



Changing the Course

RMIT three-year plan and prevention
framework to reduce sexual harm

RMIT aims to be a place where everyone has the opportunity to shape their future. Led by our values of courage and inclusion, we believe that starts with ensuring every University community member is respected – today and every day.

Our three-year Changing the Course framework outlines the steps RMIT is taking to reduce sexual harm in our community. The framework acknowledges the vital role the education sector plays in preparing students to positively contribute to society – respecting others' rights, speaking up when needed and stepping in to help others who are not able to.

The Changing the Course framework was developed in 2017 and aims to build and maintain a culture of inclusion and respect through leadership actions, policies, services and facilities, communications, events and training.



Desired Outcomes*

- RMIT communities are safe and free from violence.
- Relationships are respectful.
- Services meet the needs of those experiencing sexual harm.
- Justice responses are effective.
- Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

*Drawn from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010-2022.



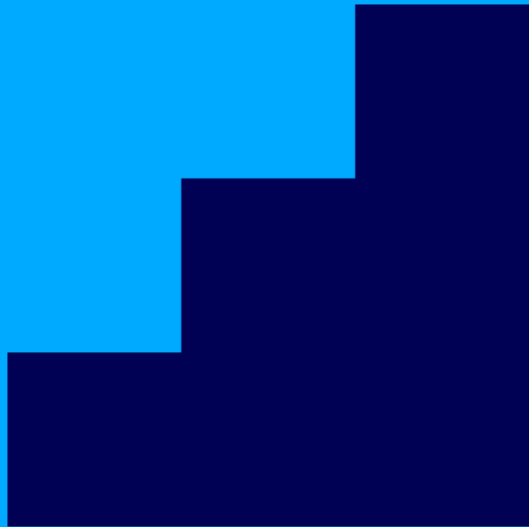
Complexities

- The University community is constantly changing and refreshing.
- Student and staff communities overlap and need to be addressed.
- A simultaneous focus on both prevention and response is required.
- Sexual harm is a complex issue affecting societies around the world.



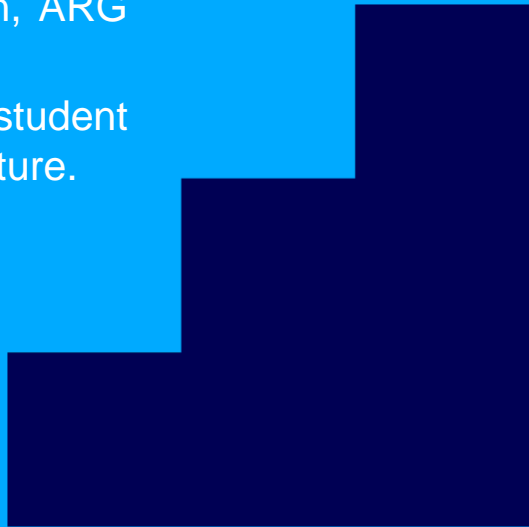


Guiding Principles

- Providing trauma-informed support and care.
 - Being collaborative and inclusive.
 - Undertaking evidence-based actions and addressing root causes.
 - Ensuring sustainability, with whole-of-organisation involvement.
 - Commitment and leadership at all levels.
- 



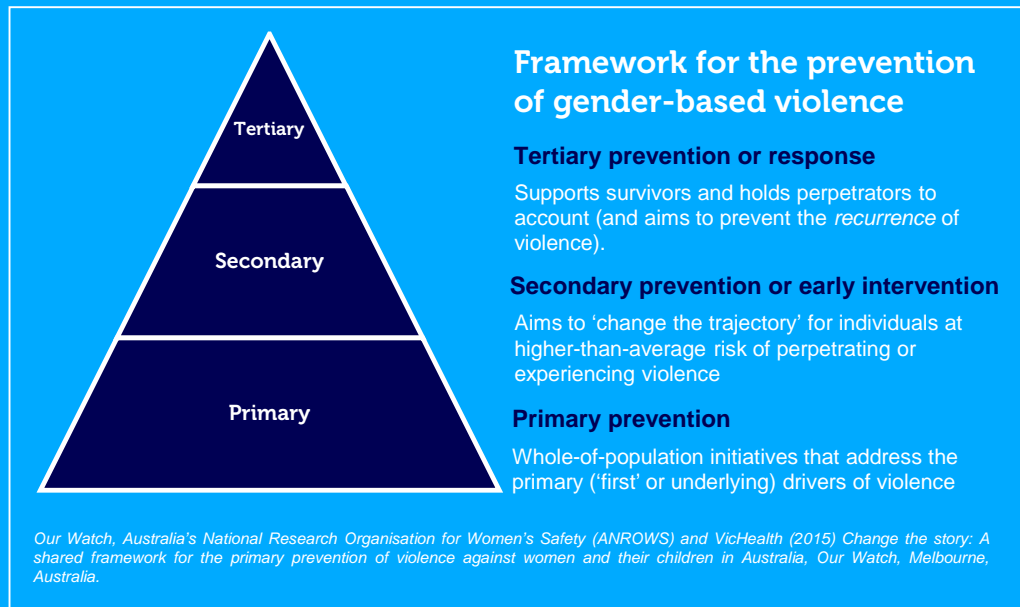
Governance

- The Vice-Chancellor’s Advisory Group meets quarterly and oversees the Changing the Course framework and annual action plans. The Advisory Group includes representatives from frontline student wellbeing services such as RMIT Safer Community and counselling, senior leadership, academic staff, security, research, residential services, ARG, HR and RUSU.
 - Changing the Course action streams are driven by leaders across student wellbeing and inclusion, ARG and HR.
 - Regular consultation and feedback from the student body is undertaken under the governance structure.
- 

