

Toward a Whole-of-institution Approach to Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response: Progress, Practice, and Possibility at Monash University

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Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual harm have long been an area of focus and concern within higher education institutions in Australia. The National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence is expected to mark a new era for the sector, moving beyond recommendations to regulatory compliance, including the importance of, and requirement for, a whole-of-organisation approach (Department of Education, 2025). This paper details Monash University's commitment and evolving progression towards a whole-of-institution approach since the release of the Change the Course report in 2017 (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017), highlighting key lessons and challenges, and outlining opportunities for the sector in this new chapter.

Keywords

Sexual harm prevention and response; Sexual harm; Gender-based violence; Whole-of-institution; Primary prevention; Higher education.

Introduction

The development and progression of the *National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence* (henceforth, the Code) has been shaped by the findings of successive national student safety surveys and years of sustained student advocacy (Australian Human Rights Commission [AHRC], 2017; Department of Education, 2024b, 2025; Heywood et al., 2022). Both the *Change the Course* report in 2017 and the subsequent National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) in 2021 revealed significant rates of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual harm occurring in university campuses across Australia (AHRC, 2017; Heywood et al., 2022). These concerning results, combined with ongoing campaigning by victim-survivors, have highlighted the urgent need for a coordinated, sector-wide response, driving institutions and government toward a systemic approach to enable accountability and consistency in prevention and response. A key focus of the Code is the requirement to adopt and implement a whole-of-institution approach to GBV prevention and response, requiring coordinated action across all areas of the institution, including affiliated student associations and student accommodation providers (Department of Education, 2024b, 2025).

The call for a whole-of-institution approach

The 2017 *Change the Course* report (AHRC, 2017), which detailed the results of the first survey of students on sexual harassment and assault at Australian universities, made several key recommendations to address sexual violence across the higher education sector. A core underpinning principle of the report was the need for a whole-of-organisation (or institutional) approach to sexual harm prevention. A statement therein from former Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins encouraged universities to act “in an inclusive manner that involves robust dialogue with students and staff alike, and responds in a fully integrated way across the full

life and community of the university” (AHRC, 2017, p. 2). Such an approach was further reflected throughout the recommendations, including in relation to institutional leadership and governance, development of institution-wide action plans, coordinated prevention strategies, the call for cross-campus multi-stakeholder engagement, and the need for integrated systems to support trauma-informed practices (AHRC, 2017).

In support of these recommendations, explicit guidance to adopt a whole-of-institution approach to prevent and respond to GBV and sexual harm was first formally referenced by Universities Australia, Our Watch, and the Victorian State Government in *Educating for Equality* (2021). *Educating for Equality* was developed in consultation with stakeholders across the university sector and rested on a foundation of earlier research and whole-of-school approaches in primary and secondary schooling settings, including *Change the Story* (Our Watch, 2021). In *Educating for Equality*, a whole-of-university model is defined as:

Addressing the context and culture in which students and staff study, work, live and play to foster a safe and supportive environment, reiterating key messages through various mechanisms, engaging relevant stakeholders, working across the diverse settings and levels of the university to effect cultural change and addressing the practices, policies and processes across all areas of the university. (Universities Australia et al., 2021, p. 13)

Five domains where universities could take action and create change were explicitly articulated in the *Educating for Equality* framework: business and operations, research, student life, teaching and learning, and workplace.

The second NSSS, designed to document prevalence rather than prescribe institutional response, did not include recommendations or explicit reference to a whole-of-institution approach. However, focus remained on institutional responsibility and accountability, supportive environments, systemic culture change, and multi-level stakeholder engagement (Heywood et al., 2022).

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)’s *Good Practice Note: Preventing and Responding to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Australian Higher Education Sector*, released in 2020, built upon this foundation. It noted leadership and governance as critical in ensuring institution-wide action. This included the need for a representative taskforce or working group, integration of student and staff voice, consideration of student accommodation, and an appropriate governance structure and resourcing.

