30 minutes to complete depending on your answers. Some questions may cause you to feel distressed. If you do [CLICK HERE](#) or on a support icon for support information!

The Ethics Approval process requires us to obtain your consent before you start this survey. Please read the following statements then if you are happy to give your consent, please check the box and start the survey by clicking on the NEXT button below.

- I understand I am being asked to provide consent to participate in this research project.
- I understand the purposes and risks of the research described in the project.
- I provide my consent for the information collected from my survey to be used for the purpose of this research study only.
- I freely agree to participate in this research as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the project and that withdrawal will not affect my relationship with Australia Catholic University Living and Learning Communities/or any research team members.
- I have read the Participant Information Sheet or someone has read it to me in a language that I understand.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.
- I have read and understand the above and freely agree to participate in this research as described.

Yes I agree.

## Participant Information Statement – Online Focus Group

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in an Online Focus Group to assist Australia Catholic University's Living and Learning Communities (LLC) in evaluating the current cultural environment experienced by residents.

*What is the project about?*

The research project investigates the current culture of students within Australia Catholic University's Living and Learning Communities (LLC) in Sydney, Ballarat and Canberra. The aim is to obtain feedback from current students at ACULLC as to their experience of the culture at ACULLC. Based on the research feedback we aim to provide recommendations as to how best ACULLC can improve and support their students. This is important not only for the current students but for those that follow you. By sharing your views you provide ACULLC with current first-hand information of what you are experiencing. With this information ACULLC can develop processes and procedures that address identified issues thereby ensuring that your voice is heard now and in the future. Your experience at ACULLC matters!

There are two parts to this project; 1) Online Survey. 2) Online Focus Groups.

This document discusses the Online Focus Group.

*Who is undertaking the project?*

- This project is being conducted by Student Life Research
- What you will be asked to do?
- You be invited to nominate your preferred time to participate in an online focus group.
- Once a convenient session time has been established you will be sent a zoom invitation with a link date and time.
- We would like you to login 5 minutes before the discussion time to confirm consent and ensure that you understand support options and your right to withdraw. (See below: Can you withdraw from the project?)
- You will be asked at the start of the zoom session if you willingly choose to participate in the focus group discussion and that you give your consent for Student Life Research to use data gathered in the zoom session in a de-identified report.
- The facilitator (personnel at Student life Research) will then initiate the discussion by posing questions approved by HREC.
- You will then participate in the discussion with your peers to whatever degree you feel comfortable.
- The focus group will then proceed in a discussion format and will conclude after one hour.
- You will be reminded by (personnel at Student life Research) about maintaining confidentiality in regards to matters discussed during the Focus Group session.

*Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?*

As with any project this research project carries some risk. Risks identified with the focus group are; lack of anonymity, possible emotional distress, and possible peer pressure. To reduce these risks, Student Life Research (SLR) will address the issues in the following way.

Anonymity

A focus group by its nature precludes total anonymity, however steps will be taken to remove possible identifiers from collected data before analysis and in the final report.

- The final recorded focus group data will be transcribed by (personnel at Student life Research)

and at that point all identifiers will be removed and replaced with pseudonyms.

- No record of the relationship of pseudonym to real name will be kept.
- Only the de-identified transcribed data and any de-identified facilitator notes will be used for the analysis and reporting.
- Once transcribed the original recording and any hard copy notes will be stored in a secure fireproof cabinet at the premises of the lead investigator.
- The identifiable recording and any hard copy notes will only be accessed by the lead and chief investigator if concerns arise during analysis of the de-identified transcription.
- The transcript, original recorded focus group discussion and any supporting data will be handed over with the final report to the ACULLC coordinator be stored for the mandatory 5-year period by ACU. Thereafter ACU may continue to store or deleted the data in accordance with the ACU Data Retention Policy.
- While your data will be stored securely and confidentially, in the event illegal activity is disclosed the researchers cannot guarantee a third party could not use some legal process to gain access to the data (e.g., subpoena or search warrant).

#### Emotional distress

It is possible that parts of the focus group discussion may cause you unanticipated distress or trigger stressful memories.

- To address this Student Life Research have provided the following support.
- The focus will be facilitated by (personnel at Student life Research) who is a skilled physician and counsellor of college age students. (Personnel at Student life Research) will support (personnel at Student life Research) by monitoring for potential distress caused by the discussion or behaviours of participants.
- Should you/another-participant or one of the facilitators detect that you/another-participant are in distress or should you/another-participant ask for help, the session will immediately be paused while you/another-participant and one of the facilitators move to a private chat-room to discuss support for you/another-participant.
- Once you/another-participant and the facilitator have move to a private room the remaining facilitator will resume the discussion.
- Support information is supplied at the end of this information sheet.
- There will also be a fixed link in the chat window of the zoom interface that will take you directly to the support information.
- In addition to this you may contact us directly (see below). (Personnel at Student life Research) is a trained medical practitioner and well placed to assist or direct you to the appropriate source of help.

#### Peer Pressure

It is possible in a focus group discussion that peer comments may cause you unanticipated distress or trigger stressful memories. The facilitators of the session are mindful of this possibility and will be vigilant in monitoring for this type of behaviour. If you feel or detect any of this type of behaviour during the session and we miss it you are asked to please bring it to our attention via personal comment in the chat area. We will immediately halt the discussion and address the situation.

Maintaining your well-being during participation is our paramount concern.

