

Respect and Gender-based Violence Action Plan

— 2026-2029



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of our lands and waterways.

We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Deakin campuses are built on the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people of the Geelong region, the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people of the greater Melbourne region, and the Gunditjmara people of Western Victoria.

We welcome all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to Deakin. Deakin is committed to valuing, building and sustaining recognition, understanding and positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians.

Acknowledgement of those affected by gender-based violence

Deakin would like to acknowledge all of those in our community and beyond who have been affected by gender-based and other forms of interpersonal violence. We appreciate the strength and bravery of those who have sought support and who continue to share their voices and experiences to enhance our understanding and inform our prevention and response practices.

Purpose of this document:

The National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (National Code) requires higher education providers to develop, implement and publish a Whole-of-Organisation Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan (Plan) and Outcomes Framework.

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Whole-of-Organisation Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan and Outcomes Framework

1. Statement of commitment

Vice-Chancellor Foreword

At Deakin University, the safety and wellbeing of our community is paramount. We are committed to widening access to education, employment and research, and to supporting a diverse and inclusive community in which people can participate fully, safely and with dignity.

Gender-based violence in any form is unacceptable and wholly inconsistent with Deakin's values. Safety, dignity and respect are essential conditions for learning, work and research to thrive, and Deakin is resolute in upholding these principles.

Deakin will prevent and respond to gender-based violence wherever it occurs, including on campus, off campus and online environments, and where it relates to family and domestic violence. This responsibility extends across our physical campuses, digital spaces and workplace contexts, including learning placements, internships and other environments connected to the University.

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence is a core responsibility of the University. It requires more than responding to incidents as they arise. It demands that we address the underlying attitudes, behaviours and systems that undermine safety, respect and inclusion. This work requires sustained leadership, accountability and collective action across all areas of the institution.

The introduction of the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence represents an important milestone for the higher education sector. For Deakin, the National Code provides a clear framework to strengthen our approach, reflect on our current practices, and ensure our governance, systems and culture meet the highest standards of safety, integrity and accountability.

The University's senior leadership fully endorses this Action Plan with a shared and ongoing commitment to preventing and responding to gender-based violence. It represents a whole-of-University effort to implement the National Code and has been informed by a comprehensive review of Deakin's policies, procedures and services, in consultation with students and staff who shared their experiences and insights. I acknowledge and thank those members of our community, particularly those who courageously shared their lived experience of gender-based violence, for contributing to this important work.

Deakin remains steadfast in maintaining a strong culture of safety, mutual respect and inclusion, both on and off campus.

As a leading Australian university, Deakin will continue to work collaboratively with government, experts and the higher education sector, including through partnerships such as the Victorian Tertiary Primary Prevention Network, to share good practice and drive meaningful, lasting change.

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence requires sustained commitment, collaboration and leadership at every level. Together, we are working to ensure Deakin is a university where respect is embedded, belonging is fostered, and all members of our community can thrive.

Deakin Distinguished Professor Matthew Clarke

Caretaker Vice-Chancellor, Deakin University

2. Provider overview

Deakin aspires to be Australia's most progressive and responsive university, delivering lasting value for our students, partners and communities. **Diversity, equity and inclusion** underpin all aspects of the University's teaching, research and engagement, ensuring an environment where people are empowered to succeed, contribute and develop a genuine sense of belonging. The University is committed to social justice, inclusivity and the strength of diversity, and prioritises building safe and secure communities as one of the five impact themes outlined in its strategic plan, **Deakin 2030: Ideas to Impact**. Deakin has a long-standing commitment to gender-based violence prevention and response, articulated through former annual action plans, and reports. The 2026-2029 Respect and Gender-based Violence Action Plan (Action Plan) builds upon this mature foundation, outlined in the sections below.

Deakin seeks to include those that have the talent and aspiration to succeed irrespective of background, providing access to education through innovative pathways, online learning, and campus locations in regional, metropolitan and international contexts. Deakin University has four

domestic campuses: Burwood, Geelong, Waurin Ponds and Warrnambool, each with its own student accommodation facilities (included in the scope of this plan). The University also has two international branch campuses: GIFT City in India and Bandung in Indonesia.

Deakin offers a comprehensive suite of undergraduate and postgraduate programs and maintains wide-ranging research partnerships across its four faculties:

- Arts and Education
- Business and Law
- Health
- Science, Engineering and the Built Environment.

An overview of the organisation is shown below; additional information is available in **Appendix A**.

Deakin at a glance

All data reported from year end 2025



#1

sport science school worldwide¹



#1

in Victoria for undergraduate
overall satisfaction 15 years running²



Top 10

universities in Australia³

10 researchers in the



Top 0.1%

worldwide in their field⁴



Australia's largest

university excelling in both education
and research⁵



9 out of 10

Deakin undergraduates in full-
time employment three years
after graduation⁶



#1

in Victoria for postgraduate overall
satisfaction for two consecutive years⁷



Top 10

In Australia for environmental research⁸

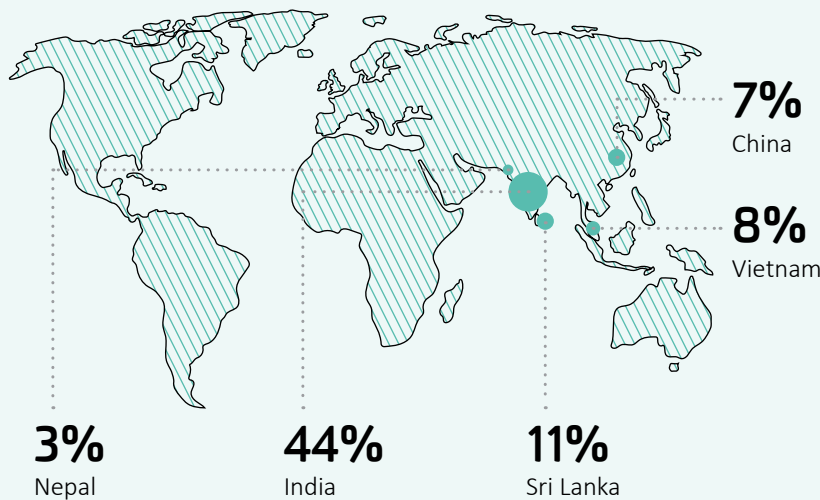


Top 5

in Australia for research quality⁹

ENROLMENTS

International – top countries of origin



ENROLMENTS

Total enrolments

61,704

Equivalent full time student load (EFTSL)

43,023

Undergraduate

39,766

Postgraduate

18,954

Graduate researchers

2,253

Non-award

731

1. ShanghaiRanking Global Ranking of Sport Science Schools and Departments 2024
2. QILT Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024
3. ShanghaiRanking 2025 ARWU
4. Clarivate Highly Cited Researchers 2025
5. QILT 2024 Student Experience Survey; CWTS Leiden Ranking Open Edition 2025- Australian universities
6. QILT Graduate Outcomes Survey – Longitudinal 2024
7. QILT Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024
8. QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2026
9. THE World University Rankings 2026

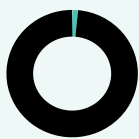
ENROLMENTS

Equity and inclusion



26.4%

First in family



1.1%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



13.9%

People with disability



8.9%

Low socioeconomic status

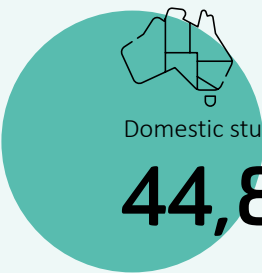


15.6%

From regional or remote areas of Australia

ENROLMENTS

Domestic and international*



Domestic students

44,881



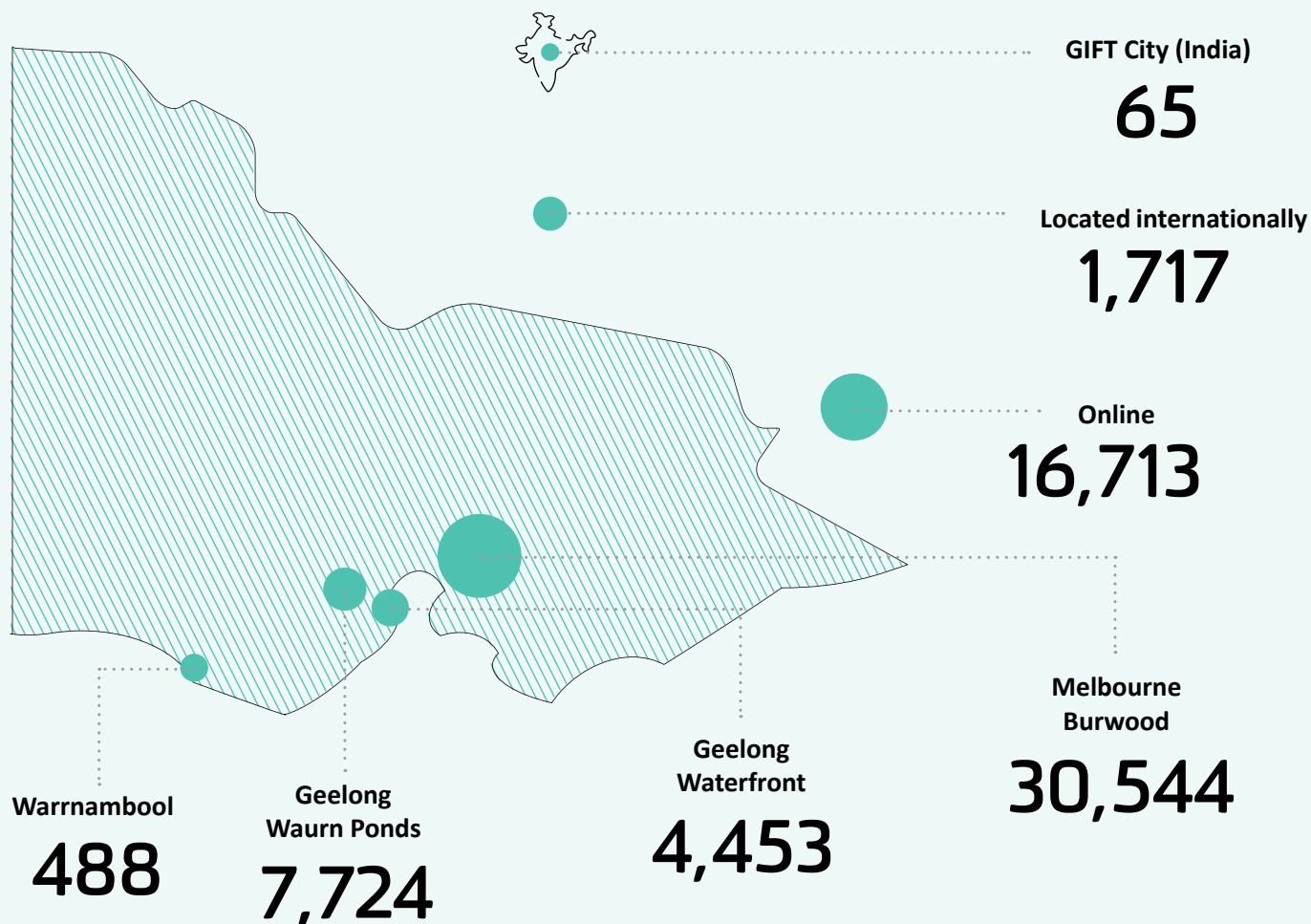
International students

16,862

*Note: Due to students gaining residency during the year, a very small number of individuals appear in both categories, resulting in the sum slightly exceeding the total course enrolments figure.

ENROLMENTS

By campus / location



ENROLMENTS

By faculty

Arts and Education

14,155



Health

17,297



Business and Law

15,111



Other

634

Science, Engineering
and Built Environment

14,507



STAFF



Total staff / FTE

5,654 / 4,988



Academic staff (FTE)

2,099

Professional staff (FTE)

2,889

FINANCES

Operating income

\$1.57bn

Net surplus

\$56.3m

Research income

\$185.0m

Note: 2025 research income amounts are indicative only and subject to external audit.

ALUMNI

Alumni community

370,000+

Number of donors

8,500+

Global distribution

164 countries

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

13

International offices

12

Research institutes and centres

2

International branch campuses

1

Research initiative

RANKINGS



ShanghaiRanking (ARWU) 2025 Rank

201-300 in the world



Times Higher Education (THE) 2026

201-250 in the world



Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) 2026

207 in the world

3. Planning, engagement and evidence

The Action Plan outlines our whole-of-organisation approach to creating a respectful Deakin community, and to preventing and responding to gender-based violence. This plan is supported by annual implementation plans, developed in consultation with students and staff, including those with lived experience. These plans will build on the previous year's work, identify key priorities for the year ahead, and address emerging risks.

Under the **National Code**, 'gender-based violence' refers to any form of physical or non-physical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that result in, or is likely

to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy.

This Action Plan builds upon a program of work and activities undertaken over many years, and is informed by state and federal legislation, evidence-based prevention, health promotion frameworks, research and best practice (see **Appendix B**). The diagram below, created by Our Watch, outlines how Deakin approaches our work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

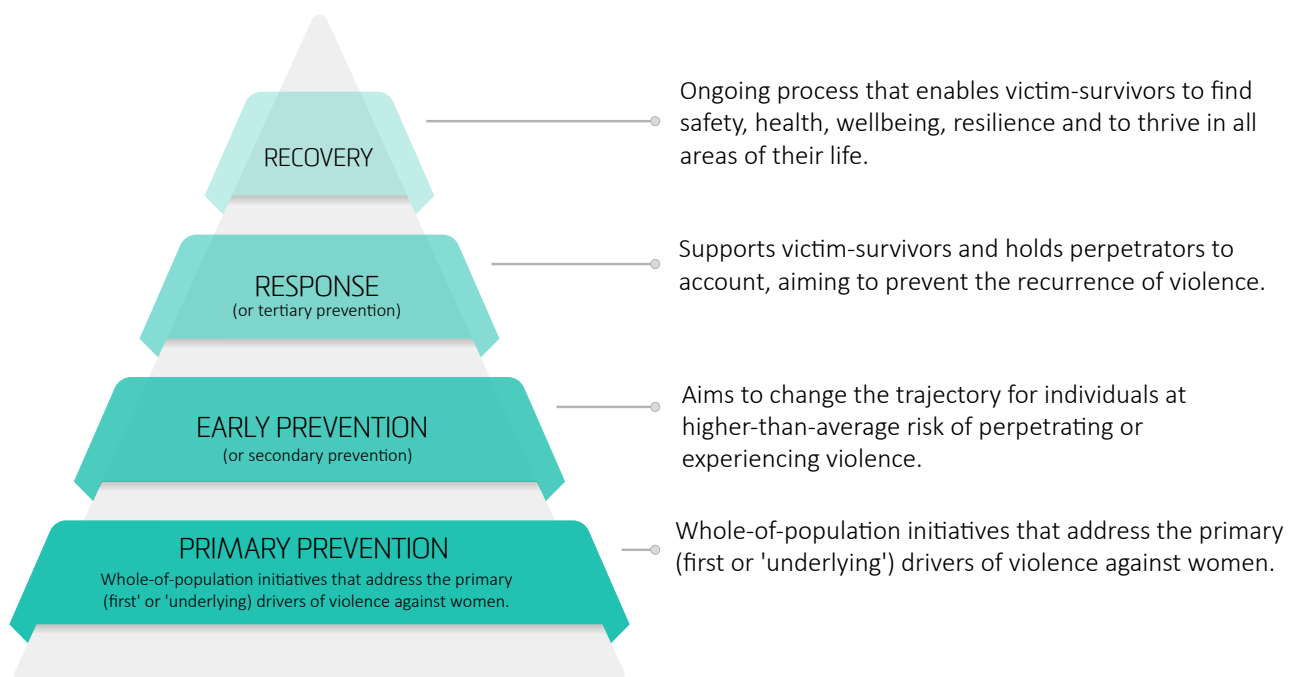


Figure 1: Source: **Our Watch | What is 'primary prevention' of violence against women?**

Primary prevention

This Action Plan takes an integrated primary prevention approach, addressing drivers of gender-based violence across all National Code Standards, aiming to shift attitudes, challenge harmful norms, and create an environment that promotes gender equality.