In 2023, Universities Australia (UA) collaborated with practitioners across the sector to develop and release the *Primary Prevention of Sexual Harm in the University Sector: Good Practice Guide* (henceforth, UA Good Practice Guide). This further reinforced the importance of a whole-of-institution approach. The UA Good Practice Guide intended to provide primary prevention practitioners with evidence-based approaches in a diverse range of university contexts, highlighting a whole-of-institution approach as a key consideration:

The promotion of respect and prevention of gender-based violence should never be the responsibility of one individual or department. A whole-of-institution approach is critical to building individual and organisational capability to prevent gender-based violence and for fostering a positive university culture. (Universities Australia, 2023, p. 12)

More recently, in 2024, the *Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education* was released, mandating that all higher education providers embed a whole-of-organisation approach across campus operations (Department of Education, 2024a). The ensuing Code similarly places strong emphasis on a whole-of-organisation approach as both a foundational principle and a practical implementation strategy (Department of Education, 2025). As detailed in the *National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Issues Paper* (Department of Education, 2024b), “The National Code will support a whole-of-organisation approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. ... It is only through this approach that changes in organisational culture, practices and service delivery can be achieved to drive institutional change” (p. 7). In alignment with the previously published UA Good Practice Guide, the Code expressly articulates that preventing and responding to GBV is not the responsibility of one unit or team, requiring coordinated action across all levels and functions of an institution. Moreover, the principle of a whole-of-organisation approach is embedded throughout the seven standards (Department of Education, 2025; Universities Australia, 2023).

Why a whole-of-institution approach?

A whole-of-institution (or whole-of-organisation, used interchangeably in legislation and the literature) approach recognises that complex and systemic issues, such as GBV and sexual harm, are not isolated or individual problems. It considers how prevention efforts can reach all parts of the organisation, leveraging policies, procedures, and everyday operations to drive cultural change and embed prevention into the fabric of institutional life (Dooris et al., 2019; Our Watch, 2021). As McCall et al. (2023) note:

To create conditions that enable these interventions, universities must act throughout their social-ecological systems—including changing institutional norms and policy, engaging campus community members, involving community voices throughout intervention lifecycles, and building on both strengths and risk factors in their contexts. (p. 1589)

This approach is essential for a number of reasons. Firstly, as evidenced in the two national surveys, instances of GBV occur within every component of the university experience: on campus and online; in student accommodation and classes; and during extra-curricular activities, study tours, internships, and placements (AHRC, 2018; Heywood et al., 2022; Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency [TEQSA], 2020). This in itself necessitates the collective responsibility for GBV prevention. A siloed response, for example, managed by a single department within a university, misses opportunities for prevention and timely support. The adoption of whole-of-organisation practice ensures that every part of the institution, including leadership, teaching staff, security, residential teams, communications, and governance, plays a role. When all staff understand their responsibilities and take aligned action, the institution can better support those affected or impacted by GBV, take action, and reduce harm (McCall et al., 2023; Universities Australia et al., 2021).

Second, a whole-of-organisation approach targets systems, culture, education, and policy, addressing the underlying drivers of GBV (Department of Education, 2025; Our Watch, 2021, Universities Australia et al., 2021). A focus on attitudes, norms, power dynamics, and inequality rather than just individual behaviours has the potential to move an institution beyond reactive compliance to long-term sustainable prevention and culture change.

Third, a coordinated approach prevents or minimises the promotion of inconsistent or incorrect information and advice (Universities Australia et al., 2021). Ensuring all staff, students, and members of the university community have a clear understanding of both prevention and response initiatives and support services is fundamental. This can help reduce confusion, minimise re-traumatisation for those affected, and increase trust in institutional response and operational practice (Department of Education, 2025; TEQSA, 2020).

Fourth, prevention work, including capacity-building initiatives like respectful relationships and consent education, can only be effective if messaging is reinforced throughout the university experience, from induction programs to lectures, and campus culture to leadership communications. This includes the importance of building individual capacity and capability to role model respectful interactions and intervene as active bystanders. A whole-of-institution approach seeks to align policies, training, leadership, reporting, and culture, reinforcing positive norms throughout the organisation and supporting the creation of a safe and respectful living and learning environment (TEQSA, 2020; Universities Australia et al., 2021).

Finally, fragmented or inadequate responses to GBV can lead to loss of trust, liability, reputational damage, student/staff attrition, and, most notably, can compound experiences of harm. A coordinated approach demonstrates that the institution is serious about safety, inclusion, and wellbeing, regardless of location, course of study, or position of employment.