#### *What are the benefits of the research project?*

- The most important benefit of this project is that it gives you an opportunity to anonymously voice your views about the residential culture and more specifically about your experience at ACULLC.

- Armed with feedback from this project Student Life Researchers will identify areas at ACULLC that are working well and make recommendations for improvement.
- A general benefit of this research is to provide an impartial evaluation of the culture at ACULLC in 2021 that can be used to identify trends that may help in long term planning.
- A specific benefit to participation in the focus group is that your words, rather than aggregated data, can be used to give depth to an identified issue.

The survey gives statistical weight to the issues and the focus group information gives depth.

- It should be noted that you may not personally benefit from participation in this project as cultural change is of its nature a process that takes time. You can however rest assured that your participation will be part of the recorded report that contributes to ACULLC's approach to improving processes and procedures that help students at ACULLC.

Can you withdraw from the project?

- Participation in this project is completely voluntary.
- You are not under any obligation to participate in the focus group.
- Once the focus group has started you may still withdraw.

However, your participation to the point of withdrawal cannot be withdrawn as your participation forms part of the recorded focus group discussion and thus cannot be retrospectively be removed.

Will anyone else know the results of the project?

- The results of the project will NOT be published to the wider community by Student Life Research.
- The results will be submitted to the ACULLC coordinator in the form of a report.
- The ACULLC coordinator will then distribute the report to the appropriate persons within Australian Catholic University's Residences.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

[student.life.research.info@gmail.com](mailto:student.life.research.info@gmail.com)

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The project has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (2021- 20H). If you have any complaints or concerns about the conduct of the project, you may write to the Manager of the Human Research Ethics and Integrity Committee care of the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

Manager, Ethics and Integrity  
c/o Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)  
Australian Catholic University  
North Sydney Campus

PO Box 968  
NORTH SYDNEY, NSW 2059  
Ph.: 02 9739 2519  
Fax: 02 9739 2870  
Email: [resethics.manager@acu.edu.au](mailto:resethics.manager@acu.edu.au)

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Student Life Research



## Participant Consent – Focus Group

At the start of the Focus Group:

A link to a PDF of the 'Focus Group Participant Information Sheet' and to the 'Support Information' will remain displayed in the chat room window and on the pre-focus group discussion screen.

The 'waiting screen' will have the following text:

This focus group is being conducted under Australian Catholic University Ethics Committee approval (2021-20H).

The full Participant Information Statement can be obtained [here](#).

Please read it and feel free to raise any questions or concerns.

Support information can be accessed [here](#)

or if you feel you need support, let us know in the private chat window at any point during the session. Before the focus group discussion begins the facilitator will remind students that the Ethics Approval process requires that SLR obtain participant consent before starting the focus group.

The facilitator will then read the following:

- Do you understand that you are being asked to provide consent to participate in this focus group.
- Do you understand the purposes and risks of the research described in the project.
- Do you give your consent for the information collected from this focus group to be used for the purpose of this research study only.
- Do you freely agree to participate in this research as described in the participant information sheet supplied by ACU LLC.
- Do you understand that you are free to withdraw at any time during the focus group session and that withdrawal will not affect your relationship with Australia Catholic University Living and Learning Communities/ or with any research team members.
- Do you confirm that you have read the Participant Information Sheet or someone has read it to you in a language that you understand.
- Do you confirm that you have had an opportunity to ask questions and that you are satisfied with the answers you have received.

The facilitator will then ask if participants have heard and understand what she has just said and will ask each participant if they freely agree to participate in the focus group as described.

She will also remind them that they can access a copy of the participant information sheet and support information via the link in this zoom chat window.

Once recorded verbal agreement has obtained from each participant the focus group will commence.

## Support Information

### ACU Counsellors

ACU students can book an appointment with a counsellor from any campus. Appointments with ACU counsellors can be made by current students through the Student Portal.

Visit Student Portal (login required)-Out-of-hours crisis counselling line

ACU has joined with University Crisis Line to deliver an out-of-hours crisis counselling service.

Use the crisis counselling line if it is out of hours and you are:

- feeling emotionally distressed
- experiencing mental health issues
- having thoughts of self-harm or other harm.

Call 1300 638 485 or text 0488 884 191.

This service only operates from 5pm to 9am (AEST) on weekdays, and 24 hours on weekends and public holidays.

If you are overseas on an approved ACU program use only the text number. Please ensure you call during the times (AEST) of operation of the out-of-hours crisis line.

Please read the Privacy Collection statements on the Student Portal before using the service.

## National Contacts- National Sexual Assault

Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service	1800 Respect 1800 737 732
24-hour National Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Helpline	1800 200 526
Callers who are deaf or hard of hearing-call the National Relay Service	1800 555 677
	and quote 1800 200 526
Lifeline:	13 11 14
Reachout.com <a href="http://au.reachout.com/find/articles/sexual-assault">http://au.reachout.com/find/articles/sexual-assault</a>	

## State and Territory Contacts

### ACT

ACT Human Rights Commission	(02) 6205 2222
Women's Legal Service	1800 634 669
Domestic Violence	(02) 6280 0900
Sexual Assault	(02) 6247 2525
Relationships Australia	1300 364 277
Mensline Australia	1300 789 978

### NSW

NSW Anti-Discrimination Board	(02) 9268 5555
Law Access NSW	1300 888 529
NSW Domestic Violence Hotline	1800 656 463
Sexual Assault (Syd)	(02) 9819 6565
Sexual Assault (Rural)	1800 424 017
Relationships Australia	1300 364 277
Mensline Australia	1300 789 978

### VICTORIA

Sexual Assault Crisis Line	1800 806 292
1800 RESPECT	1800 737 732
Relationships Australia	1300 364 277
Mensline Australia	1300 789 978
Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault	(03) 5320 3933
Victorian Legal Aid	1300 792 387
Police – Sexual Assault team- Ballarat	(03) 4372 9095

## Student invitation email

Dear Student,

You are invited to take part in a study exploring students' experiences of belonging, community, unacceptable behaviours and sexual misconduct in ACU residences.