Embedded in this approach is the **Educating for Equality** framework developed by Our Watch, which identifies the four gendered drivers of violence against women:

1. Excusing or minimising gender-based violence.
2. Gender inequality resulting in men dominating decision-making.
3. Rigid gender stereotyping.
4. Male peer relationships that disrespect women and each other.

Our Watch also identifies four reinforcing factors that may increase the frequency or severity of violence:

1. Condoning of violence in general.
2. Experience of, and exposure to, violence.
3. Factors that weaken prosocial behaviour.
4. Resistance and backlash to prevention and gender equality efforts.

This plan is further reinforced by *Deakin's Gender Equity Action Plan 2026-2029* (GEAP) (**Appendix C**), which outlines key institutional commitments to advancing gender equity and addressing barriers that limit the full participation of women and gender-diverse people in the workforce and broader community. With actions aimed at both staff and students, the GEAP priority areas support and intersect with efforts to prevent gender-based violence across the entire University community.

More detail about our existing primary prevention work is included in Section 4. This includes student and staff training, compliance modules, awareness raising campaigns, communications strategies and risk mitigation activities.

Early intervention

Where behaviours of concern are raised through support of complaints processes, our Safer Community service is equipped to deliver early intervention programs in the form of Behavioural Management Plans that take an educative approach to encourage and support behavioural change. This program can form part of student misconduct procedures.

Additionally, through our work to identify gaps and areas of potential risk, we are able to take a proactive and meaningful approach to addressing risk factors before they lead to incidents. More detail about this work is included under the Whole-of-Organisation Risk Assessment and Gap Analysis.

Response

Responses to gender-based violence are trauma-informed and guided by those with lived experience. Deakin works to raise awareness of report and support options, both internally and with external stakeholders such as the police. This is done through training, compliance modules, communications and events. Deakin's Safer Community service acts as the primary contact point for any Deakin students or staff seeking support for behaviours of concern.

As part of a whole-of-institution approach, transparent and

fair processes are maintained to respond to allegations of student or staff misconduct, with ongoing training and capacity building for specialist staff (including trauma-informed investigations for staff involved in complaints processes; and trauma-informed interviewing for staff who may receive initial disclosures, including Safer Community, Student Complaint and Student Conduct teams), and continued enhancement of data collection and case management via our specialist confidential case management system.

Deakin utilises the Simplicity case management system as a centralised platform to support consistent, secure and confidential management of disclosures and complaints across the University. The system is used by multiple teams across the organisation, including Equity and Inclusion for staff complaints, Safer Community, Student Success and Security, enabling a coordinated, whole-of-organisation approach to case management.

Simplicity supports the secure capture, storage and management of sensitive information, with controlled access settings to ensure confidentiality and appropriate information sharing on a need-to-know basis. The system enables teams to record disclosures and complaints, track case progress, document actions and decisions, and maintain an auditable record of outcomes.

Recovery

Collectively, our work to support those who experience gender-based violence, and this Action Plan are grounded in key principles that support recovery. Through the design and implementation of this plan we:

- Take a trauma-informed and person-centred approach, ensuring the safety, dignity and rights of those affected by gender-based violence are central to our actions.
- Draw on current evidence and best practice, informed by national frameworks such as Our Watch's Change the Story and Educating for Equality, and emerging research into how best to support recovery.
- Collaborate with students, staff, and those with lived experience to inform our actions and approaches and give those who have experienced gender-based violence opportunities to support change.
- Ensure inclusion and accessibility so all members of the Deakin community can engage with this work, including those with lived experience.
- Apply an intersectional lens, recognising that experiences of gender-based violence are shaped by overlapping forms of discrimination.

Engagement informing the Action Plan

Student engagement

Student engagement was conducted through two in-person workshops held at Burwood and Geelong campuses, with a total of ten students participating. Targeted recruitment was used to ensure diverse representation, including those from priority cohorts and individuals with lived experience, and all participants were remunerated in recognition of their time and expertise. Recruitment was promoted through numerous student engagement networks, including Mentors of DEAP (MoDs), Wellbeing Ambassadors, Library Ambassadors, and Students as Partners (SaPs).

The workshops provided structured opportunities for students to contribute to the development of both the prevention and response components, including:

- Barriers to student awareness, engagement and help-seeking
- Opportunities to strengthen prevention, education and awareness-raising initiatives
- Preferred communication channels, formats and engagement approaches.

Key findings included:

- Limited student awareness of gender-based violence.
- Low visibility and inconsistent understanding of existing support and reporting pathways at Deakin University and externally.
- A preference for targeted, tailored and student-centred prevention communications.
- Ongoing demand for clear, practical information on how to access support and what to expect when seeking help.
- Identification of priority topic areas for campaigns and communications.

All workshop outputs were analysed and consolidated into a de-identified summary report. Findings have directly informed the Action Plan, particularly Actions 3.1 and 3.2, and are further operationalised through activities in the implementation plan.

Staff engagement was undertaken in 2025 and 2026 to inform the development, refinement and endorsement of the Action Plan. Engagement occurred across all organisational levels and divisions, including senior leadership, faculties, professional services, frontline operational teams, and governance and advisory bodies. This occurred through multiple methods that involved opportunities for interactive discussion, including briefings, presentations and recurring meetings.

Engagement focused on prevention and response responsibilities, National Code compliance, workforce capability and training, data governance and reporting, risk management and accountability. This ensured that the Action Plan was operationally robust, compliance-aligned and embedded within existing university systems and governance structures.

Engagement occurred across, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Senior executive leadership (Vice-Chancellery, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Pro Vice-Chancellors).
- Faculty and institute leadership.
- Professional divisions (People and Culture, Student Services, Infrastructure and Digital, Legal, Audit and Risk, Organisational Development, Customer Experience, Advancement, Global and International teams).
- Specialist operational and frontline teams (Student Support, Deakin HELP and IT support and Recruitment).
- Deakin Residential Services (DRS).
- Governance and assurance entities (Audit and Risk Committee, University Council, Chancellor's Advisory Committee).
- Advisory and subject-matter expert groups (Respect and Gender-Based Violence Advisory Committee, gender-based violence response staff forums).

Feedback from staff directly informed the scope, prioritisation and design of the Action Plan and associated implementation plans, as well as Executive and Council approval.

Data analysis and evidence reviewed

Deakin's plan has been informed by a detailed data review. This includes student and staff demographic data outlined in Section 2, the National Student Safety Survey, and Deakin's internally administered surveys: The Respect and Wellbeing Student Survey and Equity and Inclusion staff survey. Detail regarding these data sources and associated findings can be found in **Appendix A**. Deakin's response to these findings have been further informed by regulation, legislation and established prevention and response frameworks, included those outlined in **Appendix B**.

Data from Deakin's 2025 Respect and Gender-based Violence Annual Report

Deakin publicly reports disclosure and reporting data in annual public reports. Below is a summary of disclosure and reporting data, along with disciplinary outcomes from 2025.

Disclosures of gender-based violence

Safer Community

Between 1 January and 31 December 2025, Safer Community received 458 new referrals. During the same period, 348 cases were closed¹. Of the cases closed:

- 57 cases had the primary case type recorded as sexual harm.
- 84 cases had the primary case type recorded as family violence².

Reports of gender-based violence against staff

Staff gender-based violence complaints against staff – 2025

- One claim of sexual harassment which was substantiated by an external process, and this allegation was handed to People and Culture for management within their processes.
- One claim of sexual harassment which was assessed and directed towards an informal resolution process.

Student gender-based violence complaints against staff – 2025

Student Complaints received four gender-based violence complaints from students about staff conduct. Of those complaints:

- One complaint was partially substantiated resulting in a written apology.
- One complaint from a former student relating to a previous complaint that was found unsubstantiated; there is no new information to support a review.
- One complaint is still in progress.
- One anonymous complaint was received; however, it could not be substantiated based on the information provided. The matter has been referred to People and Culture.

For student complaints involving staff as respondents, complaints are considered in accordance with the Student Complaints Resolution **Policy** and **Procedure** which address the student's concerns and determine whether there has been a breach of a Deakin policy or process. Complaint outcomes, where a substantiated breach is found, are referred to People and Culture to invoke the **Staff Discipline Procedure**.

Reports of gender-based violence against students

Gender-based violence complaints against students (Student Conduct data) – 2025

Student Conduct received 15 gender-based violence-based complaints in 2025. Of the 15 complaints:

- Nine were substantiated.
- One was unsubstantiated.
- Two did not progress to formal reports.
- Three are still in progress.

For the nine substantiated cases involving students as respondents in 2025, seven cases involved punitive outcomes (expulsion or suspension), one student received an educative outcome, and one student received an administrative outcome. Where students were given suspensions, the Student Misconduct Committee often required the student to provide proof of attending an appropriate intervention based on the substantiated allegations before they were allowed to re-enrol. The intention is that respondents are required to address their behaviour and the risk they pose to the Deakin University community before returning to study.

Additionally, where student respondents are also residents of Deakin's student accommodation, DRS may terminate residential contracts and remove residents from student accommodation where they pose an unacceptable risk to other residents.

¹ Remaining cases closed during 2025 were recorded as behaviours of concern, missing students or child safety. Where behaviours of concern, such as stalking, were exhibited in the context of family violence, primary case type was recorded as family violence.

² Deakin acknowledges that under-reporting remains a concern and continues to deliver prevention and awareness raising about support and report options through the Respect and Gender-based Violence Action Plan.

Data from Deakin's Biennial Surveys

Respect and Wellbeing Student Survey 2024

Total respondents: 3,711

- 70% women, 26% men, 4% gender diverse.
- 32% have a disability, health or mental health condition, or are neurodivergent.
- 22% Identify as LGBTIQ+.
- 26% were international students.

Equity:

- Nearly 50% were first in family attending university.
- 80% were non-carers.
- Nearly two thirds were working part-time.

Overall student experiences of respect, inclusion and belonging at Deakin was very high:

- 90% of students reported they are treated with respect by staff.
- 89% of students reported they are treated with respect by other students.
- 81% of students feel safe to be themselves at Deakin.
- 78% of students feel that Deakin is trying hard to protect the safety of all students.
- 77% of the student population are extremely to moderately confident that the University would support and take their sexual assault or harassment seriously.

The Respect and Wellbeing Student Survey (RWSS) data has supported planning and implementation across existing priorities, identifying opportunities to increase awareness of Student Conduct, Complaints, Safer Community and the Harassment and Discrimination Contact Officer (HDCO) network, strengthen student confidence in the University, and ensure students know where to report concerns and seek support in relation to gender-based violence. The findings validate Deakin's current direction, with very high overall student experiences of respect, inclusion and belonging. A further RWSS in 2026 will strengthen the longitudinal evidence-base, enabling monitoring of key themes over time and supporting continuous improvement.

Equity and Inclusion Staff Survey 2025

The Equity and Inclusion Staff Survey aims to capture staff perspectives on their workplace and their lived experiences. Questions cover a broad range of topics including staff demographics, workplace culture, and experiences.

Total respondents: 1,110

- 30% academic staff, 70% professional staff.
- 67% women, 29% men, 4% gender diverse.
- 16% identified as LGBTIQ+.
- 15% indicated that they have a disability.

Statements on organisational culture returned high agreeance scores:

- Managers treat employees with dignity and respect (87%).
- Deakin uses inclusive and respectful images and language (85%).
- People in their workgroup treat each other with respect (85%).
- Deakin encourages respectful workplace behaviours (81%).
- Deakin would support them if they needed to take family violence leave (89%).

Results of the Equity and Inclusion Survey are incorporated into Deakin's workforce planning conversations with senior leaders. The data is also used as performance measurement tools for various strategies and action plans including the GEAP, the Social Cohesion Action Plan, Disability Action Plan, Deakin's People Strategy and this plan. These plans are driven by Equity and Inclusion in collaboration with key strategic partners, including People and Culture, Customer Experience, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Portfolio.

Data from the 2021 National Student Safety Survey

Data from the National Student Safety Survey 2021 has informed Deakin's previous action plans (Respect and Sexual Harm Strategy 2021-24 and 2025 Respect and Gender-based Violence Action Plan). Identified areas of concern continue to be progressed in this Action Plan, with consideration of more recent insights from student and staff engagement, and biannual student and staff surveys.

National respondents	Deakin respondents
43,819	1,166

Prevalence in a university context

	Sexual harassment		Sexual assault	
	National	Deakin	National	Deakin
Since starting university	16.1%	12.1%	4.5%	3.7%
Last 12 months	8.1%	4.5%	1.1%	0.3%

Context of most impactful incident

Sexual harassment	National	Deakin
Location	43.3% general campus 17.5% university library 15.5% lecture theatre/lab	38.0% general campus 19.2% lecture theatre/lab 17.9% clubs/society event/space
Perpetrator	50.7% knew some or all of the perpetrators involved	45.9% knew some or all of the perpetrators involved

Sexual assault	National	Deakin
Location	25.8% college/student accommodation 25.3% clubs and societies 18.4% private home or residence	No data available
Perpetrator	65.7% knew some or all of the perpetrators involved	

Reporting and support seeking	Sexual harassment		Sexual assault	
	National	Deakin	National	Deakin
Made a formal complaint	3.0%	6.7%	5.6%	N/A
Sought support from the University	16.8%	17.7%	25.5%	N/A

Knowledge of university support and reporting channels	Sexual harassment		Sexual assault	
	National	Deakin	National	Deakin
Knew nothing/very little about the formal reporting process	51.0%	46.9%	53.6%	50.3%
Knew nothing/very little about where to seek support/assistance	46.7%	43.7%	43.5%	41.2%

Reporting and support services

Deakin's institutional data and the National Report highlighted that large numbers of students knew nothing or very little about support services (approximately 50%) or formal reporting processes (approximately 50%) for harassment or sexual assault. Only 17.7% who were sexually harassed sought support or assistance from Deakin and only 6.7% who were sexually harassed made a formal complaint to the University. This data has and will continue to inform our initiatives, including:

- Deakin's 'Don't let the Silence Win' campaign and videos, which continue to be utilised in awareness raising activities.
- Face-to-face on campus information stalls (including at Respect Week and DUSA self-care week and ResFest events) providing merchandise and information to raise student awareness of available support and complaint options.
- Enhancing student communications, training and modules to maximise awareness
- Ongoing website revisions and promotion of online forms to connect with Safer Community and reporting pathways.
- Enhancing staff training and modules to enhance awareness of where to refer students and colleagues.

Location of sexual harassment incidents

While the location of the most impactful incident of sexual harassment reported by students was 'general campus,' Deakin's data showed a higher than national rate of reported harassment in:

- Student club and society events and spaces (nationally 13.9% to Deakin's 17.9%).
- College or residential setting (nationally 10.6% to Deakin's 17.1%).
- University-related online spaces (nationally 6.9% to Deakin's 8.3%).
- Work experience or professional placement (nationally 3.9% to Deakin's 7.6%).

To address this, additional actions were undertaken within previous action plans and continue to be reflected in this Action Plan. Actions included:

- Mandatory respect content in staff and student compliance modules.
- Enhanced Equity and Inclusion training programs for staff and students, clearly articulating the workshops on offer and working closely with key stakeholders to increase uptake of workshops.

- Working with DUSA to encourage greater numbers of DUSA student leaders to attend training programs covering 'Bystander Intervention' and 'Understanding Gender-based Violence and How to Support Others'.
- Liaising with Work Integrated Learning teams, and support and report services to assist students participating in work experiences/placements, ensuring they are aware of reporting options and have access to support services, including through the creation of a training module.
- Ongoing work with Deakin Residential Services to increase coordination in relation to training, provision of support, and connections to reporting pathways. DRS continue to strengthen prevention and education initiatives within Residential Services, building on increased reporting rates to ensure residents feel confident to report and trust that disclosures are taken seriously and appropriately actioned.

Whole-of-organisation risk assessment and gap analysis

A whole-of-organisation risk assessment and gap analysis was undertaken in partnership with the Risk and Assurance team, incorporating consultation with students, staff, those with lived experience, and representatives of groups disproportionately affected by gender-based violence. This work followed a structured, multi-step methodology and was informed by an evidence-based understanding of risk at Deakin, considering both the likelihood and impact of harm, as well as systemic and cultural factors influencing vulnerability across the University.