History of prevention and response at Monash University

Phase 1: A response to the *Change the Course* report (2017–2021)

Monash University is a large public research university, with five major Australian campuses located across Melbourne, Victoria, Australia as well as international campuses and teaching and research sites across Malaysia, Indonesia, China, India, and Italy. The university hosts approximately 86,000 enrolled students and 20,000 staff.

Monash University first sought to introduce a centralised approach to preventing and responding to GBV in 2017 following the release of the *Change the Course* report (AHRC, 2017; McCall et al., 2023). The university had a history of prioritising student safety and wellbeing for many years, including the development of a Safer Community Unit in 2008 as a centralised point for campus threat and risk assessment. Recognising the need for a more coordinated approach, Monash University established a Respect.Now.Always Advisory Committee in September 2017, chaired by the President and Vice-Chancellor, and created a dedicated Respectful Communities team to lead and oversee primary prevention efforts (Monash University, n.d.). This included work towards engagement with students, staff, and stakeholders across the broader university, and a commitment to transparency and accountability. Monash University became one of the first Australian universities to publicly report on sexual assault and sexual harassment experienced by students on campus from 2017 onwards. Strong collaboration with the existing Safer Community Unit, subsequently designated as the central point of referral for any incidents of problem behaviour including GBV, was also a key component of a centralised approach.

At a similar time, in the months following the release of the *Change the Course* report, the university also sought to explore opportunities for enhanced sector collaboration. Colleagues across the higher education sector were approached to discuss the recommendations included in the report, as well as explore shared challenges and create opportunities for sharing good practice and ongoing partnership. This action, and interest from the sector, led to the creation of the Victorian Tertiary Primary Prevention Network (Burge & Marshall, 2023).

Additional university actions during this time included the introduction of a compulsory e-learning module for all commencing students; the development of a student-focused, peer-led active bystander training program; and review of staff ethical and professional conduct training. Other primary prevention work was targeted to student cohorts and areas of the student experience where higher rates of GBV were revealed by survey results (AHRC, 2017). Targeted initiatives were carried out in university residences, overnight and off-campus events, and new prevention approaches for incoming international students were implemented. Similarly, action to enhance Monash University's approach to GBV response focused on broad institution-wide systems, policies, and processes. This included the development of a report and support mobile application (Respect.Now.Always. Support App and later the Monash bSafe App) and the establishment of an independent review into existing university policies and response pathways for sexual harm. *Our Response to Change the Course: Addressing the AHRC Recommendations 2017 - 2019* (Monash University, 2020) provides an overview of actions taken by the university during this time.

The volume and speed of actions completed post *Change the Course* was reflective of the university's early commitment to GBV prevention. However, this work was predominantly reactive to the AHRC survey results and broadly reflective of the university's institutional maturity in GBV prevention at the time. Shortcomings were notable across two key areas: an exclusive focus on students, in particular students at Monash University's Australian campuses, and a lack of more considered capacity-building initiatives (beyond the induction compliance module and one-off training offerings for key cohorts). The spotlight on students, and exclusion of staff, resulted in the delivery of different information and support across cohorts, most notably in tertiary response policies, procedures, and systems. Further, whilst the nine recommendations in the *Change the Course* report related to Australian cohort survey results, work undertaken missed an opportunity to consider broader relevance and application across Monash University's global campus network. Similarly, separate training and social messaging campaigns limited the ability for unified and consistent messaging. An emphasis on centrally-led initiatives also limited efforts to engage and build the capacity of other areas within and beyond the Safer Community Unit, Respectful Communities, and Human Resources.

Phase 2: The National Student Safety Survey (2022)

The second strategic phase of Monash University's commitment to the prevention and response to GBV was informed by the 2021 NSSS (Heywood et al., 2022). Unlike the *Change the Course* report, recommendations were not provided as part of the NSSS; however, Monash University elected to develop and implement a tailored institutional *National Student Safety Survey Action Plan* (Monash University, 2022a; henceforth, the NSSS Action Plan). The NSSS Action Plan outlined actions across four priority areas determined based on national qualitative and quantitative data, and Monash University's institution-specific results.