The Australian Catholic University has engaged Student Life Research (SLR) to conduct the study.

The findings from this study will be incorporated into a report and recommendations for ACU. Taking part in the study is a way to help us develop recommendations that will ensure your residence has an environment best suited to you and for future students. Your experience is important, so take part to ensure that your voice is heard.

There are two parts to the study

1. an anonymous online survey. (This will take 15-30 minutes)
2. online focus groups

Participation is voluntary. Your answers are completely confidential, and all responses are de-identified before being used to inform the final report. This means that none of the information collected will be used to identify you and no one will know if you have or haven't participated.

We invite you to take part

1. Please click here to complete the survey ([survey link](#))
2. Please click here for the full Participant Information Statements for the survey. ([link to PIS](#))
3. Please click here to register your interest in taking part in the focus groups.
4. Please click here for the full Participant Information Statements for the focus group.

We thank you for taking the time to complete this important study.

## Appendix 4 – the online survey questions

*In this section we want understand a little about you and your background.*

*I am currently a resident at:*

Ballarat – Camillus Residence.                      Ballarat – Managed Residences.  
Canberra – Managed Residences.                      Sydney - Miguel Cordero Residence [MCR].

**How many years have you been living in this residence?**

Less than 1 year. 1 year. 2 years. 3+ years.                      Prefer not to say.

**Before coming to this residence, where did you live?**

At another university residence or residential college.  
Within this local area.                      Within this state.                      Interstate – capital city.                      Interstate – rural.  
Overseas.

**Are you the first person in your family to attend university?**

Yes.                      No.

**In what year did you start your current degree?**

2021                      2020                      2019                      2018                      Before 2017.

**Are you enrolled at the Australian Catholic University?**

Yes.                      No,                      I am enrolled at another university/tertiary institution.

**Are you an international student?**

Yes.                      No,                      I am a domestic student.

**Do you speak a language other than English at home?**

Yes.                      No.

**Which best describes your gender?**

Male.                      Female. Indeterminate or unspecified.                      Transgender.                      Straight/Heterosexual.  
Gay/lesbian/homosexual.                      Bisexual.                      Asexual.                      Undecided/not sure/  
questioning.  
Don't know/not sure.                      Prefer not to say.

**Do you have a disability (ie a chronic physical or mental health issue, including learning disability)?**

Yes.                      No.                      Prefer not to say.

**Do you know where you can seek support or assistance within this Residence if you experience, or have experienced, Sexual Misconduct?**

I know nothing about this                      I know very little about this                      I have some knowledge about this  
I know a lot about this                      I know everything about this

**Do you know where you can go to formally report, or disclose, an experience of sexual misconduct at**

**this Residence** I know nothing about this I know very little about this I have some knowledge about this

I know a lot about this I know everything about this

**Do you know where you can find the ACU Student Conduct policy, support services and reporting processes for your Residence?**

I know nothing about this I know very little about this I have some knowledge about this

I know a lot about this I know everything about this

**How knowledgeable are you about the ACU Student Conduct policy?**

I know nothing about this I know very little about this I have some knowledge about this

I know a lot about this I know everything about this

**What do you think your residence can do to ensure students know about their policies, support services and reporting processes on sexual misconduct?**

### **Belonging and feeling Safe**

*This section of the survey examines your sense of belonging and feeling of safety at your residence. It also explores behaviour that is generally unacceptable.*

**I feel a sense of belonging with the community at this residence.**

Strongly agree. Agree. Neither agree nor disagree. Disagree. Strongly disagree.  
Prefer not to say.

**I am comfortable participating in activities and social events that are organised by this residence.**

Strongly agree. Agree. Neither agree nor disagree. Disagree. Strongly disagree.  
Prefer not to say.

**I feel supported by my peers.**

Strongly agree. Agree. Neither agree nor disagree. Disagree. Strongly disagree.  
Prefer not to say.

**I feel supported by staff.**

Strongly agree. Agree. Neither agree nor disagree. Disagree. Strongly disagree.  
Prefer not to say.

**I feel supported by RAs.**

Strongly agree. Agree. Neither agree nor disagree. Disagree. Strongly disagree.  
Prefer not to say.

**I do not always feel safe at my Residence. (This may be physical and/or emotional safety)**

Strongly agree. Agree. Neither agree nor disagree. Disagree. Strongly disagree.  
Prefer not to say.

**Alcohol helps me to 'fit in', socialise and make friends at my Residence.**

Strongly agree. Agree. Neither agree nor disagree. Disagree. Strongly disagree.  
Prefer not to say.

**There is too much focus on alcohol at my Residence.**

Strongly agree. Agree. Neither agree nor disagree. Disagree. Strongly disagree.  
Prefer not to say.

**The RAs at my Residence have too much power over the students.**

Strongly agree. Agree. Neither agree nor disagree. Disagree. Strongly disagree.  
Prefer not to say.