The assessment considered risk across all operational areas, including teaching, research, student services, accommodation, and corporate functions, as well as both physical and online environments. Particular attention was given to higher risk settings and contexts such as student-staff interactions, residential and social settings, and informal or less supervised contexts where power imbalances may be more pronounced.

Through this process, key risk themes were identified. At a governance level, risks related to inconsistent executive ownership, unclear accountability, and variable resourcing. Across operational environments, risks included gaps in policy awareness and use, inconsistent coordination across services, and limited oversight of higher risk or isolated settings, including online environments.

Workforce capability and cultural risks were also evident, including inconsistent training, limited application of trauma-informed practice, and variable awareness among

staff and students of their rights and responsibilities, alongside the normalisation of gendered behaviours and power imbalances.

Risks were further identified in the support and response capabilities of frontline teams including Safer Community, Student Success and Deakin Residential Services, including staff preparedness to manage disclosures, variability in the delivery of person-centred support, and gaps in follow-up care. Process-related risks included unclear reporting pathways, potential delays and inconsistent application of policies. The process included reviews of:

- Safer Community, Deakin's primary support services for gender-based violence and other behaviour of concern.
- Student Success to identify gaps, risks and barriers in relation to student complaints and student misconduct processes.
- Deakin Residential Services to identify gaps risks and barriers.

Data and systems risks included fragmented data capture, inconsistent data quality, and missed opportunities to use data to inform decision-making. Additional risks were also identified in residential settings, including gaps in training, and awareness of risks unique to shared living environments.

Findings from the assessment were synthesised to identify key gaps and opportunities for improvement. The risks identified were translated into targeted actions within the Action Plan and implementation plan, with prioritisation informed by risk severity and impact. These actions are focused on strengthening governance and accountability, improving workforce capability, enhancing reporting and response pathways, and building a more consistent, data-informed and proactive organisational approach to prevention and response.

Key areas of focus include:

- Refining data systems to align with National Code requirements and strengthen monitoring, analysis and reporting.
- Strengthening training and capability building across staff, students and leadership cohorts.
- Enhancing coordination and partnerships across operational areas, including Teaching and Learning.
- Strengthening reporting and response pathways to ensure they are trauma-informed, accessible and responsive to the needs of those who disclose harm.
- Delivering targeted awareness and capacity-building initiatives to improve understanding of reporting, disclosure and support pathways.
- Leveraging survey and service data to inform continuous

improvement and future planning.

- Progressing and strengthening prevention, reporting, and response initiatives within Residential Services, including enhancing staff capability, oversight, and tailored approaches to managing risks in shared and overnight living environments.

In addition to formal risk assessments, risks will continue to be proactively identified and managed in real time as they arise, ensuring timely mitigation and responsiveness to emerging issues.

In 2024, Deakin University utilised the TEQSA-mandated quality review process to critically examine the effectiveness, impact and alignment of its student wellbeing, safety, diversity and equity policies, programs and services. The review was chaired by Professor Eóin Killackey, Chief of Research and Knowledge Translation at Orygen Youth Mental Health and Sonal Singh, Executive Director UTS, was a panel member alongside internal Deakin Panel members. The review assessed Safer Community and related response functions, mental health and counselling services, crisis response protocols, physical safety, prevention and response to gender-based violence and support for diverse and under-represented cohorts. The review drew upon service data, national and institutional survey evidence, external partnerships with specialist providers, and alignment with legislative and regulatory requirements, including preparation for what was the forthcoming National Code on Gender-based Violence.

This process enabled Deakin to identify strengths, address areas for improvement, and confirm that its approach to student safety and wellbeing is effective, appropriate and supports a safe, inclusive and respectful university community.

Following this review, as part of an organisational change within the University Services portfolio in 2025, the Safer Community function was moved into the Health and Safety Unit, alongside other critical services such as Campus Support, to better align Deakin's response and support services into a coherent, whole-of-university model that can support staff and students experiencing gender-based violence wherever it occurs.

Approach to meeting National Code compliance (including in student accommodation)

This Action Plan, along with details regarding our 2026 deliverables (**Appendix E**) and DRS approach (**Appendix F**) outline the future steps we will take to ensure National Code compliance. Using the risk assessment and gap analysis discussed above, Deakin commenced work to ensure comprehensive alignment with the National Code requirement, as detailed below. Deakin Residential Services conducted an aligned review and undertook a range of actions to ensure compliance within their settings (see **Appendix F**).

Summary of progress towards National Code compliance



Standard 1: accountable leadership and governance

Effective governance and a whole-of-organisation approach prioritises safety and support in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence.

- ✓ New National Code Gender-based Violence Committee of Council established with a direct reporting line to Council, with required expertise and probity checks for members under the National Code.
- ✓ The Vice-Chancellor's Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Advisory group was renamed the Vice-Chancellor's Respect and Gender-Based Violence Advisory Committee and will provide operational guidance on Deakin's gender-based violence program of work.
- ✓ A whole-of-organisation risk assessment and gap analysis was undertaken, including consultation with students, staff, those with lived experience, and those representing groups disproportionately affected by gender-based violence.
- ✓ A four-year whole-of-organisation Action Plan created and endorsed by Deakin Executive and Council.



Standard 2: safe environments and systems

Higher Education Providers' environments are safe, and systems continuously improve to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

- ✓ **Working with Children Check** (WWCC) requirements strengthened with upgrades to Deakin's WWCC system, enabling real time compliance information and follow up.
- ✓ Processes established to seek and assess declarations from all prospective staff, accommodation staff and relevant contractors to declare any previous allegations or findings of gender-based violence in their previous employment or other legal processes.
- ✓ Declaration of interest procedures, forms, compliance modules and communications updated to emphasise declarations relating to any form of intimate relationship.
- ✓ Updates to separation agreements, settlement agreements and relevant policies and procedures to prohibit non-disclosure or non-disparagement agreements in gender-based violence cases, unless specifically requested by the discloser.
- ✓ The **Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy** (previously Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy) and **Gender-based Violence Response Procedure** (previously Sexual Harm Response Procedure) were reviewed and endorsed, with stakeholder consultation undertaken with students, staff, those with lived experience, and those representing groups disproportionately affected by gender-based violence. The revised Policy and Procedure came into effect on 1 January 2026.
- ✓ All other relevant policies and procedures have been mapped against National Code requirements and the revised Gender-Based Violence Policy and procedures, with required updates underway.
- ✓ Workshops held with core teams to explore existing processes and enhancements required under the Code, including Student Success, Deakin Residential Services (DRS) and Complaints.
- ✓ Over 25 Executive and Senior Leadership presentations delivered to outline National Code requirements tailored to division and portfolio.



Standard 3: knowledge and capability

Higher Education Providers build knowledge and capability to safely and effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

- ✓ The Respectful Behaviours at Deakin staff module was updated to align with National Code requirements, and the requirement implemented for all staff to complete this annually. As of January 2026, the completion rate was 89%.
- ✓ Training workshops have been updated, with 'Understanding Gender-based Violence' and 'How to Support Others' workshops commencing in Trimester 2 of 2025.
- ✓ All commencing students are now required to complete the 'Academic Integrity and Respect at Deakin' module. 85% of commencing students successfully completed the module in 2025 (noting that Trimester 3 had not yet concluded as of 31 December 2025).
- ✓ All commencing DRS residents must complete an online induction with 98% completion rate achieved. This includes a gender-based violence specific module, which has demonstrated a 17-percentage point uplift in understanding. All Residential Leaders also undertake staff training in addition to this.
- ✓ Communications plan developed and implemented for staff and student audiences. The plan included content to enhance awareness of the National Code, awareness of training opportunities and support options, and build practical knowledge to engage Deakin's community in gender-based violence prevention.
- ✓ Trauma-informed investigations training commenced with staff involved in student and staff complaints, investigations and misconduct processes.



Standard 4: safety and support

Responses and support services are safe and person-centred.

- ✓ Existing procedures largely aligned with this requirement, however additional requirements have been captured in the revised Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Procedure, with additional enhancements being made to standard operating procedures where relevant.
- ✓ Internal skills audit of staff involved in risk assessments, with all Safer Community staff holding requisite skills, and opportunities for ongoing capacity development identified.
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation schedule developed for support services (Safer Community, Student Complaints, Student Conduct) included in four-year Action Plan.
- ✓ Updated gender-based violence risk assessment tool developed and implemented, in addition to existing family violence and sexual harm tools.



Standard 5: safe processes

All processes are safe and timely.

- ✓ Gender-based Violence Response Procedure updated to align with National Code requirements. Updates include clearer definitions, strengthened response obligations, enhanced guidance for staff and improved clarity around roles and responsibilities, and support options available for students and staff.
- ✓ Refinements to the Student Misconduct procedure are underway to enhance consistency and transparency of outcomes in gender-based violence cases.
- ✓ Standard operating procedures for Student Complaints and Student Conduct have been revised to ensure consistency with the National Code and revised Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy and Gender-based Violence Response Procedure.
- ✓ Formalising of a DRS Response procedure including safety assessment and out of hours actions has been embedded in whole-of-organisation policies and procedures.
- ✓ Internal complaints-handling processes have undergone targeted refinements to ensure accessibility, consistency between teams, timeliness and ensuring all processes are trauma-informed.
- ✓ Updates to additional policies and procedures to ensure feasibility of gender-based violence response timelines as outlined in the Code.



Standard 6: data, evidence and impact

Higher education providers use evidence to inform their approach, measure change and contribute to the national evidence-base.

- ✓ Development and implementation of a data collection and reporting process aligned to the National Code, including:
 - development of new closed-case form, managed by Safer Community, to collect demographic and case data stipulated by the National Code
 - new reporting templates (monthly, quarterly and annual) integrating disclosure and report data across Safer Community, Student Complaints, Staff Complaints and Student Conduct functions
 - scoping of potential systems upgrades to enhance automation for secure, real time data reporting.
- ✓ Regular meetings implemented to share disclosure and reporting data trends and themes; and to identify related prevention actions and opportunities.
- ✓ Ongoing evaluation of training, capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, with iterative review and enhancement to activities based on evaluation findings.



Standard 7: safe student accommodation

Student accommodation is safe for all students and staff.

- ✓ Workshop sessions held with DRS to explore opportunities for enhancement to support and response processes, and implications for policy and procedure.
- ✓ DRS requirements are included as part of Deakin's whole-of-organisation approach, policies and procedures, and four-year Action Plan.
- ✓ Deakin Residential Leaders have completed the tailored session, 'Understanding Gender-based Violence and How to Support Others' prior to commencing their roles.
- ✓ All DRS staff have completed 'Understanding Gender-based Violence and How to Support Others'.
- ✓ All residents and staff have been required to make declarations regarding any investigations or findings of gender-based violence against them, with 'yes' declarations triggering an internal risk assessment process.
- ✓ All third-party contractors who work within the premises of DRS properties are required to make declarations in relation to gender-based violence, with 'yes' declarations triggering a risk assessment process. Contractors are not permitted to enter sites without this declaration.
- ✓ Non-DRS managed accommodation is undergoing key compliance updates, including improvements to after-hours welfare and reporting processes, contractor inductions and declaration requirements, staff training, and revised tenancy and licensing agreements.

Deakin Residential Services were included in Deakin's Whole-of-Organisation Risk Assessment and Gap Analysis. In addition, Deakin Residential Services undertook their own review, which includes a detailed assessment of compliance against Standard 7 as demonstrated in the document listed. Please refer to DRS Evidence of Compliance (**Appendix F**) for further details.

For additional information on the full program of prevention and response work undertaken in 2025, please refer to Deakin's 2025 Respect and Gender-based Violence Annual Report in **Appendix A**.

4. Approach

Deakin's approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence

Deakin has a long-standing program of work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in our university community. Annual action plans have supported the ongoing development of this work since 2019, prompted by the Changing the Course report and Deakin's subsequent commissioned report into recommended responses. Strong governance, capacity building, awareness raising, support services and response procedures have created a mature foundation on which the National Code standards will continue to build. The following sections outline Deakin's existing provisions in relation to:

- Leadership, governance and policy.
- Addressing the factors that drive and contribute to gender-based violence.
- Capacity building, awareness raising and respectful communities.
- Responding to gender-based violence wherever it is experienced.
- Additional components of Deakin's existing whole-of-organisation approach.

Annual implementation plans will provide additional detail regarding key annual deliverables, timelines and responses to emerging risks, and be developed in consultation with students and staff, including those with lived experience. Detail of key 2026 deliverables can be found at [Appendix E](#) and further information about Deakin's work and approach to date can be found in our 2025 Respect and Gender-based Violence Annual Report (see [Appendix A](#)).

Leadership, governance and policy

Deakin's policy framework around staff and student conduct strongly emphasises our commitment to preventing and responding to gender-based violence. The staff and student Codes of Conduct are underpinned by an explicit Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure.

Deakin's recently revised [Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy](#) and [Gender-based Violence Response Procedure](#), and associated procedures (see [Appendix D](#)), provide the framework within which all Deakin's prevention and response activities are undertaken, ensuring compliance with the National Higher Education Code Addressing Gender-based Violence.

In 2025, the Vice-Chancellor's Gender-based Violence Advisory Committee provided oversight to Deakin's gender-based prevention and response programs of work, meeting three times per year. The Advisory Committee had direct responsibility for shaping Deakin's prevention and response initiatives and for monitoring and evaluating actions taken.

In response to the National Code, Deakin's gender-based violence governance structure has been revised, with a National Code Gender-based Violence Committee of Council established in December. The National Code Gender-based Violence Committee of Council will meet three times annually, and a business schedule outlines key reporting and decision-making requirements for each meeting. The Respect and Gender-based Violence Advisory Group also remains, with revised Terms of Reference, providing practical input to advance Deakin's gender-based violence prevention and response agenda.

Addressing the factors that drive and contribute to gender-based violence

This Action Plan takes an integrated primary prevention approach (refer to Section 3) and is informed by Federal and State legislation and regulation, guidance documents and resources (including from TEQSA and the National Student Ombudsman, and best practice frameworks – these are detailed in [Appendix B](#)).

Embedded in this approach is the **Educating for Equality** framework developed by Our Watch, which identifies the four gendered drivers of violence against women:

1. Excusing or minimising gender-based violence.
2. Gender inequality resulting in men dominating decision-making.
3. Rigid gender stereotyping.
4. Male peer relationships that disrespect women and each other.

These drivers are spelled out explicitly in our training, modules and associated resource packs. In addition, they continue to be reflected in our action plans and reflected in our awareness raising activities for students, staff, executives and University leadership.

The work to address these drivers is further reinforced by Deakin's **Gender Equity Action Plan 2026-2029** (GEAP), which outlines key institutional commitments to advancing gender equity and addressing barriers that limit the full participation of women and gender-diverse people in the workforce and broader community. The GEAP priority areas support and intersect with efforts to prevent gender-based violence across the university community (see [Appendix C](#)).

Our Watch also identifies four reinforcing factors that may increase the frequency or severity of violence:

1. Condoning of violence in general.
2. Experience of, and exposure to violence.
3. Factors that weaken prosocial behaviour.
4. Resistance and backlash to prevention and gender equality efforts.

These factors are considered in the way our prevention and response activities are undertaken, and our broader focus on creating respectful and inclusive communities at Deakin.

In relation to Deakin's specific context, through our data gathering, student and staff engagement and whole-of-organisation risk assessment, we have identified risk factors and drivers relevant to university settings and identified actions in this plan to address these further. Identified areas include situational factors, such as those relating to:

- Power dynamics, especially in Graduate Research Supervision.
- Travel, and potential risks associated with remote travel and shared accommodation settings.
- Student led events and activities.
- Learning that occurs beyond on campus and online environments (student placements, study tours and field trips).

It also includes factors relating to student and staff identity characteristics, including those related to specific needs, risks and forms of gender-based violence that may be relevant to students and staff who are First Nations, are international students or from migrant or refugee backgrounds, have disabilities, or belong to LGBTIQ+ communities.

Capacity building, awareness raising and respectful communities

Prevention activities, including comprehensive, sustained and iterative education and capacity building, empower our community to act as active bystanders and challenge views that condone violence, disrespect, power imbalances and inequality. By embedding these principles into campus culture, policies, teaching and learning, we intend to foster a community where every individual feels valued and secure, laying the foundation for academic, personal and professional success. Activities will include ongoing and evolving education and capacity building, awareness raising activities, culture, attitudinal and behavioural change initiatives.