Taking a Holistic Approach

The aim of our Changing the Course framework is to build a community where every student and staff member is not only safe, but respected, valued and treated as an equal in our community.

We recognise that no one single initiative can achieve this goal – that’s why we’re targeting the drivers of sexual harm with evidence-based strategies to prevent it from occurring in the first instance.



The Changing the Course framework is underpinned by three principles:

- 1. Primary prevention:** To prevent sexual harm from occurring in the first place
- 2. Secondary prevention:** To support those experiencing or at risk of sexual harm and applying targeted interventions to prevent occurrence.
- 3. Tertiary prevention:** To respond after sexual harm has occurred to minimise impacts, prevent re-occurrence and ensure perpetrator accountability.




RMIT Leadership and Commitment

RMIT is proud to have the strong support of the Vice-Chancellor and senior leaders who recognise that change takes long-term effort and requires commitment and engagement across the University.

With continued support and leadership, we are confident that we can bring about wide-reaching and sustainable social change.

RMIT recognises that it is not alone in this work. Sexual harm is a significant public health issue, that continues to receive attention at a local, national and international level. It is the joint responsibility of individuals, institutions, communities and the government to build a safer, more respectful and equitable society that is free from sexual harm.





Changing the Course

RMIT plan and prevention framework
to reduce sexual harm (2017-2020)

Desired Outcomes	2017	2018	2019	2020
RMIT Communities are safe and free from violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engagement campaign – Visible support from leadership – Refreshed sexual harassment policy – Coordination and alignment across other services and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Student communications and engagement campaign – Communicate clear expectations about respectful and inclusive behaviour, including within policies – Launch e-learning modules – Design a comprehensive alcohol policy comprising evidence-based strategies for university settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Launch evaluation framework for RMIT's action – Engagement campaign (attitudes and pulse check) – Drive respectful and inclusive values and culture through strategic conversations, events and targeted professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implement evidence-based targeted interventions to support diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally and linguistically diverse students and staff, DGSS communities and RMIT entities and partners
Relationships are respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Staff-student relationships review – Face to face skill development for students and staff (wave 1) – Development of e-learning suite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Build awareness and skills among students and staff in respectful relationships, consent and bystander action – Deliver skills development to students living in residences associated with RMIT and members of RMIT clubs – Review staff sexual harassment compliance modules to make explicit required standards of behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Resource teaching staff to embed impactful values and culture in curriculum and learning environments – adopting a whole-of-school approach where possible – Amplify male leadership and modelling of positive male attitudes and behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engage with industry partners and peak bodies who employ RMIT graduates, host WIL placements, partner in research around reducing sexual harassment and assault
Services meet the needs of those experiencing sexual harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support to report and respond – On-campus specialist sexual harm counselling service – Additional staff to support casework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Refine services which support those affected, aligned with trauma-informed principles – Resource and manage demand – Provide evidence-based interventions to support staff working in sexual harm to reduce vicarious trauma/burnout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support those affected by sexual harm through conduct and complaints – Support students affected by sexual harm through academic processes including special consideration, academic appeals and the academic 'at risk' process – Prepare for second national survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Respond to the second national survey findings and recommendations
Justice responses are effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complaints handlers, misconduct investigators and advisors trained in responding to disclosures (wave 1) – Commitment to restorative engagement (centre of innovative justice) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Student and staff misconduct processes to align with guiding principles, particularly trauma-informed practice – Deliver training in responding to disclosures (senior officers) and restorative engagement (executive leaders) – Develop a threshold to refer matters for third-party external investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improve student access to University justice by integrating the option of Restorative Justice into student conduct processes – Train senior officers in Restorative Engagement and Restorative Justice – Strengthen reporting cultures across student clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Build partnerships with multi-disciplinary community services – Develop and pilot approaches to remove justice barriers for diverse communities – Review and refine Restorative processes
Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review student and staff misconduct findings and penalties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop best practice standards for investigations and for discipline action to hold perpetrators to account – Develop and implement guidelines for consistent application of student misconduct penalties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Explore potential for single code of conduct across RMIT community – Research evidence-based behaviour change programs designed to prevent any recurrence or escalation of inappropriate behaviour (e.g. education, counselling) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adopt evidence-based behavioural interventions and penalties to prevent recurrence