**I feel students and staff at my University label or disparage me because I live at this Residence.**

Strongly agree. Agree. Neither agree nor disagree. Disagree. Strongly disagree.  
Prefer not to say.

**Unacceptable Behaviour**

*The following questions explore your experience of Unacceptable Behaviour.*

*Unacceptable Behaviour. is a form of misconduct undertaken by a student or a of group of students which include deliberately behaving in a way that is inconsistent with the ACU Student Conduct policy, or breaches the regulations, rules or procedures of ACU. This includes and is not limited to, bullying, intimidation, pressure to undertake activities you don't want to, being excluded or isolated, homophobic or racist slurs, hurtful rumours and other behaviours that made you feel uncomfortable. For the purposes of this survey, unacceptable behaviour does not include sexual misconduct.*

**Have you experienced any unacceptable behaviour since starting at this Residence?**

Yes. No. Not sure. Prefer not to say.

**Which of the following have you experienced since starting at this Residence? Please select all that apply.**

Pressure to drink alcohol. Pressure to take recreational drugs (cannabis, ecstasy, stimulants, sedatives, hallucinogens, etc) Bullying or coercion. Pressure to join in activities that demeaned or frightened you or other students. Pressure to participate in rituals or traditions organised by the students of this Residence. Being excluded by students or staff at this Residence. had mean or hurtful rumours spread about you. Feel that in order to be accepted by other students I should be open to having sex.

I feel like I have to hide or deny my sexual orientation so that I 'fit in'. Been the target of homophobic insults. Been the target of racist insults. Been the target of sexist comments.

*"In the previous question you may have selected one or more than one incident. In this question please select your most recent incident then answer the following questions in relation to your selected incident.*

*If you are not sure, please make your best guess."*

**My most recent incident was...**

Pressure to take recreational drugs (cannabis, ecstasy, stimulants, sedatives, hallucinogens, etc).

Bullying or coercion. Pressure to join in activities that demeaned or frightened you or other students.

Participate in rituals or traditions organized by the students of this Residence. Being excluded by students or staff at this Residence. Had mean or hurtful rumours spread about you. Feel that in order to be accepted by other students I should be open to having sex. I feel like I have to hide or deny my sexual orientation so that I 'fit in'. Been the target of homophobic insults. Been the target of racist insults.

Been the target of sexist comments.

**When did the incident happen?**

January 2021 – June 2021.      July 2020 – December 2020.      January 2020 – June 2020.  
Before 2020.

**Where did the incident happen? (Please select all that apply)**

At your Residence.      At a social event organised by your Residence.      While  
working for your Residence.

At my university.    At another residential college or university event.    Online.

Elsewhere/somewhere outside this residence or university.

**Who was involved in this incident? (Please select all that apply).**

A student/s from your Residence.    A student/s from your university.  
Not sure.      Prefer not to say.    Other.

**What was their relationship to you? Were they.....**

A student in a lower year.    A student in your year.      A student in a more senior year .      A student  
RA.

Not sure.      Prefer not to say.    Other.

**Was the person/people involved in the behaviour?**

Male(s) only.      Female(s) only.      Both male and female.      Not sure.      Prefer not  
to say.

**Did you seek support or assistance in relation to the most recent incident?**

Yes.      No.      Prefer not to say.

**People decide not to seek support or assistance for many different reasons. Which, if any of these were the reasons that you did not seek support or assistance from your residence? Please select all that apply.**

I did not know who could provide me with support or assistance at this Residence.

I did not know where I had to go or what I had to do to make a formal report or complaint.

I felt embarrassed or ashamed.      I thought it would be too emotionally difficult.

I did not think the incident would be kept confidential.    I did not think I needed help.

I did not think it was serious enough.      I was worried I might not be believed.

I did not want to hurt the offender/s or get them into trouble.      I thought it would be too hard to  
prove.

I was too scared or frightened.      I thought it could incriminate me and I did not want to get into  
trouble.

I did not want anyone to know.      I thought I could sort it out for myself.

I didn't want other students in this Residence to judge me.

I thought I would be victimised if I made a complaint.    I did not want to involve the police.



I was too scared or frightened.      Prefer not to say.

**Any other reason as to why did you NOT seek support.**

**Following the incident/s who did you go to for support?**

Friends or family outside of this Residence.      A more senior resident at this Residence.

Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence.      Another student at this Residence.

Someone employed at your university.      Student support services at your university.

An external support group e.g. 1800 RESPECT, Lifeline.      Police.

I did not seek support or assistance.      I prefer not to say.

**As you sought support or assistance with regard to your personal experience of unacceptable behaviour, please rate how satisfied were you with the support and assistance that you received.**

Very satisfied.      Satisfied.      Not satisfied.      Very unsatisfied.

**Did you make any FORMAL report or complaint about the incident to anyone?**

Yes.      No.      Not sure.      Prefer not to say.

**Who did you report it to? (Please select all that apply).**

An employee at this Residence.      student RA at this Residence.

Someone employed at your university.      Student support services at your university.

An external support group e.g. 1800 RESPECT, Lifeline.      Police.

I did not seek support or assistance.      I prefer not to say.

**Did the person taking your report explain their formal reporting or disclosure processes to you, including any involvement with or processes for reporting to the police?**

Yes.      No.      Not sure.      Prefer not to say.

**How satisfied were you with the formal reporting or complaint process of unacceptable behaviour, taking into account issues such as the fairness, sensitivity and efficiency of the process?**

Very satisfied.      Satisfied.      Not satisfied.      Very unsatisfied.