Compliance training and online modules

Deakin continues to provide education, training and capacity building for all members of our community.

- The mandatory staff compliance module 'Respectful Behaviour at Deakin' was recently updated to align with National Code training and capacity building compliance. The module covers topics relating to equal opportunity, discrimination and harassment, gender-based violence (including consent and bystander action), child safety, and responding to disclosures.
- Graduate Research candidates and supervisors have access to a tailored 'Respect at Deakin – Higher Degree by Research' module. The module includes the topics relating to respectful relationships and behaviour, with additional sections exploring factors that may influence supervisory relationships, including power and authority, constructive feedback, and support for both candidates and supervisors. The module is currently mandatory for candidates and supervisors.
- All commencing students are required to complete a mandatory 'Academic Integrity and Respect at Deakin' module. The module takes a strength-based approach to invite students to learn more about how they can contribute to a positive and respectful culture at the University, while supporting them to study, work and socialise in a safe and supportive environment.
- Students attending placements and internships also have access to Deakin's 'Respectful and Inclusive Workplaces' module to support awareness of expected behaviours, their rights while on placement, and options if they experience any behaviour of concern.
- All residents of DRS are required to complete an interactive online induction module pre-arrival, which includes direct reference to the DRS RESPECT values, consent, bystander intervention, respectful behaviours, and gender-based violence, culminating in a test with a required pass rate of 100%.

Training and capacity building

Training and capacity building workshops continue to be delivered to staff and students, with strong participation across the University (Appendix A).

Deakin's core prevention workshop offering was updated in 2025, in line with National Code requirements to become the 'Understanding Gender-based Violence and How to Support Others' [training](#). Workshops cover gender-based violence, current legislative and Deakin-specific frameworks, intersectionality, consent and coercive control, drivers of gender-based violence, activity bystander intervention, responding to disclosures and reporting options.

Additional training workshops support the ongoing development of Deakin's culture of respect and support enhanced intersectional awareness for both students and staff, and include topics such as Bystander Intervention, Developing Disability Confidence and Putting Inclusive Language into Practice.

Deakin continues to offer a guest lecture program designed to raise awareness and upskill students and academics within specific study programs. The program aims to promote diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and increase engagement with capacity-building offerings. Guest lectures have included 'Bystander Intervention' and 'Building Skills for Inclusive Practice'.

Deakin Residential Services provide a range of events, workshops and training programs to build awareness of gender-based violence, promote understanding of available support services, and support residents to contribute to a safe and respectful residential and university environment. This includes initiatives such as Real Talk, where residents engage with prominent speakers, including athletes and advocates, to encourage conversations about safety, respect and collective responsibility.

Presentations, briefings, and information sessions are regularly delivered to senior leaders, executive and staffing teams, including about Deakin's annual reports, actions plans and incident data. Safer Community also delivers presentations to student and staff groups to raise awareness of the service and encourage reporting.

Awareness raising of gender-based violence and prevention initiatives

Deakin continues to promote and raise awareness of gender-based violence, reporting options and services within and beyond Deakin.

Deakin's annual 'Respect Week' campaign is held in the first trimester each year, with a range of co-designed on campus and online activities and activations held throughout the week to promote gender-based violence awareness and increase understanding of behaviours or concepts. Past themes have included coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse. Events include the availability of support and reporting services for those impacted by gender-based violence and encourage active participation of all members of the Deakin community in promoting a respectful environment. Respect at Uni Week forms part of a state-wide initiative coordinated by the Victorian Tertiary Primary Prevention Network (VTPPN).

Deakin also participates in the Candlelight Vigil campaign, International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign and the Walk Against Family Violence.

Annual communication plans set clear priorities, with targeted content focused on gender-based violence prevention. Communications also reinforce awareness of support and reporting pathways at Deakin, while promoting training, initiatives, events and campaigns that strengthen a safe and respectful university environment.

Student accommodation at Deakin University

Deakin Residential Services (DRS)

DRS owns and operates all residential facilities across Warrnambool, Geelong Waterfront, Geelong Waurin Ponds and Melbourne Burwood campuses, totalling 3,000 beds except for Kitjarra Residence, which form part of National Indigenous Knowledges Education Research Innovation Institute (NIKERI) at Deakin University.

As a true reflection of the 24/7 nature of student accommodation, DRS employs professional staff to work at each campus reception location 24/7, 365 days of the

year in addition to working alongside residential Campus Support Officers. This is a point of difference from many other student residence providers, where staff are often on call rather than present on-site overnight. All relevant staff are trained in responding to disclosures, Mental Health First Aid and incident reporting. DRS has a dedicated campus life team who undertake additional training in ASSIST Suicide Prevention, Respectful Relationships and Bystander Intervention and who work closely with internal and external support services.

Since 2024, DRS has employed Night Welfare Coordinators to increase the ability to proactively respond to overnight welfare and to contribute to ongoing preventative programming. These roles have already made a positive impact for the overnight safety and wellbeing of both the residents and DRS Staff.

In addition to its 24/7 professional staffing model, DRS has a strong volunteer student Residential Leadership model focused on identifying and referring concerns as well as role-modelling and upholding our community values. These leaders are given an extensive suite of training, including detailed Consent and Respectful Relationships training, Responding to Disclosures, identifying, and responding to behaviours of concern and more. They are also required to complete the University's Respect at Deakin module.

DRS' RESPECT values guide community expectations and standards and are meaningfully embedded into all facets of DRS operations and a formal indexation of their success is taken each year to validate their impact. In practice, they create a shared sense of accountability and responsibility for the residential community, and they inform student and staff behavioural expectations, are used extensively throughout Residential Leader training and development, as well as through the incident response process. Regular incident reviews are conducted to track trends, address concerns, and ensure a consistent and professional response, and DRS also meets regularly with Safer Community and other key stakeholders, to ensure strict adherence to reporting processes, and a united approach to student support and incident response.

All students residing within student accommodation at Deakin are required to complete an interactive online induction module pre-arrival which includes direct reference to the RESPECT values, consent, bystander intervention, respectful behaviours, and gender-based violence, culminating in a test with a required pass rate of 100%. Within 24 hours of arrival, residents attend a face-to-face compulsory briefing reiterating key messages.

New students also attend a compulsory 'Safe Partying' presentation by an external guest speaker. Residents attend compulsory meetings throughout the year, providing key updates and information and re-articulating messages about consent, respect and accountability. These messages are also reinforced through other events and initiatives, such as the Real Talk events, which see high-profile guest speakers come onto campus and share their journeys and learnings in this area. In this way, DRS delivers these messages through a new lens, packaged in a way that is appealing to students.

In addition to the above, a detailed outline of DRS work to date to achieve National Code compliance can be found at **Appendix F**.

Other Deakin accommodation

Deakin faculties and schools also provide a small number of short-term accommodation options for students on placement or study intensives. In 2025 work commenced with relevant teams to better align their practices with DRS including key National Code compliance updates, improvements to after-hours welfare and reporting processes, contractor inductions and declaration requirements, staff training, and revised tenancy and licensing agreements.

Responding to gender-based violence wherever it is experienced

Responses to gender-based violence continue to be trauma-informed and guided by those with lived experience. Awareness raising of report and support options is undertaken both internally and with external stakeholders such as the police. As part of a whole-of-institution approach, transparent and fair processes are maintained and regularly

reviewed to respond to allegations of student or staff misconduct, with Deakin responding to gender-based violence wherever it may occur. Activities include awareness raising, training and capacity building of specialist staff, and continued enhancement of data collection via our specialist confidential case management system.

Disclosures of gender-based violence to Safer Community

Deakin's **Safer Community** team is the primary point of contact to disclose experiences of gender-based violence in business hours (Monday to Friday – 9am to 4pm). The Safer Community Team can be contacted to make both disclosures and reports/complaints about gender-based violence or other behaviours of concern. A disclosure is made for the purpose of accessing support or referral, while a report is made for the purpose of enacting relevant complaint or misconduct procedures. Students, staff and associates are not required to make a report/complaint to access Safer Community services and may engage with Safer Community regardless of whether harm has occurred on campus, online or in their private lives.

Safer Community provides advice, support and information to students, staff and associates impacted by gender-based violence and/or behaviours of concern. Safer Community Advisers also act as the central point of contact where there is concern a student may be missing. Finally, Safer Community Advisers support members of the Deakin community to ensure compliance with Child Protection reporting obligations.

Safer Community Advisers have a broad range of professional expertise, with educational backgrounds in psychology, counselling, social work and specialist family violence support. Safer Community Advisers undertake annual professional development to ensure currency of expertise and are supported through regular supervision.

Safer Community is designated as the central point of contact through which data on disclosures and reports of gender-based violence, are collated, analysed and reported. This mechanism is articulated in relevant policies and procedures, with data used to meet a range of legal obligations and reporting requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, reporting to the Workplace Gender Equality

Agency, and the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence. This centralised mechanism for data collection and classification ensures confidentiality, consistency and accuracy of reporting.

In 2024 Deakin's **SafeZone app** – designed as a mechanism for alerting Deakin campus security of emergencies to obtain real time emergency assistance – was updated to include a welfare assistance tab, which includes access to the Safer Community referral form, along with information about external support services for individuals who experience gender-based violence or other behaviours of concern, along with mental health, occupational health and safety, and other wellbeing support information.

Harassment and Discrimination Contact Officer (HDCO) Network

The HDCO Network provides confidential support and information to students, staff and associates who have experienced or witnessed discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying, vilification or victimisation. HDCOs assist individuals whether they wish to make a report or are simply seeking guidance on available options, reporting pathways or relevant policies. They can also attend meetings as a support person.

The network is managed by the Consultant, Governance and Policy within the Equity and Inclusion Division. HDCOs help Deakin meet positive duty obligations under Equal Opportunity legislation and often act as the first point of contact for those seeking information or considering making a report.

It is a requirement of General Manager roles and the CEO at DRS to train and join the HDCO network.

Management of gender-based violence disclosures and reports

In 2025 the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy, Sexual Harm Response Procedure, Family Violence Support Policy and Family Violence Support Procedures (staff, students) provided the framework for considerations and management of gender-based violence complaints or reports. These were recently updated and since 1 January,

2026, these behaviours, along with broader forms of gender-based violence are managed under the **Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy** and **Gender-based Violence Response Procedure**.

As outlined above (disclosures of gender-based violence to Safer Community), Deakin's Safer Community team is available as the primary point of contact to disclose experiences of gender-based violence in business hours (Monday to Friday – 9am to 4pm). Their role includes supporting students and staff to submit a formal complaint or report, should they wish to. Where disclosures, reports or complaints are received outside of Safer Community business hours, procedures are in place for Deakin generally, and for Deakin Residential Services to manage initial disclosures, provide support and ensure that Safer Community is informed at the first available opportunity.

More broadly, application of additional Deakin policies and procedures is contingent on the parties involved. Complaints or reports of gender-based violence made:

- by a student where a staff member is the respondent are considered under the **Student Complaints Resolution Policy** and **Procedure** and the **Code of Conduct** (staff).
- by a student where a student is the respondent are considered under the **Student Complaints Resolution Policy** and **Procedure** and the **Student Misconduct Procedure**.
- by a staff member where another staff member is the respondent are considered under the **Complaints: Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Victimization and Vilification (Staff) Procedure** and the **Code of Conduct** (staff).

If a formal investigation is initiated, and the respondent is a staff member, an independent assessor is engaged by the relevant area within Deakin to conduct an investigation. Should the investigation substantiate the allegations, findings are provided to the team managing the complaint in line with the above framework and from there to People and Culture.

At Deakin, reports of gender-based violence allegedly perpetrated by a student against another member of the University community are considered by a specialist

Gender-based Violence Student Misconduct Panel aligned with the Student Misconduct Committee (the Committee). This panel is supported by the Student Conduct team under the Pro Vice-Chancellor Students. Dedicated Committee Chairs and panel members bring expert professional and research experience to their roles, typically in fields such as psychology, criminology and law. Newly appointed chairs and panel members receive specialised training from the Student Conduct and Equity and Inclusion teams – training that is designed to hone awareness and understanding of gender-based violence and trauma-informed investigations and decision-making.

Outcomes of gender-based violence reports

Outcomes of substantiated complaints or reports may be classified as educative or punitive. Educative outcomes typically include attending training or participating in tailored education, while punitive outcomes include suspension or exclusion.

The choice between educative and punitive outcomes is based on the nature and type of the gender-based violence report made, and the Student Misconduct Committee or independent assessor's determination of the most appropriate outcome for the respondent, in line with relevant procedures. If an individual does not complete an educative outcome, or if their engagement is reported to be unsatisfactory, Deakin may consider imposing a punitive outcome in relation to a subsequent allegation.

In addition, due to risk levels in accommodation settings, movement of residents or exclusion from residence is applied, at times, prior to substantiation of claim. This may occur in cases where there is evidence of residents breaching their suitability to live on residences due to RESPECT community values and/or impact on other residents as per the licence agreement.

Monitoring gender-based violence incidents, disclosures and reports

When collecting gender-based violence data, Deakin makes a distinction between disclosures and complaints or reports. A disclosure refers to the provision of information about an experience of gender-based violence to Deakin, for the

purpose of receiving support and information. A complaint or report of gender-based violence is the provision of information to Deakin with the expectation of Deakin taking further action or investigating further.

Deakin also makes a distinction between incidents with a direct affiliation to university business and those with an indirect affiliation. Incidents with a direct affiliation are those where university legislation, policy and/or procedure provide a framework through which a member of the Deakin community may be held to account for alleged behaviour, for example through staff complaint and/or misconduct processes.

Incidents with an indirect affiliation are those where there is a nexus with university business, but where Deakin legislation, policy and/or procedure do not provide a framework through which the University could hold a person to account in response to an allegation of gender-based violence – for example, where a student makes a complaint about the actions of a member of the public on a Deakin campus.

It is important to acknowledge that staff, students and associates who disclose a gender-based violence incident are not obliged or required to make a report, either internally to Deakin or externally to, for example, Victoria Police. As a university we have a comprehensive risk management process in place and, wherever safe and appropriate to do so, will place the wishes of the person who has experienced harm at the centre of our response. As a result of this approach, incidents with a direct affiliation to the University may have no associated staff or student complaint or student misconduct outcome.

Deakin also provides advice and support to staff, students and, in some instances, associates who disclose a non-affiliated incident of gender-based violence. Non-affiliated incidents are those with no nexus to university business, for example an historical sexual assault, or experience of family violence.

Awareness raising of report and support services

Deakin continues to promote and raise awareness of reporting and support services within and beyond the University via a range of communication channels. This includes content provided via Student Unit Guides, Deakin website, Deakin Sync (student website), Student blogs, Staff Network articles, staff internal hub, briefings, presentations, social media, newsletters, podcasts, apps, digital signage, emails, webinars, forums, on campus activations and campaigns.

Information about responding to disclosures of gender-based violence, including available reporting and support options, is provided in the formal induction for new leaders, as well as compulsory staff and student training. Student leaders across the University are heavily involved in communications and messaging, co-designing, promoting and reinforcing a positive and inclusive environment.

Additional components of Deakin's existing whole-of-organisation approach

Teaching and learning

Deakin is committed to maintaining teaching and learning environments that promote respect and are free from gender-based violence. Equity and Inclusion work with teaching and learning areas to help equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to foster respect, demonstrate appropriate behaviour, preparing them for success in their future careers. By embedding these values into their education, we aim to build future-ready graduates who can positively impact their communities and workplaces. Activities include initiatives to embed respect within teaching and learning and as part of experiences such as placements and internships.

Research

Deakin's research staff play a crucial role in advancing knowledge on respect and gender-based violence, contributing to a deeper understanding of the social, structural and institutional factors that drive harmful behaviours, as well as effective prevention and response

strategies. By examining intersectional influences, power dynamics and patterns of violence, Deakin researchers generate evidence-based insights that inform policy, practice and broader social change.

