

FAIR AGENDA

Students living on campus at high risk – yet survey shows most residences failing to invest adequately in prevention

PRESS RELEASE

Today's Australian Human Rights Commission report has revealed that 6.9% of university students were sexually assaulted on at least one occasion in 2015 or 2016.

The report has found that 10% of students who were sexually assaulted in a university setting in 2015 or 2016 experienced the most recent incident at a university residence; and 21% experienced the most recent sexual assault at a university or residence social event.

Yet a recent survey by community group Fair Agenda has shown that right now most residences are failing to invest adequately in prevention.

Fair Agenda approached all of Australia's university residences with a survey asking what, if any, training they provide to students and staff in consent and prevention sexual violence.

Of the 218 residences approached, just 129 have responded to the Fair Agenda survey so far. And of those, only 60 have indicated that they are involving a sexual assault service in the provision of this year's student training.

"It's not good enough. We know that sexual assault is an issue at universities, and at residences – and they should be doing everything possible to ensure student safety. That includes investing in prevention and consent training." Says Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

"We hear from so many students that there's a real desire to become better educated in this area. They don't feel they know what it means to get informed consent." Says Sharna Bremner, End Rape on Campus Australia.

"What's more, it's absolutely critical that any staff responsible for student welfare receive training in how to provide an appropriate response to someone who has just been through this kind of trauma. Right now many staff are not equipped to respond appropriately - meaning that students who work up the courage to try and report what's happened to them are sometimes being re-traumatised through that process." She added.

The data released today also shows that 63% of people who saw another student being sexually assaulted in 2016 did not take action in response to the incident.

Ms Carr added: "Residences should be training students and staff around preventing sexual violence – to make sure they understand things like consent and prevention, how to respond appropriately if somebody discloses that they've been raped, and how to safely intervene if you see someone acting predatorily towards one of your friends."

"It's also vital that training is being delivered by experts – which means involving a sexual assault service. But so far less than half of the residences who have

responded to Fair Agenda's survey have indicated that they are doing that. Students deserve better."

The full results of Fair Agenda's residence survey can be accessed at www.fairagenda.org/residences_survey

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Fast facts on Fair Agenda's survey:

- Residences approached with survey: **218**
- Residences who have responded to the survey: **129**

Of those:

- o Residences who are training all students in preventing sexual violence: **106**

- o Residences that are involving experts from a sexual assault service in student training: **60**

- o Residences that are training all staff w welfare responsibilities in preventing and responding to sexual violence: **107**

- o Residences that are involving experts from a sexual assault service in that staff training: **66**