**Sexual Harassment**

*Sexual Harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and /or intimidated, where a reasonable person would anticipate that reaction in the circumstances. This does NOT include any activity that includes touching or penetration of, or by, sexual parts of the body (mouth, breasts, bottom or genitals).*

**Have you personally experienced Sexual Harassment since moving into this residence?**

Yes.      No.      Not sure.      Prefer not to say.

**Please indicate ALL the types of sexual harassment that you have personally experienced.**

Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing. Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated. Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body. Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended. Sexually explicit pictures, posters or gifts that made you feel offended. Repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates. Intrusive questions about your private life or physical appearance that made you feel offended. Requests or pressure for sex, or other sexual acts. Received or seen any sexually explicit emails or SMS messages. Repeated or inappropriate advances on email, social networking websites or internet chat rooms. Inappropriate commentary, images or film of you distributed on some form of social media without your consent. Other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

**Please indicate which was the most recent incident of sexual harassment that you personally experienced. Then answer the following questions on sexual harassment in relation to that incident.**

Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing. Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated. Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body. Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended. Sexually explicit pictures, posters or gifts that made you feel offended. Repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates. Intrusive questions about your private life or physical appearance that made you feel offended. Requests or pressure for sex, or other sexual acts. Received or seen any sexually explicit emails or SMS messages. Repeated or inappropriate advances on email, social networking websites or internet chat rooms. Inappropriate commentary, images or film of you distributed on some form of social media without your consent. Other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

**Where did this most recent incident occur?**

At this Residence. At a social event organised by this Residence. While working for this Residence.

At your university. At a university event. Online.

Elsewhere/somewhere outside this residence or university.

**When did this most recent incident occur?**

In the last month. In the last 3 months. In the last 6 months. 2020

Not sure. Prefer not to say.

**Who engaged in the most recent incident?**

A student/s from your residence. A student/s from your university.

Other people outside this residence or university. Not sure. Prefer not to say.

**What was the person's relationship to you? Were they..**

A student in a more senior year. A student in your year. A student in a lower year.

A student RA. Not sure. Prefer not to say.

**How many people were directly involved in most recent incident?**

1. 2. 3-5. More than 5. I don't know.

**How many of them were known to you?**

All of them.      Some of them.      None of them.      Prefer not to say.

**Was the person/people engaged in the most recent incident ...**

Male(s) only.      Female(s) only.      Both male(s) and female(s)  
Not sure.                      Prefer not to say.

**Did you seek support or assistance in relation to the most recent incident?**

Yes.      No.      Prefer not to say.

**Following the incident/s who did you go to for support?**

Friends or family outside of this Residence.      A more senior resident at this Residence.  
Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.  
An employee at this Residence.      Another student at this Residence.  
Someone employed at your university.      Student support services at your university.  
An external support group e.g. 1800 RESPECT, Lifeline.      Police.  
I did not seek support or assistance.      I prefer not to say. Other.

**As you sought support or assistance with regard to your personal experience of sexual harassment, please rate how satisfied were you with the support and assistance that you received.**

Very satisfied.      Satisfied.                      Not satisfied.      Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on the support or assistance you received from this Residence?**

Yes.      No.

**Comment**

**People decide not to seek support or assistance for many different reasons. Which, if any of these were reasons you did not seek support or assistance from this Residence? (Please select all that apply).**

I did not know who could provide me with support or assistance at this Residence.  
I did not know where I had to go/what I had to do to make a formal report or complaint.  
I felt embarrassed or ashamed.      I thought it would be too emotionally difficult.  
I did not think the incident would be kept confidential. I did not think I needed help.  
I did not think it was serious enough.      I was worried I might not be believed.  
I did not want to hurt the offender/s or get them into trouble.      I thought it would be too hard to prove.  
I was too scared or frightened.      I thought it could incriminate me – I did not want to get into trouble. Prefer not to say. Other reasons.

**Did you formally report or make a formal complaint about the incident to anyone?**

Yes.      No.      Prefer not to say.

**Who did you report it to?**

A student RA at this Residence.      Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence.      University complaints service.      Police.      I prefer not to say.

**Did the person taking your formal report or complaint explain their formal reporting or disclosure processes to you, including any involvement with or processes for reporting to the police?**

Yes.      No.      Don't know.      Prefer not to say.

**How satisfied were you with the formal reporting or complaint process of sexual harassment, taking into account issues such as the fairness, sensitivity and efficiency of the process?**

Very satisfied.      Satisfied.      Not satisfied.      Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on your experience of formally reporting or making a complaint about the incident?**

Yes.      No.

**Comment**

**Have you observed someone else being Sexual Harassed since moving into this residence?**

Yes.      No.      Not sure.      Prefer not to say.

**Observed or Witnessed Sexual Harassment**

We are interested in your answers to the following questions. because you have observed or witnessed sexual harassment during your stay at this residence.

**Have you ever witnessed any of the following happening to another student of your residence?**

Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing.      Inappropriate staring or leering that made them feel intimidated.      Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body.      Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made them feel offended.      Sexually explicit pictures, posters or gifts that made them feel offended.      Repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates.

Intrusive questions about their private life or physical appearance that made them feel offended.

Inappropriate physical contact.      Requests or pressure for sex, or other sexual acts.