Central to this work is the **Deakin Network Against Gendered Violence (DNAGV)**, a university-wide, interdisciplinary network of researchers and practitioners with expertise across gendered violence, including violence against women and children, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, family violence, same-sex violence, the role of intersectionality, and both legal and non-legal regulatory responses. DNAGV fosters collaboration across disciplines and translates research into real world impact, strengthening Deakin's contribution to national and international efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

Through this collective expertise, Deakin aims to bridge the gap between research and practice, driving innovation and progress toward safer, more respectful communities. Key activities include ensuring safety and respect within HDR supervision practices, engaging in ethically informed research and data collection, and strengthening research, sector, and professional partnerships to support prevention, early intervention and systems change.

Partnerships and collaboration

Partnerships, collaboration and co-design with government, specialist agencies, other tertiary institutions, community groups, students and staff, are crucial in enhancing Deakin's respect and gender-based violence program of work. Engagement at every level enables Deakin to leverage diverse expertise, perspectives and lived experience to foster creative and innovative approaches. Activities include consultation and collaboration with members of our community and specialist support services.

Deakin continues to partner with external community, government, specialist agencies and other tertiary institutions as part of its respect and gender-based program of work. This includes contributing to community prevention and remembrance initiatives such as the 'Light it

Purple' campaign and Candlelit Vigil in May and 16 Days of Activism in November.

The CEO of Deakin Residential Services continues to contribute at a national level as a member of the National Higher Education Code Expert Reference Group, providing advice on the development and planned implementation of the National Code.

Deakin participated in the Victorian Tertiary Primary Prevention Network (VTPPN) including co-working days focused on emerging themes such as National Code priorities, and delivery of annual priority projects, including the Respect Week campaign.

Deakin's respect, gender-based violence and conduct practitioners also continue to participate in events, training, webinars and activities offered by sector partners to enhance our program of work.

Monitoring and evaluation

Deakin's Outcomes Framework (Section 6) is based on a results-based accountability model (RBA), measuring the key components of implementation, quality and impact. This model also allows us to draw upon existing theories of change (including actions and impact as outlined in **Change the Story**) as they relate to gender-based violence in higher education and more broadly. Whole-of-organisation impact will be monitored using the below QILT and national survey data, alongside internal data sources, to track trends in student and staff experiences of respect, safety and wellbeing, as well as organisational trends in gender-based violence.

5. Whole-of-Organisation Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan

The Action Plan outlines our whole-of-organisation approach to creating a respectful Deakin community, and to preventing and responding to gender-based violence. The plan aligns with the seven National Code Standards.

The Action Plan is supported by a complementary operational implementation plan, with all actions delivered collaboratively in partnership with stakeholders, faculties and teams across the University. This approach provides a coordinated and consistent framework for implementation across the institution. The implementation plan will be reviewed and updated annually in consultation with students, staff and those with lived experience to support ongoing delivery and continuous improvement. This implementation plan can be viewed in [Appendix E](#).

Table 1: Effective governance and a whole-of-organisation approach, prioritising safety and support, in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence

Action	Responsible	Timeline
1.1 Formalise and maintain regular gender-based violence reporting and approval schedule through Deakin Council.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: - Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor University Services (DVCUS) - Office of the Vice-Chancellor (VCO) - Governance Team	<i>Deakin Council meetings for 2026:</i> 5 and 6 February 19 March 28 May 6 August 1 October 13 November 11 December
1.2 Establish and maintain the National Code Gender-based Violence Committee of Council and Respect and Gender-based Violence Advisory Group as governance structures for National Code compliance and implementation.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: - VCO - DVCUS - National Code Gender-based Violence Committee - Vice-Chancellor's Respect and Gender-based Violence Advisory Committee	National Code Committee of Council meetings for 2026: 2 March 27 July 23 November Respect and Gender-based Violence Advisory Group meetings for 2026: 3 June 4 November
1.3 Develop and implement annual implementation plans for 2026-29 Action Plan.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: - Deakin Residential Service (DRS) - Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) Students - Student Success - Safer Community - Health and Safety - Travel Team - Assurance	2 March

Action	Responsible	Timeline
1.4 Respond to identified risks (from whole-of-university risk assessment and other means), identifying and implementing relevant risk mitigation strategies.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Deakin Global Learning • Graduate Outcomes • Governance and Policy Team • Assurance	Annual ongoing risk review informing development of annual implementation plans
1.5 Develop 2030-33 four-year Respect and Gender-based Violence Action Plan.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • National Code Gender-based Violence Committee • Vice-Chancellor's Respect and Gender-based Violence Advisory Committee	T2 2029
1.6 Develop 2030-33 four-year Outcomes Framework.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • National Code Gender-based Violence Committee of Council • Vice-Chancellor's Respect and Gender-based Violence Advisory Committee	T2 2029
1.7 Continue to build on existing student collaboration and partnerships in the development and delivery of Deakin's four-year action plans and annual implementation plans.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Student Success • DUSA • DRS • Student Engagement • International Student Support and Compliance • Safer Community • National Indigenous Knowledges Education Research Innovation Institute (NIKERI) • Respect Ambassadors	Respect Ambassador recruitment: January 2026 Planning and consultation activities: September 2026
1.8 Transparently report on Deakin's Gender-based Violence Prevention Program of work and relevant data.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Student Complaints • Student Conduct • Safer Community	Biannual progress reports to be published: July 2026 and December 2026

Table 2: Environments are safe, and systems continuously improve to prevent and respond to gender-based violence

Action	Responsible	Timeline
2.1 Promote the Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Deakin Residential Services • Safer Community • University Communications • Student Engagement • Web teams • Travel teams • Student Engagement • Student Success • PVC Students • Deakin Residential Services	Policy and procedure promotion to begin January 2026 and be ongoing
2.2 Conduct a three-year review of Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure in consultation with staff and students.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Student Complaints • Student Conduct • Staff Complaints • Safer Community • Vice-Chancellor's Respect and Gender-based Violence Advisory Committee	Q2 2028
2.3 Review additional relevant policies, procedures and requirements (e.g. Working with Children checks, Recruitment, Conflict of Interest, Contractor and Partnership Agreements) to ensure ongoing alignment with emerging legislation and National Code requirements and monitor implementation.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Health and Safety • Customer Experience • Equity and Inclusion • Safer Community • Staff Complaints • Student Complaints • Student Conduct • Assurance	Ongoing
2.4 Raise awareness of National Code requirements and enhance measures to ensure compliance with related programs, requirements, policies and procedures.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Health and Safety • Student Engagement • University Communications • Assurance • Faculty Executives • Professional Executives	Ongoing and as requested
2.5 Continue to monitor non-disclosure agreement use and ensure these are not utilised in gender-based violence cases. Continue to refine related documentation.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Customer Experience • People and Culture • Assurance • Workplace Relations	Annual monitoring began in 2026 and will remain ongoing, and reported on for Council on an annual basis

Action	Responsible	Timeline
2.6 Implement any necessary recommendations made by the National Student Ombudsman in relation to gender-based violence.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • PVC Student • Deakin Residential Services • Health and Safety • People and Culture • Assurance	As required by National Student Ombudsman

Table 3: Build knowledge and capability to safely and effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

Action	Responsible	Timeline
3.1 Coordinate and deliver tailored awareness raising campaigns and communications.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • University Communications • Student Engagement • Deakin Residential Services • Safer Community • Health and Safety • DUSA • People and Culture • Assurance • Web Channel Marketing	March 2026 and ongoing
3.2 Continue to build on existing student collaboration and partnerships in the identification of gaps and challenges, and development of campaigns and educational initiatives.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Student Success • Student Engagement • Student Communications • DUSA • Deakin Residential Services • Safer Community • Respect Ambassadors • NIKERI • Disability Resource Centre (DRC)	Ongoing
3.3 Undertake ongoing delivery, review and refinement of capacity building (including in-person/online facilitated training, student and staff compliance modules, specialised training for staff in key roles [where disclosures are more likely, or roles involved in complaints, conduct and investigations], leadership and students in leadership roles, and tailored training solutions).	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • DUSA • Researcher Development Academy (RDA) • Student Services • Deakin Residential Services • Student Success • Safer Community • Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) teams • University faculties • Workplace Relations • People Solutions	Began the annual schedule of review and uplift, and subsequent training schedules in June 2025

Action	Responsible	Timeline
3.4 Continue ongoing monitoring of staff skills and expertise requirements and taking proactive actions to upskill and address gaps as required.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • People and Culture • Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic (DVCA) • Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (SPVC) Students, Teaching and Learning • Safer Community • Workplace Relations • Student Complaints • Student Conduct • Staff Complaints • Partnering and Solutions	Ongoing
3.5 Take proactive steps to improve engagement with groups disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, including women, First Nations people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability and people of diverse sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Student Services • NIKERI • Deakin Residential Services • Disability Resource Centre • Student Success • Respect Ambassadors • Indigenous Strategy Innovation	Ongoing
3.6 Take proactive steps to engage with those at increased risk of experiencing gender-based violence due to situational factors (e.g. students on placements, graduate researchers, those in student accommodation, those attending field trips and student-run events).	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Deakin Residential Services • PVC Students • Faculty Directors • Placement Coordinators • WIL teams • DUSA • RDA • Travel Team • Customer Experience • Deakin Global Learning Graduate Outcomes • Student Accommodation	October 2026 for completion
3.7 Ongoing data collection and evaluation of campaigns, communications and capacity-building activities to inform future iterations.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • University Communications • Student Engagement • Respect Ambassadors • DUSA • Deakin Residential Services • Safer Community • Web Channel Marketing	Ongoing

Action	Responsible	Timeline
3.8 Continue to explore opportunities to embed respect and gender-based violence related content within the curriculum to support positive learning environments and enhance graduate capabilities.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • DVC Academic • SPVC Students, Teaching and Learning • Graduate Outcomes • WIL Coordinators • Faculty of Arts and Education • Deakin Learning Futures • University Faculties	Ongoing
3.9 Continue to explore partnerships and awareness raising initiatives with Teaching and Learning staff to enhance prevention and response capacity and opportunities.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • DVCA • SPVC Students, Teaching and Learning • University faculties • Deakin Learning Futures	Ongoing
3.10 Collaborate with Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Supervisor Development and Researcher Development Academy to enhance supervisory relationships.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • RDA	February 2026 – onwards Collaboration began in February 2026, and Equity and Inclusion and Researcher Development Academy (Supervisor Development) have a partnership in place with workshops being delivered as required and HDR training module reviewed to go live in Trimester 2 2026

Table 4: Responses and support services are safe and person-centred.

Action	Responsible	Timeline
4.1 Coordinate and deliver tailored response and support awareness raising campaigns and capacity development to relevant stakeholders.	Safer Community in partnership with university stakeholders including: • DUSA • Equity and Inclusion	Ongoing
4.2 Implement required process updates as per National Code and revised policy and procedure, including revised risk assessment tools and processes and continue to monitor effectiveness.	Safer Community in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Student Success • Health and Safety	Ongoing
4.3 Undertake ongoing monitoring and formal evaluation of support services at least every three years in line with the National Code.	Safer Community in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Health and Safety	Ongoing
4.4 Refine data collection processes and systems in relation to disclosures to record and report relevant data points as per Code requirements (in alignment with complaints and conduct teams).	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Safer Community • Student Complaints • Student Conduct • Staff Complaints • Deakin Analytics and Insights	Biannual reports due: June 2026 and December 2026 Moving to automation of Safer Community reporting by end of Q1 2026
4.5 Continue to support and improve the Harassment and Discrimination Contact Officer (HDCO) Network.	• Equity and Inclusion Governance • Policy Team	Ongoing

Table 5: Gender-based violence responses are safe and timely.

Action	Responsible	Timeline
5.1 Enhance skills and support training provision to those: • Involved in conduct, complaints, investigations and disciplinary processes. • Those who provide supports services and/or undertake risk assessments.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • People and Culture • Safer Community • Student Success	2026 and ongoing
5.2 Continue to monitor and refine response related processes and procedures to improve system consistency and alignment.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Safer Community • Student Success	Ongoing

Action	Responsible	Timeline
5.3 Undertake ongoing monitoring and formal evaluation of reporting and complaints functions, at least every three years in line with the National Code.	• Student Conduct • Student Complaints • Student Fairness • Staff Complaints	Ongoing
5.4 Refine data collection processes and systems in relation to reports and complaints to record and report relevant data points as per Code requirements (in alignment with support teams).	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Student Success • Safer Community • Student Complaints • Student Conduct • Staff Complaints • Deakin Analytics and Insights	Biannual reports due: June and December 2026 Moving to automation of Safer Community reporting by end of Q1 2026
5.5 Coordinate and deliver tailored disclosure, response and support awareness raising campaigns and capacity development to relevant stakeholders.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Student Fairness • Safer Community • DUSA	March 2026 to Respect Ambassadors and throughout the year as required

Table 6: Use evidence to approach, measure change and contribute to the national evidence-base.

Action	Responsible	Timeline
6.1 Enhance research and professional partnerships through Deakin's Network Against Gender-based Violence.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Deakin Network Against Gendered Violence (DNAGV)	Ongoing Deakin's Network Against Gender-based Violence meetings booked for 2026: 16 July 21 August 17 September 16 October 16 November
6.2 Design, deliver, coordinate and/or incorporate findings from relevant surveys and service data (including supporting delivery of the National Student Safety Survey).	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Academic Governance and Standards • Dean of Students • PVC Students • Student Services • Deakin Residential Services • Safer Community • University Communications • Health and Safety / Security • DUSA • Deakin Security • Campus Services Office • Strategic Intel and Planning	T1 2027 for design, T2 2027 for delivery, analysis and reporting T3 2027

Action	Responsible	Timeline
6.3 Continue to refine data systems to ensure data collection and reporting are in line with data requirements listed under Standard 6 of the National Code, and that mechanisms for data collection are trauma-informed.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: • Safer Community • Student Complaints • Student Conduct • Staff Complaints • Deakin Analytics and Insights	Commenced in 2025 and as data system is being refined by the end of 2026
6.4 Engage with, contribute to, and lead collaborative projects, partnering with relevant external stakeholders and organisations to develop and extend expertise across the sector.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with external stakeholders including: Victorian Tertiary Primary Prevention Network (VTPPN)	Business as usual, ongoing
6.5 Monitor emerging themes, gaps and needs, and work with internal partners to develop tailored solutions as required.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: Safer Community Student Success Staff Complaints Deakin Residential Services	Monthly ongoing meetings on the second Tuesday of each month, starting this year on 10 February
6.6 Utilise the above data and evidence-base to inform future gender-based violence action plans, implementation plans, campaigns and education.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders	Ongoing

Table 7: Student accommodation is safe for all students and staff (where relevant)

Action	Responsible	Timeline
7.1 Provide volunteer residential leaders with training on responding to disclosures and referring to appropriate internal supports.	Deakin Residential Services in partnership with external stakeholders including: Equity and Inclusion	January and December annually
7.2 Provide residential staff with training on responding to disclosures and out-of-hours risk mitigation and response.	Deakin Residential Services in partnership with external stakeholders including: Equity and Inclusion	January 2026 and ongoing as new starters commence
7.3 Implement an enhanced personalised compulsory welcome to residences induction module for all residents with assessment prior to arrival. This is in addition to the Respect@Deakin module (residential specific examples and case studies utilised).	Deakin Residential Services in partnership with external stakeholders	Q1 2026
7.4 Continue ongoing education via compulsory meetings throughout the year, for all residents (two meetings per trimester).	Deakin Residential Services	Ongoing

Action	Responsible	Timeline
7.5 Enhance Resident Experience Framework to have dedicated stream aligned with the DRS Community RESPECT values, including campaigns, activities and events.	Deakin Residential Services	Ongoing
7.6 Continue to assess understanding of policy, where to access supports and prevalence of gender-based violence within residences via the Residential Experience Standard accreditation that specifically allows residents to provide feedback and data on gender-based violence experiences.	Deakin Residential Services	Ongoing
7.7 Establish process for volunteer residential leaders to disclose intimate relationships with residents.	Deakin Residential Services	Complete
7.8 Deliver required uplift to Deakin's non-DRS managed accommodation facilities.	Equity and Inclusion in partnership with university stakeholders including: - The Faculty of Health - NIKERI - Deakin Residential Services	The Faculty of Health – June 2026 NIKERI – T1 2027