A whole-of-institution approach was again adopted, with greater attention and focus on the shortcomings identified from the previous plan. This included individual and sector capacity building, with an emphasis on engagement, collaboration, and resource sharing with other universities and expert organisations. Greater consideration of broader GBV prevention and response programs of work across the university and the distribution of responsibility for new actions was also captured in the NSSS Action Plan. Alignment of staff and student prevention practice was identified as a priority area, with a focus to improve response systems to ensure all members of the university community received consistent support when disclosing or reporting GBV, albeit via different departments, policies, and procedures. Efforts towards alignment of prevention practice across Monash University's global campus network were also emphasised, with an initial focus on the establishment of GBV governance structures and auditing of current practice.

Although challenges regarding access to context- and location-specific data remained, the NSSS Action Plan conceived GBV prevention as an institution-wide imperative.

Phase 3: A Strategic Commitment to Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harm Prevention and Response (2023–present day)

In 2022, Monash University launched its *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2022–2030* (henceforth, EDI Framework). This followed an extensive period of community consultation where the need for a renewed intersectional and collaborative approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work became apparent (Monash University, 2022b). The framework further reinforced the importance of a whole-of-institution approach to broader EDI initiatives, highlighting the role of all community members in fostering a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment.

The completion of the university's NSSS Action Plan set the stage for a renewed focus on GBV prevention and response. It also provided the opportunity to reaffirm the institution's commitment to this program of work, resulting in the *Strategic Commitment to Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harm Prevention and Response* (Monash University, 2024a). The aim of the document was to speak to both students and staff, and connect to Monash University's broader efforts to prevent discrimination, vilification, harassment, and violence, as outlined in *Impact 2030: Monash University Strategic Plan 2021–2030* (Monash University, 2021). Meanwhile, it recognised the fundamental link between equity and inclusion, and the prevention of sexual harm and GBV (Monash University, 2022b).

The development of the new strategic approach was informed by a comprehensive review of existing primary prevention frameworks, and comprehensive local and international sector benchmarking (Universities Australia, 2023; Universities Australia et al., 2021). This desktop review revealed that, at the time, less than half of Australian universities (17 of 41) had published frameworks or action plans to address sexual harm and/or GBV. Most of the documentation included action plans, comparable to previous Monash University plans, with specific actions and timeframes. Internationally, the desktop review included universities in Canada, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom, with 19 current or previous frameworks to address sexual harm considered.

Monash University's Strategic Commitment to Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harm Prevention and Response (henceforth, the Commitment) was released in 2024 (Monash University, 2024a), with a whole-of-institution approach reflected throughout its six domains: leadership, culture, learning and teaching, research and impact, student life, and staff experience and engagement. The Commitment acknowledged existing practice and historical work on prevention and response at Monash University. It incorporated and embedded the perspectives of students, staff, academic experts, and external stakeholders (including the South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault) through extensive consultation and feedback opportunities. Purposefully broad, the Commitment outlines the vision to create a university free of violence where the whole community is safe, welcomed, respected, and thriving. In line with a whole-of-institution approach, responsibility for response and prevention is shared across the organisation.

To operationalise the Commitment, Monash University developed a phased implementation approach consisting of two sequential action plans. The *2024 - 2025 Prevention and Response Action Plan* (Monash University, 2024b) outlines actions Monash University will undertake for the first two years of the Commitment to enhance existing GBV and sexual harm prevention and response interventions, across all domains. Consistent with past practice, Monash University maintains its commitment to transparency and accountability through the publication of annual reports detailing its prevention and response efforts.

Challenges in adopting a whole-of-institution approach

While a whole-of-institution approach offers significant potential for lasting cultural change, its implementation is not without obstacles. Several challenges have emerged throughout evolving implementation, reflecting the complexity of system-wide cultural and structural change.

Lack of clear definitions and shared understandings

A key challenge in the broader approach to prevention and response within the higher education sector has been the inconsistent use of terminology, and consequent discrepancies in whole-of-institution approaches across different institutions, including with regards to reporting. Fluctuating since the release of the *Change the Course* report, terms like sexual assault and sexual harassment, sexual harm, sexual violence, and, more recently, gender-based violence have all been used interchangeably throughout literature and frameworks (AHRC, 2018; Department of Education, 2025; Heywood et al., 2022; Universities Australia, 2023). The Code defines gender-based violence as “any form of physical or non-physical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that results in, or is likely to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy” (Department of Education, 2025, p. 28). This definition has broader implications for the sector, with a far greater range of behaviours and practices included as part of this umbrella concept. It is expected that the Department of Education will provide guidance and templates for reporting in order to meet the requirements of the Code. However, current data collection and reporting practice across the sector varies and includes public facing reporting on behaviours such as sexual misconduct, GBV, and sexual harm, presenting significant challenges to obtaining consistent data to guide whole-of-institution approaches.