Received or seen any sexually explicit emails or SMS messages.      Repeated or inappropriate advances on email, social networking websites or internet chat rooms.      Inappropriate commentary, images or videos of them distributed on some form of social media without their consent.

**What was the most recent incident?**

Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing.      Inappropriate staring or leering that made them feel intimidated.      Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body.      Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made them feel offended.      Sexually explicit pictures, posters or gifts that made them feel offended.      Repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates.

Intrusive questions about their private life or physical appearance that made them feel offended.

Inappropriate physical contact.      Requests or pressure for sex, or other sexual acts.

Received or seen any sexually explicit emails or SMS messages. Repeated or inappropriate advances on email, social networking websites or internet chat rooms. Inappropriate commentary, images or videos of them distributed on some form of social media without their consent.

**Where did this most recent incident happen?**

At this residence. At a social event organized by this residence. While working for this residence.

At your university. At a university event. Online. Other.

**Who engaged in the unwelcome behaviour?**

A student/s from this residence. A student/s from your university. Not sure.

Prefer not to say. Other.

**Did you take any action when you became aware of this?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**What did you do? (Please select all that apply.)**

I talked to the victim. I talked to the offender.

I asked a staff member at this residence about what I should do.

I spoke to a student at this residence about what I should do.

I spoke to someone outside of this residence about what I should do.

Called 1800 RESPECT telephone counselling. Called Lifeline. Called the Police. I didn't do anything.

Not sure. Prefer not to say. I did something else.

**Which of these best describes why you did not take any action about the incident you witnessed? (Please select all that apply).**

I felt it would endanger the victim. I felt worried for my own safety.

I didn't think it was serious enough to intervene. I didn't think it was my responsibility.

I knew that other people were supporting and assisting them. I didn't know what to do.

I didn't want to get involved. The victim asked me not to take any action. Prefer not to say.

**Did you seek support or assistance in relation to the incident?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**Following the incident/s who did you go to for support?**

Friends or family outside of this Residence. A more senior resident at this Residence.

Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence. Another student at this Residence.

Someone employed at your university. Student support services at your university.

An external support group e.g. 1800 RESPECT, Lifeline. Police.

I did not seek support or assistance. I prefer not to say. Other.

**As you sought support or assistance with regard to your personal experience of sexual harassment, please rate how satisfied were you with the support and assistance that you received.**

Very satisfied. Satisfied. Not satisfied. Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on the support or assistance you received from this Residence?**

Yes. No.

**Comment**

**People decide not to seek support or assistance for many different reasons. Which, if any of these were reasons you did not seek support or assistance from this Residence? (Please select all that apply).**

I did not know who could provide me with support or assistance at this Residence.

I did not know where I had to go/what I had to do to make a formal report or complaint.

I felt embarrassed or ashamed. I thought it would be too emotionally difficult.

I did not think the incident would be kept confidential. I did not think I needed help.

I did not think it was serious enough. I was worried I might not be believed.

I did not want to hurt the offender/s or get them into trouble. I thought it would be too hard to prove.

I was too scared or frightened. I thought it could incriminate me – I did not want to get into trouble.

Prefer not to say.

**Did you formally report or make a formal complaint about the incident?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**Who did you report it to?**

A student RA at this Residence. Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence. University complaints service. Police. I prefer not to say.

**Did the person taking your report explain their formal reporting or disclosure processes to you, including any involvement with or processes for reporting to the police?**

Yes. No. Don't know. Prefer not to say.

**How satisfied were you with the formal reporting or disclosure process, taking into account issues such as the fairness, sensitivity and efficiency of the process?**

Very satisfied. Satisfied. Not satisfied. Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on your experience of formally reporting or making a complaint about the incident?**

Yes. No.

## Comment

### Indecent Assault

*Indecent Assault is unwanted touching of a person's body (mouth, breast, bottom or genitals) by another person. For example, it can include kissing or inappropriate touching of a person's breasts, bottom or genitals.*

#### Have you personally experienced Indecent Assault since moving into this residence?

Yes. No. Not sure. Prefer not to say.

#### Where did this occur?

At this Residence. At a social event organised by this Residence. While working for this Residence.

At your university. At a university event. Online. Elsewhere/somewhere outside this residence or university.

#### When did this occur?

In the last month. In the last 3 months. In the last 6 months. 2020 Not sure.

Prefer not to say.

#### Who engaged in the unwelcome behaviour?

A student/s from your residence. A student/s from your university. Not sure. Prefer not to say.

#### What was the person's relationship to you? Were they..

A student in a more senior year. A student in your year. A student in a lower year.

Student RA/s at this Residence. Not sure. Prefer not to say.

#### How many people were directly involved in subjecting you to this incident?

1. 2. 3-5. More than 5. I don't know.

#### How many of them were known to you?

All of them. Some of them. None of them. Prefer not to say.

#### Was the person/people engaged in the unwelcome behaviour?

Male(s) only. Female(s) only. Both male(s) and female(s). Not sure.

Prefer not to say.

#### Did you seek support or assistance in relation to the incident?

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

#### Following the incident/s who did you go to for support?

Friends or family outside this Residence. A student RA at this Residence.

Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence. An employee at

this Residence.

Another student at this Residence. Someone employed at your university.

Student support services at your university. An external support group e.g. 1800 RESPECT, Lifeline.

The Police. I prefer not to say. Other.

**As you sought support or assistance with regard to your personal experience of indecent assault, please rate how satisfied were you with the support and assistance that you received.**

Very satisfied. Satisfied. Not satisfied. Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on the support or assistance you received from this Residence?**

Yes. No.