Table 8: Key implementation dates

Code requirement	Year/s for completion	Responsible	Actions
1.4 A Provider must, led by its Higher Education Principal Executive Officer, prepare, implement and publish on its website a Whole-of-Organisation Prevention and Response Plan.	(2026-29 Action Plan) 2025 (2030-2033 Action Plan) 2029 development	Equity and Inclusion	Publish Plan
1.9 Commencing after the Initial Reporting Date, a Provider must report to the Governing Body at least every six months against the Outcomes Framework for its Prevention and Response Plan. The report must include de-identified data on incidents of gender-based violence experienced by students and staff since the last report, including identification of any trends in the data.	Governing Body Reports (every 6 months) – July and December 2026 2027 2028 2029	Equity and Inclusion (and Support and Report functions)	Six-monthly and Annual reporting

Code requirement	Year/s for completion	Responsible	Actions
1.10 Commencing after the Initial Reporting Date, a Higher Education Principal Executive Officer must give to the Secretary every two years a report on the Prevention and Response Plan and its Outcomes Framework. The Secretary may prescribe the manner and form in which these reports must be provided.	Secretary Reports – 1 January • 2028 • 2030	Equity and Inclusion (and relevant internal partners)	n/a
2.5 A Provider must develop and review its Policy on preventing and responding to Gender-based Violence at least every three years.	Updated 2025 Review 2028	Equity and Inclusion	n/a
3.1 A Provider must ensure delivery of ongoing, comprehensive prevention education and training to its Students, Leadership and Staff. 3.8 A Provider must, as part of the onboarding process and subsequently on at least an annual basis, deliver specialised education and training on responding to a Disclosures to Students in leadership positions, Leadership, Staff and any other person whom the Provider considers necessary.	• Annual Staff Compliance Module (review 2026, 2028) • Student Compliance Module-commencement (review 2026, 2028) • Respect at Deakin – HDR Module (review 2026, 2029) • Pre-placement Module (review 2027) • GBV training workshops (review 2027, 2029) • LinkSafe Contractor Induction Module (implementation 2026)	Equity and Inclusion (Organisational Development, people leaders, PVC Students, RDA)	Monitoring compliance module implementation, review as needed. Review student module. Review HDR module. Implement GBV training. Implement LinkSafe compliance updates
3.16 A Provider must require Staff involved in responding to Formal Reports, conducting an investigation, or determining a disciplinary proceeding to have: (clauses 3.16 a) – b)). 3.17 A Provider must require Staff under paragraph 3.16 to undertake training in areas relating to paragraph 3.16(b) once every three years.	Trauma-informed Investigations Training – at commencement (relevant roles) and every three years • 2026 and 2029	People and Culture PVC Students/Student Fairness Equity and Inclusion	2026 Training

Code requirement	Year/s for completion	Responsible	Actions
4.9 A Provider must monitor its support services and evaluate the effectiveness of those services at least once every three years. Monitoring and evaluation findings must inform future service delivery. The Secretary may require a Provider to report on how the monitoring and evaluation of its support services has informed future service delivery. 4.10 A Provider is responsible for determining whether its support services require change having regard to its duty of care to Students and Staff.	Formal review of support services: • Safer Community (2026, 2029) • Student Complaints (2026, 2029) • Student Conduct (2026, 2029) • Staff Complaints (2028)	Safer Community Student Fairness Equity and Inclusion	Formal review of support services: • Safer Community • Student Complaints • Student Conduct
6.12 A Provider must, by 30 June each year commencing after the Initial Reporting Date, seek and provide to the Secretary, and may be required to publish, the following data for the previous calendar year (Specific data points and reporting specifications in line with Standard 6).	30 June: • 2026 • 2027 • 2028 • 2029	Equity and Inclusion (and Support and Report functions)	YTD data reporting (maybe)
7.6 A Provider must have arrangements in place with a Student Accommodation Provider to ensure that risk assessments are only undertaken by persons who have the expertise and experience in paragraph 3.14 of Standard 3.	Risk Assessments Training (relevant roles) – at commencement and every three years. • 2026 and 2029	Deakin Residential Services	Additional risk assessment training to be delivered by Our Watch

6. Outcomes Framework

Based on the actions outlined above, use the below table to outline the outcomes you are seeking to achieve, and how progress towards these outcomes will be tracked over time.

Note: Under the National Code, the provider must report against the Outcomes Framework to its governing body every six months.

Please note, as this is the first year of implementing this Outcomes Framework, specific targets for our measures have not yet been set. Deakin will take an iterative improvement approach, using this initial year to test data collection mechanisms and establish baseline metrics. These baseline insights will inform the development of evidence-based and meaningful targets, which will be included in the next iteration of our Outcomes Framework.

Outcome	Sub-outcomes	Indicators	Measures (of impact or progress)
Effective governance and a whole-of-organisation approach, prioritising safety and support, in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence	Governance, oversight and accountability are embedded within the leadership levels of the organisation	Governance structures are established and functioning, with regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting of action plans	No. of committees established No. of meetings held Action plans published Annual reports published
	Internal policies and procedures are established to guide practice and support organisation-wide accountability	Gender-based violence policies and procedures are developed and aligned to National Code requirements	No. of policies and procedures in place aligned to Code requirements by 1 Jan 2026 No. of policies and procedures reviewed and updated by end 2026
Environments are safe, and systems continuously improve to prevent and respond to gender-based violence		Policies and procedures are maintained and regularly reviewed	Completion of a three-year review of key policies and procedures
	The organisation adopts and implements best practice and evidence-based recommendations	Risk assessment and relevant external recommendations are implemented and embedded in practice	Risk assessment conducted No. of risk assessment recommendations implemented No. of Student Ombudsman recommendations implemented
	Trauma-informed approaches are embedded across systems	Reduction in practices inconsistent with trauma-informed approaches and increased adoption across services	No. of non-disclosure agreements used in gender-based violence cases

Outcome	Sub-outcomes	Indicators	Measures (of impact or progress)
Build knowledge and capability to safely and effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence	Staff and student leaders are equipped to respond effectively to gender-based violence	Workforce capability is strengthened through targeted training	No. of staff in training No. of student leaders in training Percentage of participants reporting increased knowledge, confidence and skills
	Students are actively engaged in prevention and awareness activities	Increase student activation and engagement with topic through information and experience events	No. of student activations Percentage of students who complete activation evaluation that report impact
	Institutional capability is strengthened through coordinated education and capacity-building initiatives. Information is accessible, clear and widely communicated	Targeted communications reach key audiences and drive engagement	No. of tailored communication outputs Engagement metrics (e.g. views, click-through rates – where available)
Responses and support services are safe and person-centred	Students and staff are aware of and able to access gender-based violence support services	Increased awareness and understanding of services, support and reporting pathways	No. tailored communication outputs (progress) No. tailored trainings delivered and attendance (progress) Percentage of staff and student leaders trained who reported impact (impact) No. students and staff who complete mandatory Modules Percentage of staff and students who complete Module evaluation and report impact (impact)
	Service delivery is person-centred and effective	Positive service user experience	Percentage of service users reporting satisfaction with the service and/or outcome
	Continuous improvement and monitoring and evaluation is embedded in service delivery	Monitoring and evaluation inform service improvements	Formal evaluation of support services completed at least every three years (aligned to National Code)

Outcome	Sub-outcomes	Indicators	Measures (of impact or progress)
Gender-based violence responses are safe and timely	People who disclose or report gender-based violence receive safe, timely and well-communicated responses and support	Increased confidence in reporting and response processes	No. disclosures/reports (staff, student, type, comparison to previous years) Percentage of those who engage (by service type) who indicate satisfaction with service/outcome
		Disclosures, reports and complaints responded to within established timeframes	Percentage of responses meeting proposed timeframes (Safer Community metrics) Percentage of those who engage (by service type) who indicate satisfaction with service/outcome
	Response systems, workforce capability, policies and data practices are continuously strengthened to improve quality and effectiveness of GBV responses	Staff in key roles receive tailored capacity building	No. tailored trainings delivered and staff attendance for identified cohorts (those involved in conduct, complaints, investigations, disciplinary process, support services and risk assessments) Percentage of staff trained who reported impact (impact)
		Monitoring and evaluation of response processes, procedures, reporting and complaints functions (every 3 years)	Three-yearly evaluation of support and response services completed
Use evidence to approach, measure change and contribute to the national evidence-base	Data, research and lived experience inform decision-making and continuous improvement in prevention and response	Data collection and reporting processes align with National Code standards and trauma-informed practice.	No. surveys delivered by organisation (including EandISS, RWSS, NSSS) Survey participation rates
		Research, survey findings and service data inform decision-making	Evidence of trends identified and incorporated into planning cycles (including annual plans/reports, project plans (e.g. Respect Week))
	Partnerships and sector collaboration strengthen shared learning, innovation, and contribute to the national evidence-base	Active participation in partnerships and sector initiatives	No. partnerships/collaboration activities
		Data and evidence are used to identify emerging trends, priority issues, and gaps to inform effective responses	No. monthly trend meetings held between prevention and response staff No. of monthly and quarterly reports delivered from response teams No. of trends and priority issues reflected in annual implementation plans

Outcome	Sub-outcomes	Indicators	Measures (of impact or progress)
Student accommodation is safe for all students and staff	Students and staff in accommodation are equipped to recognise, prevent and respond appropriately to gender-based violence	Residential staff and student leaders complete training and demonstrate increased capability	No. tailored trainings delivered and attendance (progress) Percentage of staff and student leaders trained who reported increased knowledge, confidence and skills (impact)
	Residential environments are safe and supported by consistent policies and standards, alongside prevention initiatives	DRS students are aware of expectations, policies and available support services	Percentage of students reporting confidence in how to seek help and access services, obtained from residential survey data
		Prevention, education, engagement activities delivered	No. initiatives delivered
		Non-DRS managed accommodation aligns with GBV prevention and response requirements	No. and proportion of non-DRS providers meeting required standards

Deakin's Outcomes Framework is based on a results-based accountability model (RBA), measuring the key components of implementation, quality and impact. This model also allows us to draw upon existing theories of change (including actions and impact as outlined in 'Change the Story') as they relate to gender-based violence in higher education and more broadly. Whole-of-organisation impact will be monitored using the below QILT and national survey data, alongside internal data sources, to track trends in student and staff experiences of respect, safety and wellbeing, as well as organisational trends in gender-based violence.

Cohort	Measure	Source	Desired trend
Students	Student experiences of safety and respect	Respect and Wellbeing Student Survey, Student Experience Survey	⬆️ favourable responses
	Student awareness of support and report services	Respect and Wellbeing Survey, National Student Safety Survey	⬇️ favourable responses
	Student experiences of gender-based violence	National Student Safety Survey, Getting Started Survey, DRS twice yearly survey asks specific GBV data both on prevalence and management of reporting.	⬇️ in prevalence measures ⬆️ in support seeking and reporting measures
	Student experiences of university responses to gender-based violence	Respect and Wellbeing Student Survey, National Student Safety Survey	⬆️ favourable responses
	Proportion of discontinuing students who report experiences of gender-based violence as the reason	Not currently collected, baseline data required to assess future trends	⬇️ in number and proportion of students indicating GBV as factor

Cohort	Measure	Source	Desired trend
Staff	• Staff experiences of safety and respect	Equity and Inclusion Staff Survey	⬆️ favourable responses
	• Staff experiences of gender-based violence	Equity and Inclusion Staff Survey	⬇️ in prevalence measures
			⬆️ in support-seeking and reporting measures

7. Gender Equality Action Plan/s

Details of Deakin's Gender Equity Action Plan can be found below.

Name and tenure:	Gender Equity Action Plan 2026-2029 (See Appendix C)
Authorising agency:	Victorian Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (CGEPS) CGEPS acknowledges that GEAPs are living documents that continue to evolve throughout their lifetimes.
Revision commitments:	The GEAP will be reviewed in Q3 2027 as part of the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 reporting obligations, providing an opportunity to include further detail and ensure ongoing alignment to the needs of staff and students.

Appendix A – Referenced Data

1. [Deakin at a Glance 2026 \(PDF, 4.8MB\)](#)
2. [2021 NSSS National Report \(PDF, 3MB\)](#)
3. [2021 NSSS Qualitative Report \(PDF, 1.3MB\)](#)
4. [Respect and Gender-based Violence Annual Report 2025 \(PDF, 3.6MB\)](#)



Appendix B – Relevant Legislation and Frameworks

Legislative context:

- 1) **Psychological Health Regulations 2025:** updated guidance and regulations relating to psychosocial safety hazards, including gendered violence and sexual harassment in workplaces.
- 2) **National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence:** providing a set of compliance standards specifically relating to the prevention of, and responses to gender-based violence in higher education.
- 3) **Sex Discrimination and Fair Work (Respect at Work) Amendment Act 2021:** protects and empowers workers to address unlawful sexual harassment in the workplace.
- 4) **Gender Equality Act 2020:** enhancing Victoria's workplace gender equality, including in universities.
- 5) **ESOS Act 2000 and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018:** holds training providers accountable to national standards in education delivery, facilities and services (including in relation to student welfare), and provides tuition fee protection.
- 6) **Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012:** accountability requirements for certain employers to promote gender equality in the workplace.
- 7) **Equal Opportunity Act 2010:** addresses discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in public life.
- 8) **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004:** sets out key workplace health and safety principles, duties and rights, including protecting from sexual harassment and other forms of gendered violence.
- 9) **Sex Discrimination Act 1984:** preventing discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, or involving sexual harassment.

Non-legislative compliance, prevention reports and frameworks:

- 10) **National Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education (2024):** outlines a government led action plan for enhancing gender-based violence prevention and response in higher education.
- 11) **Universities Australia Charter on Sexual Harm (2023):** outlines commitments for universities relating to how they approach sexual harm prevention in universities.
- 12) **Universities Australia - Sexual Harm Response Guidelines (2023):** details how universities can provide victim-centred responses to instances of sexual harm.
- 13) **Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021:** includes standards relating to safety and wellbeing; diversity and equity; and grievance and complaints processes.
- 14) **Our Watch, Educating for Equality (2021):** sector guidance document outlining strategies for addressing the gendered drivers of violence in a higher education context.
- 15) **Our Watch, Workplace Equality and Respect (2021):** sector guidance document outlining strategies for addressing the gendered drivers of violence in workplaces.
- 16) **Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Good Practice Note Preventing and Responding to Sexual Assault and Harassment in the Higher Education Sector (2020):** provides guidance for higher education providers to better understand, prevent, identify and respond to sexual harm.
- 17) **AHRC Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report (2020):** offers detail about the prevalence and nature of workplace sexual harassment and recommendations for action.
- 18) **Universities Australia (UA) Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships (2018):** guidelines for preventing sexual harm and other forms of discrimination and disrespect in supervision relationships.
- 19) **Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities (2017):** in-depth research report outlining prevalence, impacts and recommended actions to address sexual harm in universities.

Appendix C – Gender Equity Action Plan

GENDER EQUITY ACTION PLAN 2026-2029

Gender Equity at Deakin University

At Deakin, diversity, equity and inclusion are integral to every aspect of education, research and experience –creating an environment where people are empowered and supported to thrive, contribute and feel a sense of belonging. They are an integral part of the University’s ongoing success aligned to the University’s Strategic Plan ***Deakin 2030: Ideas to Impact***.

Universities are uniquely placed to challenge gender stereotypes and to educate, train and develop a future workforce that is free from the limitations of gender segregation-advancing society, culture, and the economy. Deakin is strongly committed to supporting staff and students of all genders to participate and thrive in underrepresented courses and industries, challenging inequities that persist in the higher education sector.

Since 2012, Deakin has lodged an annual report to the federal Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) which maintains a world-leading dataset on gender equality in Australian workplaces. Following the introduction of the Victorian Gender Equality Act in 2020, Deakin has continued to demonstrate progress towards achieving workplace gender equity.

Gender equity is a shared responsibility, and we must continue to engage with our communities and challenge gender stereotypes. As one of Australia’s most progressive universities, we continue to work collaboratively with government, experts, and other tertiary institutions to explore ongoing opportunities to share good practice.

Overview

Deakin’s ongoing commitment to creating a gender equal workplace is captured in the Gender Equity Action Plan 2026-2029. It builds upon the program of work and activities undertaken in previous years, and is informed by state and federal legislation, research and evidence-based best practice and recent sector developments.

Consultation with employees and stakeholders helped inform the development and ongoing evaluation of this action plan. Engagement and insights were gathered through employee surveys, providing quantitative and qualitative data on workplace culture, barriers and priorities for action.