Achieving and sustaining at scale

Implementing change at scale across large, complex, and diverse institutions, both in terms of cohort and location, presents considerable logistical and strategic challenges, seen and felt throughout Monash University’s experiences with this program of work. Initiatives may succeed within individual departments or even pilot areas but struggle to gain traction or awareness organisation-wide. For example, the Flip the Script with EAAA program, a sexual assault resistance education program for university-aged women, is an evidence-informed but resource-intensive program run by Monash University. The program has shown a decrease in the likelihood of completed sexual assaults and has demonstrated impact at small scale, but this impact does not scale to the whole university (Senn et al., 2023). Moreover, sustaining scaled efforts over time in prevention and response demands ongoing leadership, iterative evaluation, and adaptation.

Relevancy and application across contexts and locations

Ensuring consistency and relevance across different contexts, including metropolitan, regional, and international campuses, while avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach, also requires significant coordination, communication, and resource investment. Student demographics, lived experiences, and understanding of GBV can vary significantly by location and context. In all cases, cohorts change through turnover (through graduation or attrition) on average every three to four years. Together with the aforementioned lack of shared understandings on the definitions of GBV, this creates instances where students do not label their experiences as GBV as they do not believe these meet the threshold for sexual violence. This necessitates repeat introductory communications, socio-culturally relevant and appropriately timed messaging, nuanced approaches to capability building and awareness-raising initiatives, and ongoing evaluation of impact and effectiveness (Bonar et al., 2020).

Frameworks without practical implementation

While several national and international frameworks outline principles for whole-of-organisation or institutional approaches, and a number of other universities have outlined similar commitments, there has often been a gap between theory and practice, particularly within tertiary settings (Universities Australia et al., 2021). Challenges arise in relation to hierarchical structures, resourcing and support, and tangible practical application, resulting in fragmented efforts or failure to meaningfully scale programs of work across the organisation. The limited availability of published, evidence-based examples of good practice across the sector has made it challenging to design, implement, and measure effective approaches to prevention or response as there are few tested models to guide or benchmark progress.

Disconnect with workplace gender equality practices

Whilst the Code directly links GBV prevention with broader gender equality efforts (including the requirement for institutions to incorporate a gender equality action plan under Standard 6), there has been a historical disconnect between the two (Department of Education, 2025). Indeed, workplace gender equality and GBV prevention have often been treated as separate agendas, despite sharing underlying drivers (Universities Australia et al., 2021). Gender equality initiatives have tended to focus on workplace matters including representation, pay gap, positive duty, and career progression (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, n.d.) without any explicit guidance on translation into student settings. The separation of these two programs of work has, at times, resulted in inconsistencies and unnecessary duplication.

Inconsistent resourcing

Resourcing for GBV prevention is highly variable across institutions. Whilst some universities allocate dedicated staff and funding, others rely on fragmented or short-term arrangements. There are also often significant differences in the classification, seniority, and scope of prevention and response roles. Even in settings like Monash University, where GBV prevention and response have been continually resourced, progress has been disrupted by organisation and sector change; shifting priorities; leadership turnover; and, particularly in primary prevention and response roles, staff fatigue or attrition. Monash University's size and scale has thus emerged as both a burden and an advantage in the context of this work. At times, it has resulted in an inability to effectively implement whole-of-institution change across the large international organisation. However, the large resourcing capacity has resulted in the creation and general maintenance of an inter-disciplinary team of practitioners devoted to prevention (Respectful Communities initially, the Equity Diversity and Inclusion team at present) and response (Safer Community Unit). Such resourcing has provided the ability to leverage diverse skills and expertise not often seen in universities smaller in scale and size, which often allocate far fewer resources to GBV prevention.

Lessons learned and opportunities for impact

Despite some of these challenges, there have been a number of lessons learned and opportunities which have presented from the university's experiences implementing a whole-of-institution approach which may be of value for others in the sector.