#### **Comment**

**People decide not to seek support or assistance for many different reasons. Which, if any of these were reasons you did not seek support or assistance from this Residence? (Please select all that apply).**

I did not know who could provide me with support or assistance at this Residence.

I did not know where I had to go/what I had to do to make a formal report or complaint.

I felt embarrassed or ashamed. I thought it would be too emotionally difficult.

I did not think the incident would be kept confidential. I did not think I needed help.

I did not think it was serious enough. I was worried I might not be believed.

I did not want to hurt the offender/s or get them into trouble. I thought it would be too hard to prove.

I was too scared or frightened. I thought it could incriminate me – I did not want to get into trouble.

Prefer not to say.

**Did you formally report or make a formal complaint about the incident to anyone?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**Who did you report it to?**

A student RA at this Residence. Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence. University complaints service. Police. I prefer not to say.

**Did the person taking your report explain their formal reporting or disclosure processes to you, including any involvement with or processes for reporting to the police?**

Yes. No. Don't know. Prefer not to say.

**How satisfied were you with the formal reporting or complaint process of indecent assault, taking into account issues such as the fairness, sensitivity and efficiency of the process?**



Very satisfied. Satisfied. Not satisfied. Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on your experience of formally reporting or making a complaint about the incident?**

Yes. No.

**Comment**

**Have you observed someone else being Indecently Assaulted since moving into this residence?**

Yes. No. Not sure. Prefer not to say.

**Observed or Witnessed Indecent Assault**

*We are interested in your answers to the following questions. because you have observed or witnessed indecent assault during your stay at this residence.*

**Where did this happen?**

At this residence. At a social event organised by this residence. While working for this residence.

At your university. At another residential college or university event. Online.

Elsewhere/somewhere outside this residence or university.

**Who engaged in the unwelcome behaviour?**

A student/s from this residence. A student/s from your university. Not sure.

Prefer not to say.

**Did you take any action when you became aware of this?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**What did you do? (Please select all that apply.)**

I talked to the victim. I talked to the offender.

I asked a staff member at this residence about what I should do.

I spoke to a student at this residence about what I should do.

I spoke to someone outside of this residence about what I should do.

Called 1800 RESPECT telephone counselling. Called Lifeline. Called the Police.

I didn't do anything. Not sure. Prefer not to say. I did something else.

**Which of these best describes why you did not take any action about the incident you witnessed?  
Please select all that apply.**

I felt it would endanger the victim. I felt worried for my own safety.

I didn't think it was serious enough to intervene. I didn't think it was my responsibility.

I knew that other people were supporting and assisting them. I didn't know what to do.

I didn't want to get involved. The victim asked me not to take any action. Prefer not to say.

**Did you seek support or assistance in relation to the incident?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**Following the incident/s who did you go to for support?**

Friends or family outside of this Residence. A more senior resident at this Residence.

Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence. Another student at this Residence.

Someone employed at your university. Student support services at your university.

An external support group e.g. 1800 RESPECT, Lifeline. Police.

I did not seek support or assistance. I prefer not to say. Other.

**As you sought support or assistance with regard to your personal experience of indecent assault, please rate how satisfied were you with the support and assistance that you received.**

Very satisfied. Satisfied. Not satisfied. Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on the support or assistance you received from this Residence?**

Yes. No.

**Comment**

**Did you report the incident?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**Who did you report it to?**

A student RA at this Residence. Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence. University complaints service. Police. I prefer not to say.

**Did the person taking your report explain their formal reporting or disclosure processes to you, including any involvement with or processes for reporting to the police?**

Yes. No. Don't know. Prefer not to say.

**How satisfied were you with the formal reporting or complaint process, taking into account issues such as the fairness, sensitivity and efficiency of the process?**

Very satisfied. Satisfied. Not satisfied. Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on your experience of formally reporting or making a complaint about the incident?**

Yes. No.

**Comment**

**Sexual Assault**

*Sexual Assault describes the forced penetration of the vagina or anus of any person with any part of the body of another person, or any object, against their will or consent. It also includes oral sex.*

**Have you personally experienced Sexual Assault since moving into this residence?**

Yes. No. Not sure. Prefer not to say.

**Where did this occur?**

At this Residence. At a social event organised by this Residence. While working for this Residence.

At your university. At a university event. Online.

Elsewhere/somewhere outside this residence or university.

**When did this occur?**

In the last month. In the last 3 months. In the last 6 months. 2020

Not sure. Prefer not to say.

**Who engaged in the unwelcome behaviour?**

A student/s from your residence. A student/s from your university. Not sure.

Prefer not to say.

**What was the person's relationship to you? Were they..**

A student in a more senior year. A student in your year. A student in a lower year.

Student RA/s at this Residence. Not sure. Prefer not to say.

**How many people were directly involved in subjecting you to this incident?**

1. 2. 3-5. More than 5. I don't know.

**How many of them were known to you?**

All of them. Some of them. None of them. Prefer not to say.

**Was the person/people engaged in the unwelcome behaviour?**

Male(s) only. Female(s) only. Both male(s) and female(s). Not sure.

Prefer not to say.

**Did you seek support or assistance in relation to the incident?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**Following the incident/s who did you go to for support?**

Friends or family outside of this Residence. A more senior resident at this Residence.

Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence. Another student at this Residence.

Someone employed at your university. Student support services at your university.

An external support group e.g. 1800 RESPECT, Lifeline. Police.