Engagement with employee representatives, including People and Culture and the NTEU have enabled deeper discussions of what is working well, and key areas for improvement. Input from employee groups from the University’s Faculties and Portfolios has ensured that this Plan is informed by diverse perspectives, aligned with institutional priorities and supported by leadership.

The strategies and actions in this GEAP are aligned to Deakin’s People Strategy and designed to address one or more of the seven gender equality indicators. Successful implementation of this plan will contribute to improving employment outcomes for women, but also consideration of intersectionality, and the impact this has on staff development, career progression, job satisfaction, work-life balance and personal wellbeing.

1. CLOSING THE GENDER PAY GAP

The gender pay gap is a persistent and complex issue, reflecting broader structural inequalities that continue to shape economic and social outcomes. This disparity is not the result of a single cause but rather a combination of interrelated social practices and systemic norms.

Deakin continues to close its gender pay gap – the University’s median gender pay gap of 6.5% (total remuneration March 2025) sits below Australia’s national median gender pay gap of 16.4%³. Activities within this focus area look to further understand and address cultural mechanisms that contribute to the gender pay gap.

Outcomes:

- Close the gender pay gap through identifying and addressing contributors at all stages of the employee life cycle.
- Increase reporting accuracy and uplifts in provision of gender and intersectional metrics that are embedded to inform workforce decision-making and planning.

Strategy/Action	Description	Responsibility	Timeline
1.1 Commission a job architecture framework review.	Commission a job architecture framework review to better understand and identify pockets of gender segregation in the University.	• Equity and Inclusion • People and Culture	Q1 2027
1.2 Continue to advance workforce diversity by systematically integrating gender and intersectional metrics into workforce planning and talent identification processes.	Continue to support senior leaders to build diverse workforces through ongoing provision of diversity metrics in MY Workforce and MY Talent conversations.	• People and Culture • Equity and Inclusion	Ongoing
1.3 Build a culture that supports confident, equitable and informed salary-negotiation practices.	Women are less likely to negotiate salary and proactive communication to overcome systemic biases and societal norms is necessary. Develop a quantified skills framework and map these capabilities to salary bands to support conversations around salary negotiation.	• Equity and Inclusion • People and Culture • Customer Experience • University Communications	Q4 2028

3 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Gender Pay Gap data 2024-2025 wgea.gov.au/pay-and-gender/gender-pay-gap-data

2. ENHANCING CAREER PIPELINES

The systemic underrepresentation of women in senior levels of leadership in the higher education sector remains an ongoing issue. Women are overrepresented at lower employment levels and underrepresented in more senior levels.

Deakin is focussed on strengthening the academic pipeline of mid-career female and gender diverse academics through career advancement, promotion and leadership initiatives. In addition to tailored career professional development programs, process reviews will be conducted to identify and address barriers to career progression.

Outcomes:

- Remove barriers to career opportunities to increase the diversity and representation of women and gender diverse people in senior roles.
- Increase applications and promotion of women to academic levels C-D.

Strategy/Action	Description	Responsibility	Timeline
2.1 Continue to refine and embed inclusive hiring and decision-making processes.	Strengthen equity and inclusion across the recruitment process by addressing systemic barriers and decision-making practices that can disadvantage underrepresented candidates.	• Equity and Inclusion • Customer Experience	Ongoing
2.2 Build out the pipeline of future talent by delivering a comprehensive suite of outreach activities aimed at increasing representation of genders across traditionally underrepresented fields.	Deliver outreach activities for future students to build aspiration and raise awareness of education and careers for women in non-traditional fields.	• DVCA • Equity and Inclusion	Ongoing
2.3 Pilot a strategic graduate employment program.	Invest in the development of future leaders by delivering a new graduate program. The program will support graduates to accelerate career development through mentorship, training and exposure to different parts of Deakin.	• People and Culture	Q1 2027
2.4 Review the academic promotions framework.	Standardise the academic promotions process and develop criteria for equitable recognition of education, research and service in academic careers.	• PVC Academic Experience	Q1 2026
2.5 Increase access to academic leadership programs targeted towards women.	Continue investing in the WATTLE program which aims to empower women to attain senior leadership roles within the university sector by providing an intensive leadership and networking program.	• Equity and Inclusion • People and Culture	Q4 2026
2.6 Demonstrate Deakin's continued commitment to leadership development through delivery of the Cultivate_U program of work.	Develop the capability and confidence of managers at every career stage to support their growth as influential and impactful leaders.	• People and Culture	Ongoing

3. CREATING A RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY

Actions in this section help to deliver Deakin's 2025 Respect and Gender-based Violence Action Plan. Comprehensive, sustained and iterative education and training to promote an understanding of the link between gender inequality and violence against women, empowering our community to challenge views that condone violence, disrespect, power imbalances and inequality.

By embedding these principles into campus culture, policies, teaching and learning, we continue to foster a community where every individual feels valued and secure, laying the foundation for academic, personal and professional success.

Outcomes:

- Processes, training, education and capacity-building offerings align with the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (National Code) requirements.
- Increased awareness of and confidence in support options and processes for staff and students who are experiencing, or have experienced, sexual harassment or other gender-based violence.

Strategy/Action	Description	Responsibility	Timeline
3.1 Review Deakin's Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure.	Ensure alignment of policy and procedures with emerging legislation and National Code requirements.	• Equity and Inclusion • Assurance	2028
3.2 Implement Gender-based Violence screening requirements.	In line with national requirements for preventing and responding to gender-based violence, new checks will be introduced to recruitment and promotions processes.	• Equity and Inclusion • Customer Experience • Assurance	Q1 2026
3.3 Improve approach to sexual harm and gender-based violence.	Deliver and improve Deakin's coordinated approach to sexual harm and gender-based violence prevention and response, aligned with the National Higher Education Framework and National Code requirements.	• Equity and Inclusion • Health and Safety	Ongoing
3.4 Support students to engage in the 2026 National Student Safety Survey (NSSS).	The National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) aims to collect robust, representative data on student experiences of sexual violence and harm within university contexts. Findings will help shape university policies, services and national responses to improve student safety.	• Equity and Inclusion • Vice-Chancellor's Office • Student Services	S2 2026
3.5 Enhance employee consultation on gender equality issues.	Addition of annual consultation with an employee representative group or network. Undertake annual consultation of all staff on gender equality in the workplace using employee focus groups and exit interviews.	• Equity and Inclusion • People and Culture • Customer Experience	Q1 2028

4. FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Inclusion is one of Deakin's core values and the University seeks to create a contemporary, flexible and adaptive working environment underpinned by practical knowledge and inclusive practices.

Deakin seeks to foster an environment in which diversity is valued, differences are embraced, and staff and students feel part of a connected, safe, and respectful community.

Outcomes:

- Staff across all levels demonstrate confidence and competence in engaging with inclusive practices that balance University requirements with individual circumstances, promoting a sustainable work-life balance.
- Maintain 80 % threshold staff survey result pertaining to statements on workplace culture.

Strategy/Action	Description	Responsibility	Timeline
4.1 Commission a comprehensive review of intersectional data fields within DeakinPeople.	Equity cohort data is incomplete, with many fields left blank or recorded before current categories—such as non-binary gender options—were introduced. The review will include a feasibility assessment to identify system gaps and the downstream impacts of proposed changes, while also considering external reporting requirements to ensure consistent mapping across systems.	• Equity and Inclusion • Customer Experience	Q1 2026
4.2 Continue delivering Guest Lecture Program.	The Guest Lecture Program was piloted in 2022 and involves identifying opportunities to contribute to course materials in relation to gendered violence; engaging with relevant stakeholders to design and deliver guest lectures; upskilling students and academics within specific programs and increasing engagement with capacity-building offerings.	• Equity and Inclusion • Faculties	Ongoing

Strategy/Action	Description	Responsibility	Timeline
4.3 Continue promoting inclusive practices through capacity and capability building.	Deakin is committed to creating an environment of inclusion where we value diversity, embrace difference, and nurture a connected, safe, and respectful community. Capability offerings include training for staff and students on topics including inclusive recruitment practices, gendered language, gender diversity awareness, disability awareness, LGBTIQ+ Allyship, Bystander Intervention, Responding to Disclosures (Child Safety, Gender-based Violence) and training for staff and student leaders who are more likely to receive disclosures of gender-based violence.	• Equity and Inclusion • People and Culture	Ongoing
4.4 Embed inclusive principles through leadership and manager capability programs.	Build inclusion into the core of our leadership and manager capability programs, equipping leaders at all levels to foster equitable, respectful, and inclusive workplaces.	• Equity and Inclusion • People and Culture	Ongoing
4.5 Deliver campaigns challenging gender stereotypes.	Deliver campaigns with an aim to: • Encourage men to take up flexible work arrangements and parental leave. • Profile people of all genders in non-traditional roles.	• Equity and Inclusion • Strategic Comms • Advancement	Q1 2029
4.6 Continue removing barriers impacting participation of women in study, work, and social activities at Deakin.	Address any emerging feedback that suggest potential gender bias impacts on participation in Deakin life including but not limited to part-time work, flexible working conditions, return to work from parental/carers leave, and on and off campus work.	• Equity and Inclusion • Student Services	Ongoing

Strategy/Action	Description	Responsibility	Timeline
4.7 Promote the uptake of Diversity Impact Assessments.	Develop and implement communications plan to enhance staff awareness and understanding of Diversity Impact Assessments.	- Equity and Inclusion - University Communications	Q4 2027
4.8 Maintain gender balance on University Council.	All council member appointment submissions must provide details on how the appointment will affect the gender composition of the Council. The Council maintains a skills matrix and has an objective of 50:50 gender balance.	- Chancellor's Advisory Committee - Council Secretary	Ongoing
4.9 Advocate for the diversity of university councils and champion sector-wide advocacy for greater alignment and consistency in reporting to regulators.	Advocate to the Minster via ATN/UA on the value of diverse appointments; including diversity and lived experience as components of board skills matrix.	- Equity and Inclusion - VCO	Ongoing

Key outcomes

The meaningful and measured actions in this Plan support the achievement of the following WGEA-aligned targets by 2029:

- Improve gender balance in the workforce by increasing women's participation in graduate and apprentice roles above the current 25% baseline.
- Strengthen employee consultation mechanisms to support meaningful engagement on gender equality matters.
- Undertake comprehensive gender pay gap analyses annually to ensure ongoing monitoring and evidence-based action.

Deakin is committed to going beyond its legislative obligations. Over the next four years, the University will seek to:

- Reduce the organisational gender pay gap to 5%.
- Address gender segregation across the workforce, including in STEM fields.
- Increase the representation of women and gender diverse people in senior roles.
- Foster a respectful community by strengthening awareness and understanding of the link between gender inequality and gender-based violence.
- Strengthen a culture of belonging, safety, respect, and inclusion.

Appendix D – List of relevant Deakin policies

- Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy
- Gender-based Violence Response Procedure
- Code of Conduct (staff)
- Code of Conduct (students)
- Student Complaints Resolution policy
- Student Complaints Resolution procedure
- Student Misconduct Procedure
- Complaints: Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Victimisation and Vilification (Staff) Procedure
- Student Appeals Policy
- Student Appeals Procedure
- Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) Supervision procedure
- Travel Policy
- Travel Procedure
- Declaration of Interest Procedure



Appendix E – 2026 Implementation Plan

1. ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence requires accountable leadership, effective governance, and a coordinated whole-of-university approach. This focus area recognises the pivotal role of leadership in fostering a safe, respectful and inclusive Deakin community. Proactive leadership sets expectations, drives cultural change, and can prioritise safety and support in addressing gender-based violence. This focus area supports strengthening governance, informed decision-making, and embedding responsibility for prevention and response across all levels of the University.

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
1.1 Formalise and maintain regular gender-based violence reporting and approval schedule through Deakin Council.	Biannual data and progress reporting to go to Council in July and December of each year.	July and December 2026
	Annual public reports to be shared with the Respect and GBV Advisory Group for endorsement prior to publication.	February 2026
	Minutes from the Respect and GBV Advisory Group, key reports, briefings and activities to be shared with National Code Committee of Council, and Council on a regular schedule.	In accordance with governance and reporting requirements
1.2 Establish and maintain the National Code Gender-based Violence Committee of Council and VC's Respect and Gender-based Violence Advisory Committee and VC's Respect as governance structures for National Code compliance and implementation.	Support implementation of National Code Committee of Council and align processes and documentation with relevant requirements.	National Code Committee of Council meetings: 2 March 2026, 27 July 2026, 23 November 2026
	Review membership, group purpose and meeting cadence of Advisory Committee.	March 2026
	Convene the Respect and GBV Advisory Group Committee on a regular schedule and monitor and implement relevant actions.	Quarterly (ongoing)
1.3 Develop and implement annual implementation plans for 2026-29 Action Plan.	Present 2026 Implementation Plan to National Code Committee at first meeting.	2 March 2026
	Develop 2027 Implementation Plan, including undertaking associated student and staff engagement activities.	Trimester 2 2026

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
1.4 Respond to identified risks (from whole-of-university risk assessment and other means), identifying and implementing relevant risk mitigation strategies.	Work with Deakin Global Learning to implement their gender-based violence action plan for Deakin study abroad and study tours.	June 2026
	Work with Graduate Outcomes to enhance centralised placements information and uplift initiatives to enhance placement safety and accountability for placement providers.	November 2026
	Explore opportunities to work with Deakin Infrastructure and Property teams, to explore safety enhancements through the application of CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) principles.	Ongoing
	Continue to monitor risk, updating risk assessments and mitigation plans, risk statements, and reporting through the Audit and Risk and National Code committee of Council.	Quarterly Reviews: March 2026 July 2026 October 2026 January 2027
1.5 Develop 2030-33 four-year Respect and Gender-based Violence Action Plan.	2029 Action	Trimester 2 2029
1.6 Develop 2030-33 four-year Outcomes Framework.	2029 Action	Trimester 2 2029
1.7 Continue to build on existing student collaboration and partnerships in the development and delivery of Deakin's four-year action plans, and annual implementation plans.	Respect Ambassador Recruitment.	Respect Ambassador recruitment:
	Primary Prevention student touchpoint days, including Respect Week 2026.	January 2026
	Planning and student consultations.	Respect Week: 9-12 March Planning and consultation activities: September 2026
1.8 Transparently report on Deakin's Gender-based Violence Prevention Program of work and relevant data.	6 monthly reporting of gender-based violence data to Deakin Council, along with progress reports against the 4-year action plan.	July 2026 December 2026
	Continue to publish Annual Reports on the Respect and Gender-based Violence Action Plan on Deakin's website.	March 2026

2. SAFE ENVIRONMENTS AND SYSTEMS

Higher education providers are responsible for creating environments that are safe for all members of their communities. This focus area ensures that policies, procedures and systems support the prevention of and response to gender-based violence. Continuous improvement is embedded through regular review, feedback mechanisms and data-informed decision-making.

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
2.1 Promote the Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure.	- Promote awareness of revised Gender-based Violence Policy and Procedure including updates to website content to ensure accessibility of information about policies and procedures, process maps especially for students and those seeking information about support and report options. - Communicate the importance of preventing gender-based violence wherever it occurs, including on campus, online and in private. - Communicate updates to staff and students where appropriate.	January 2026 and ongoing
2.2 Conduct a three-year review of Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure in consultation with staff and students.	TBC	2028
2.3 Review additional relevant policies, procedures and requirements (e.g. Working with Children's checks, Recruitment, Conflict of Interest, Contractor and Partnership Agreements) to ensure ongoing alignment with emerging legislation and National Code requirements and monitor implementation.	Work with relevant teams to ensure necessary revisions to key policies and procedures to ensure comprehensive alignments with the National Code.	Ongoing
	Contribute to additional policy and procedure review processes to ensure ongoing Code compliance.	Ongoing
	Implement required changes to recruitment processes for gender-based violence declarations. Monitor and refine as necessary.	Trimester 1 2026
2.4 Raise awareness of National Code requirements and enhance measures to ensure compliance with related programs, requirements, policies and procedures.	Deliver briefing(s) regarding the National Code, any educational requirements and updates regarding the proposed National Student Safety Survey to members of Executive and other relevant stakeholders.	Ongoing and as requested
2.5 Continue to monitor non-disclosure-agreement use and ensure these are not utilised in gender-based violence cases. Continue to refine related documentation.	Annual review of NDA data and documentation in consultation with Legal team.	Annual monitoring began in 2026 and will remain ongoing and reported on for Council on an annual basis.
2.6 Implement any necessary recommendations made by the National Student Ombudsman in relation to gender-based violence.	Implement recommendations made by the National Student Ombudsman relating to gender-based violence as they arise.	As required by National Student Ombudsman.