The importance of iteration and evaluation

Adopting a whole-of-institution approach requires an iterative and evolving process. Ongoing learning, adaptation, feedback, and critical reflection have proven essential to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and long-term impact across diverse contexts and stakeholders (TEQSA, 2020). The university's adoption of a phased approach, with annual or longer-term action plans, has enabled review and evaluation of existing and evolving practice. This phased approach has also enabled the

development and implementation of new strategies and approaches to emerging research, evidence, and examples of good practice across the sector, as these become available.

Leadership commitment and continuity

As has been outlined throughout much of the literature and documentation, leadership commitment has been vital to the ongoing evolution of GBV prevention and response programs of work at Monash University (Department of Education, 2024b; McCall et al., 2023; Our Watch, 2021; TEQSA, 2020; Universities Australia et al., 2021). Strong and visible senior leadership, supported by individual expertise in this space, have driven strategic commitment. This ensures adequate resourcing, transparency, and accountability through public reporting, contributions to sector collaboration, and championing the importance of the work by openly sharing progress and work still to be done.

Early engagement and co-design

The early engagement of students, staff, stakeholders, and those affected by GBV has also proven to be a critical component of progress to date at Monash University (McCall et al., 2023; TEQSA, 2020; Universities Australia, 2023; Universities Australia et al., 2021). Involving and authentically engaging relevant groups as part of co-design, delivery, and promotion, whilst often more time consuming, has generated significantly greater buy-in and broader university-wide commitment. Peer-led programs remain a cornerstone of prevention capacity building and awareness-raising at the university. New intakes of students are trained each year to facilitate training programs and host community events on topics including consent, respectful relationships, and masculinities.

Collaboration and partnership

Finally, Monash University has sought to take a proactive and leading approach to collaboration and partnership across the sector, recognising community safety and wellbeing as not just a responsibility of individual institutions but the sector as a whole. Collaborative efforts have included taking a leading role in the establishment of the Victorian Tertiary Primary Prevention Network, and associated initiatives such as Respect at Uni week. Monash University has also contributed to the development of Universities Australia good practice guidelines and development of the Code as part of the Expert Reference group (Burge, 2024; Burge & Marshall, 2023; Universities Australia, 2023). Working in partnership, supported by leadership commitment and availability of resourcing, offers unique opportunities to leverage expertise, foster innovation, drive systemic change, and amplify sector-wide impact (Dooris et al., 2019; McCall et al., 2023; Universities Australia, 2023).

Looking ahead

To guide the next phase of prevention and response at Monash University, the development of the new *2026-2030 GBV and Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan* has commenced. With a four-year timeline, this plan endeavours to bring together learnings from previous action plans and activities over the course of the past decade, giving particular consideration to scalability and sustainability of a whole-of-institution approach. Primary focus will be directed toward prioritising compliance with the Code. Additional activities will include enhancing the use of university-wide data to inform initiatives; retaining and expanding peer-led learning models to student engagement, training, and workshops; and further expansion and diversification of intervention approaches, including targeted interventions for identified cohorts. Beyond this, deeper consideration is being given to equitable and locally nuanced delivery of GBV prevention and response initiatives across Monash University's global campus network.

A National Code Taskforce has been created within Monash University to reinforce a whole-of-institution approach to the adoption of the Code. Led by the Vice-Chancellor and President, the taskforce is engaging senior leaders, practitioners, experts, affiliated associations, and student representatives. The taskforce recognises the importance and role of existing governance forums, whilst acknowledging the need for a focused, time-bound working group to facilitate collaboration and enact the changes required to be compliant and strive for sector leadership in prevention and response.

Conclusion

The Code presents the higher education sector with the obligation to move from goodwill approaches to GBV prevention and response to structured and well-governed approaches. While the Code primarily emphasises timely and trauma-informed response to GBV, Monash University remains equally committed to maintaining a strong and ongoing focus on primary prevention to address the underlying drivers of harm. A whole-of-organisation approach to GBV prevention and response is an ongoing and evolving commitment, requiring monitoring and evaluation and innovation. While significant progress has been made, and leadership has been demonstrated by Monash University and other institutions across the sector, as long as GBV remains a reality on our campuses and in our society more broadly, significant work remains.

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