I did not seek support or assistance. I prefer not to say. Other.

**As you sought support or assistance with regard to your personal experience of indecent assault, please rate how satisfied were you with the support and assistance that you received.**

Very satisfied. Satisfied. Not satisfied. Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on the support or assistance you received from this Residence?**

Yes. No.

#### **Comment**

**People decide not to seek support or assistance for many different reasons. Which, if any of these were reasons you did not seek support or assistance from this Residence? (Please select all that apply).**

I did not know who could provide me with support or assistance at this Residence.

I did not know where I had to go/what I had to do to make a formal report or complaint.

I felt embarrassed or ashamed. I thought it would be too emotionally difficult.

I did not think the incident would be kept confidential. I did not think I needed help.

I did not think it was serious enough. I was worried I might not be believed.

I did not want to hurt the offender/s or get them into trouble. I thought it would be too hard to prove.

I was too scared or frightened. I thought it could incriminate me – I did not want to get into trouble.

Prefer not to say.

**Did you formally report or make a formal complaint about the incident to anyone?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**Who did you report it to?**

A student RA at this Residence. Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence. University complaints service. Police. I prefer not to say.

**Did the person taking your report explain their formal reporting or disclosure processes to you, including any involvement with or processes for reporting to the police?**

Yes. No. Don't know. Prefer not to say.

**How satisfied were you with the formal reporting or complaint process of indecent assault, taking into account issues such as the fairness, sensitivity and efficiency of the process?**

Very satisfied. Satisfied. Not satisfied. Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on your experience of formally reporting or making a complaint about the incident?**

Yes. No.

**Comment**

**Have you observed someone else being Indecently Assaulted since moving into this residence?**

Yes. No. Not sure. Prefer not to say.

**Observed or Witnessed Sexual Assault**

We are interested in your answers to the following questions, because you have observed or witnessed sexual assault during your stay at this residence.

**Where did this happen?**

At this residence. At a social event organised by this residence. While working for this residence.

At your university. At another residential college or university event. Online.

Elsewhere/somewhere outside this residence or university.

**Who engaged in the unwelcome behaviour?**

A student/s from this residence. A student/s from your university. Not sure.

Prefer not to say.

**Did you take any action when you became aware of this?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**What did you do? (Please select all that apply.)**

I talked to the victim. I talked to the offender.

I asked a staff member at this residence about what I should do.

I spoke to a student at this residence about what I should do.

I spoke to someone outside of this residence about what I should do.

Called 1800 RESPECT telephone counselling. Called Lifeline. Called the Police. I didn't do anything.

Not sure. Prefer not to say. I did something else.

**Which of these best describes why you did not take any action about the incident you witnessed?  
Please select all that apply.**

I felt it would endanger the victim. I felt worried for my own safety.

I didn't think it was serious enough to intervene. I didn't think it was my responsibility.

I knew that other people were supporting and assisting them. I didn't know what to do.

I didn't want to get involved. The victim asked me not to take any action.

Prefer not to say.

**Did you seek support or assistance in relation to the incident?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**Following the incident/s who did you go to for support?**

Friends or family outside of this Residence. A more senior resident at this Residence.

Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence. Another student at this Residence.

Someone employed at your university. Student support services at your university.

An external support group e.g. 1800 RESPECT, Lifeline. Police.

I did not seek support or assistance. I prefer not to say. Other.

**As you sought support or assistance with regard to your personal experience of indecent assault, please rate how satisfied were you with the support and assistance that you received.**

Very satisfied. Satisfied. Not satisfied. Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on the support or assistance you received from this Residence?**

Yes. No.

**Comment**

**Did you report the incident?**

Yes. No. Prefer not to say.

**Who did you report it to? (Please select all that apply).**

A student RA at this Residence. Someone who is responsible for the welfare of students at this Residence.

An employee at this Residence. University complaints service. Police. I prefer not to say.

**Did the person taking your report explain their formal reporting or disclosure processes to you, including any involvement with or processes for reporting to the police?**

Yes. No. Don't know. Prefer not to say.

**How satisfied were you with the formal reporting or complaint process, taking into account issues such as the fairness, sensitivity and efficiency of the process?**

Very satisfied. Satisfied. Not satisfied. Very unsatisfied.

**Would you like to provide any comments on your experience of formally reporting or making a complaint about the incident?**

Yes. No.

**Comment**

## Appendix 5 - Links

### **Link to the AHRC report**

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/change-course-national-report-sexual-assault-and-sexual>

### **AHRC Change the Course Report. Profile of University Respondents UNIVERSITY: AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY ACU results**

<https://www.acu.edu.au/-/media/staff-site-rte-docs-only/docs/emergency-and-safety/acu-2017-survey-results-summary-tables-v2.pdf?la=en&hash=27FE04464E4C90088EA980488EC6FA7E>

### **Implementation of recommendations from Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities**

<https://www.acu.edu.au/-/media/feature/pagecontent/richtext/student-life/study-safety/implementation-of-recommendations-from-change-the-course-report.pdf?la=en&hash=345B251B10FA46BC09E7ED3D18A38627>

### **AHRC University student sexual assault and sexual harassment survey. Notes on reading institutional-level data**

<https://www.acu.edu.au/-/media/feature/pagecontent/richtext/student-life/study-safety/university-student-sexual-assault-and-sexual-harassment-survey.pdf?la=en&hash=C012FF8C76693E2BC69DC2312E0790EE>