3. KNOWLEDGE AND CAPABILITY

Deakin is committed to build the knowledge and capability of staff and students to safely and effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence. This focus area supports ongoing, evidence-based education and capacity building for all staff and students that addresses the drivers of gender-based violence and challenges disrespect, inequality and harmful attitudes. This includes training, compliance modules, campaigns and student and staff communications.

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
3.1 Coordinate and deliver tailored awareness-raising campaigns and communications.	Deliver the annual Respect Week (formerly Respect at Uni) Campaign, subsequent engagement, and 16 Days of Activism in partnership with relevant stakeholders.	March 2026
	- Develop annual communications plan and Trimester implementation plans, including annual themes, and deliver student, staff and external communications incl. social media, blogs, podcasts, articles and digital signage. - Communicate the importance of preventing gender-based violence wherever it occurs, including on campus, online and in private.	February 2026
	Utilise communications to address identified knowledge gaps around gender-based violence, support and reporting as identified in student consultation.	Ongoing
	Regularly review internal and external webpages to ensure accessibility and consistency.	Annually

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
3.2 Continue to build on existing student collaboration and partnerships in the identification of gaps and challenges, and development of campaigns and educational initiatives.	Review documentation to ensure representation of diverse needs and experiences; ensure inclusion of resources and supports for specific cohorts; and engage diverse students and staff in planning, evaluation, and feedback to support the prevention of gender-based violence wherever it occurs.	Ongoing
	Implement the Respect Ambassadors program and enhance student partnerships to deliver prevention initiatives, including with DRS and DUSA	February 2026 and onwards
	Explore opportunities to partner with stakeholders to enhance information and education provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, international students, those from diverse cultural backgrounds, students with disability, LGBTIQ+ and mature age students.	Ongoing

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
3.3 Undertake ongoing delivery, review and refinement of capacity building (including in-person/online facilitated training, student and staff compliance modules, specialised training for staff in key roles (where disclosures are more likely, or roles involved in complaints, conduct and investigations), leadership and students in leadership roles, and tailored training solutions).	- Refine and deliver education in alignment with Code requirements, including training and online education modules. - Identify advanced/additional offerings to enable leaders, front line support and key workers to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination and disrespect wherever it occurs, in line with the Code and positive duty obligations. - Target promotion of training and briefings to key cohorts (e.g., library, frontline services, student leaders, DUSA, HDR). - Adapt the Respect at Deakin Modules (standard and HDR) to address gaps/build on foundational learning.	Began the annual schedule of review and uplift, and subsequent training schedules in June 2025
	Compliance and other Modules	March 2026
	- Academic Integrity and Respect at Deakin University (Students) – Annual review. - Respect at Deakin – HDR Module – 2026 and 2028 review. - Respectful and Inclusive Workplaces Pre-placement Module – 2026 review.	
	Deakin Facilitated Workshops	Ongoing from June 2025
	Understanding Gender-based Violence and How to Support Others – 2026 review.	
	Role-based training	March 2026
	- Trauma-informed responses training arranged for all staff involved in conduct, complaints, investigations and disciplinary processes at role commencement and at least every three years. - Safe and Respectful Supervision Training – 2026 review.	Monthly sessions from February 2026
	Additional Respect and Inclusion training facilitated by Equity and Inclusion on topics including:	Ongoing
	- Inclusive language. - Bystander Intervention. - Disability confidence. - Gender equity. - LGBTIQA+ allyship and inclusion. - Anti-racism.	

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
3.4 Continue ongoing monitoring of staff skills and expertise requirements and taking proactive actions to upskill and address gaps as required.	Monitor teams (Safer Community) conducting risk assessments to ensure ongoing compliance with expertise requirements.	Ongoing
	Roll out trauma-informed Investigations to staff involved in complaints, reports, investigations, findings or disciplinary action.	February 2026
3.5 Take proactive steps to improve engagement with groups disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, including women, First Nations people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability and people of diverse sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	- Develop an annual student engagement and co-design schedule, outlining process, principles and opportunities for student engagement and co-design of relevant initiatives and plans. - Engage with students via focus groups and other forums to obtain regular feedback and opportunities for enhancement including in relation to awareness of support and report options and services.	Ongoing
3.6 Take proactive steps to engage with those at increased risk of experiencing gender-based violence due to situational factors (e.g. students on placements, graduate researchers, those in student accommodation, those attending field trips and student-run events).	Continue to implement action plans developed through 2025 Code compliance activities, including in relation to supervision, placements, study tours and study abroad, and student accommodation.	October 2026 for completion
3.7 Ongoing data collection and evaluation of campaigns, communications and capacity-building activities to inform future iterations.	Continue to evaluate prevention, communication and engagement activities, including: - Respect Week. - Training. - International Women's Day. - Comms plan. - Student engagement. - Prevention and recognition campaigns. - Respect Ambassador Program.	Ongoing
3.8 Continue to explore opportunities to embed respect and gender-based violence related content within the curriculum to support positive learning environments and enhance graduate capabilities.	- Placement module promotions are automated and consider value add opportunities. - Continue to deliver respect content as part of relevant curriculum (e.g. EEH315 and EEH217 – content on Respectful Relationships Education).	Ongoing

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
3.9 Continue to explore partnerships and awareness raising initiatives with Teaching and Learning staff to enhance prevention and response capacity and opportunities.	Explore opportunities to partner with external providers on initiatives to enhance primary prevention in teaching and learning practice.	Ongoing
3.10 Collaborate with Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Supervisor Development and Researcher Development Academy to enhance supervisory relationships.	Update HDR Respect Module to better align with new HDR Procedure and National Code requirements.	July 2026
	Increase early compliance with requirements to complete HDR Respect at Deakin Module by candidates and supervisors and monitor completion rates.	July 2026 and ongoing
	Update Safe and Respectful Supervision workshop content and deliver as part of mandatory supervisor orientation sessions.	January 2026 and ongoing

4. SAFETY AND SUPPORT

Responses and support services will remain safe and person-centred. This focus area includes enhancing awareness of Deakin's support services, especially Safer Community, ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review of services, and maintaining standards for trauma-informed responses, risk assessments, implementation of precautionary measures, staff expertise and capacity development, and support and escalations processes.

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
4.1 Coordinate and deliver tailored response and support awareness raising campaigns and capacity development to relevant stakeholders.	- Continue 'Don't let the silence win' campaign engaging with students and staff to encourage reporting of threatening, aggressive, persistent or unreasonable behaviours. - Continue to work with DUSA staff to ensure reports of gender-based violence are referred to the Safer Community Team and, where appropriate, to the Student Conduct Team.	Ongoing
4.2 Implement required process updates as per National Code and revised policy and procedure, including revised risk assessment tools and processes and continue to monitor effectiveness.	- Implement required changes to responses processes and procedures, monitoring adherence to compliance with designated timelines as per the National Code. - Refine and align risk assessment approaches across systems, ensuring a consistent response regardless of where disclosures or reports are received.	January 2026 and ongoing
4.3 Undertake ongoing monitoring and formal evaluation of support services at least every three-years in line with the National Code .	- Monitor support services through ongoing feedback mechanisms provided to those who engage with service themselves or on behalf of others. - Undertake a formal evaluation process at least every three years.	Ongoing

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
4.4 Refine data collection processes and systems in relation to disclosures to record and report relevant data points as per Code requirements (in alignment with complaints and conduct teams).	- Continued collaboration between Safer Community, Equity and Inclusion, Student Fairness and People and Culture to enhance data collection systems. - Review annual data and apply relevant considerations re: privacy and confidentiality to develop relevant reports to Deakin Council and the Department Secretary.	Biannual reports due: June 2026 and December 2026 Moving to automation of Safer Community reporting by end of Q1 2026
4.5 Continue to support and improve the Harassment and Discrimination Contact Officer (HDCO) Network.	Continue to deliver professional development training and relevant resources for HDCOs, with topics aligned to emerging trends across the University.	Ongoing

5. SAFE PROCESSES

Safe, timely and transparent reporting and complaints processes are essential to a whole-of-institution approach. This focus area ensures responses to allegations of student or staff misconduct are trauma-informed and guided by those with lived experience. It prioritises awareness of complaints and reporting options, specialist staff awareness-raising and capability-building, and continued enhancement of data collection via Deakin's specialist confidential case management system.

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
5.1 Enhance skills and support training provision to those: - Involved in conduct, complaints, investigations and disciplinary processes. - Those who provide supports services and/or undertake risk assessments.	- For all staff in roles related to conduct, complaints, investigations and disciplinary action: - provide training on trauma-informed responses and investigations at least every three years, as per Code requirements - support awareness and adherence to relevant processes and procedures and code related requirements. - For all staff required to undertake risk assessments, ongoing skill development and training.	Ongoing from 2026
5.2 Continue to monitor and refine response related processes and procedures to improve system consistency and alignment.	Equity and Inclusion to review and refine response processes in consultation with Safer Community and Student Success.	Annual and ongoing
5.3 Undertake ongoing monitoring and formal evaluation of reporting and complaints functions, at least every three years in line with the National Code.	- Monitor reporting and complaints functions through ongoing feedback mechanisms provided to those who engage with service themselves or on behalf of others, - Undertake a formal evaluation process at least every three years.	Ongoing from 2026
5.4 Refine data collection processes and systems in relation to reports and complaints to record and report relevant data points as per Code requirements (in alignment with support teams).	- Continued collaboration between Safer Community, Equity and Inclusion, Student Fairness and People and Culture to enhance data collection systems. - Review annual data and apply relevant considerations re: privacy and confidentiality to develop relevant reports to Deakin Council and the Department Secretary.	Biannual reports due: June 2026 and December 2026 Moving to automation of Safer Community reporting by end of Q1 2026

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
5.5 Coordinate and deliver tailored disclosure, response and support awareness raising campaigns and capacity development to relevant stakeholders.	Support training and capacity development of new and existing Gender-based Violence Student Misconduct panel members and chairs to ensure consistent and trauma-informed approaches in gender-based violence cases, develop additional resources in collaboration with the Student Conduct team where relevant and highlighting the need to work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence wherever it occurs.	Trimester 1 2026
	Continue to work with DUSA staff to ensure reports of gender-based violence are referred to the Safer Community Team and, where appropriate, to the Student Conduct Team.	Trimester 1 2026 and ongoing

6. DATA, EVIDENCE AND IMPACT

Effective prevention and response require an evidence-informed approach, and Deakin is committed to both using and contributing to the national evidence-base. This focus area supports strengthening our data collection, evaluation and reporting processes to refine work, while promoting transparency of findings to contribute to sector-wide learnings.

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
6.1 Enhance research and professional partnerships through Deakin's Network Against Gender-based Violence.	Explore additional opportunities to engage and collaborate with DNAGV members	Ongoing. Deakin's Network Against Gender-based Violence meetings booked for 2026: 16 July 21 August 17 September 16 October 16 November
6.2 Design, deliver, coordinate and/or incorporate findings from relevant surveys and service data (including supporting delivery of the National Student Safety Survey).	- Engage the Deakin community to prepare for and raise awareness of the 2026 Student Safety Survey (NSSS) including coordination of a Survey reference group involving relevant staff across the University to ensure awareness and engagement. - Incorporate relevant findings from the 2026 and 2028 Student Respect and Wellbeing surveys and explore additional questions that support National Code reporting and impact evaluation. - Report against the outcome framework every six months to Deakin's Council and as required by the Department.	Trimester 1 2027- design Trimester 2 2027- delivery Trimester 3 2027- analysis and reporting
6.3 Continue to refine data systems to ensure data collection and reporting are in line with data requirements listed under Standard 6 of the National Code, and that mechanisms for data collection are trauma-informed.	- Continued collaboration between Safer Community, Equity and Inclusion, Student Fairness and People and Culture to enhance data collection systems. - Review annual data and apply relevant considerations re: privacy and confidentiality to develop relevant reports to Deakin Council and the Department Secretary.	Commenced in 2025 and data system is being refined by the end of 2026

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
6.4 Engage with, contribute to, and lead collaborative projects, partnering with relevant external stakeholders and organisations to develop and extend expertise across the sector.	- Continue to engage with the Victorian Tertiary Primary Prevention Network, contributing to agreed priority projects. - Engage with relevant networks, communities of practice, and prevention partners to enhance practice and support local prevention campaigns to support efforts in the prevention of gender-based violence in all forms, wherever it occurs. - Explore complementary external offerings to enhance messaging or impact (e.g. consent, tech-facilitated abuse, alcohol and gambling).	Business as usual, ongoing
6.5 Monitor emerging themes, gaps and needs, and work with internal partners to develop tailored solutions as required.	- Ensure quarterly data trends are being provided to Primary Prevention team from response and support teams. - Contribute to internal partnerships and working groups including the those associated with the Student Health and Wellbeing Plan, and others to stay abreast of emerging trends and opportunities. - Monitor research, internal data sources, and support and report data, to identify gaps, emerging themes, and design evidence-based solutions.	Monthly ongoing meetings on the second Tuesday of each month, starting this year on 10 February
6.6 Utilise the above data and evidence-base to inform future gender-based violence action plans, implementation plans, campaigns and education.	As per overarching action	Ongoing

7. SAFE STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Student accommodation is safe for all students and staff. This focus area ensures residents, residential leaders and staff are engaged in creating safe and respectful environments, building their capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, and uplift systems and procedures to maximise safety.

Action Plan Action	2026 Deliverables	Timeline
7.1 Provide volunteer residential leaders with training on responding to disclosures and referring on to appropriate internal supports.	Deliver Understanding Gender-based Violence and How to Support Other DRS Workshops and highlight the importance of preventing and responding to gender-based violence for the Deakin community wherever it occurs.	January and October annually
7.2 Provide residential staff with training on responding to disclosures and out-of-hours risk mitigation and response.	Deliver Understanding Gender-based Violence and How to Support Others to remaining DRS staff, and Risk Assessment training to relevant leaders.	January 2026 and ongoing as new starters commence
7.3 Implement an enhanced personalised compulsory welcome to residences induction module for all residents with assessment prior to arrival. This is in addition to the Respect@Deakin module (residential specific examples and case studies utilised).	Review Respect@Deakin Module. Deliver enhanced welcome module to commencing residents in T1.	Trimester 1 2026
7.4 Continue ongoing education via compulsory meetings throughout the year, for all residents (two meetings per trimester).	DRS to lead.	Ongoing
7.5 Enhance Resident Experience Framework to have dedicated stream aligned with the DRS Community RESPECT values, including campaigns, activities and events.	DRS to lead.	Ongoing
7.6 Continue to assess understanding of policy, where to access supports and prevalence of gender-based violence within residences via the Residential Experience Standard accreditation that specifically allows residents to provide feedback and data on gender-based violence experiences.	DRS to lead.	Ongoing
7.7 Establish process for volunteer residential leaders to disclose intimate relationships with residents.	Equity and Inclusion to complete for DRS.	Completed
7.8 Deliver required uplift to Deakin's non-DRS managed accommodation facilities.	Work with Kitjarra to implement action plan developed during National Code meetings in 2025, prior to reopening.	Trimester 1 2026
	Work with Faculty of Health Accommodation to implement action plan developed through National Code compliance meetings in 2025.	June 2026

Appendix F – DRS Evidence of Compliance

DRS Compliance with Standard 7 of the National Code Against Gender-based Violence

Background

Deakin Residential Services (DRS) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Deakin University (DU). All staff that work at DRS are employed as DU staff members; however, DRS is a registered NFP with its own ABN and operates under the Corporations Act with a CEO, reporting to a Board of Directors. Deakin University is its sole shareholder and only member of the company and as such DRS is required to meet the National Code as an owned / operated student accommodation provider.

DRS operates the on campus accommodation for Deakin University across its four physical campuses in Victoria (except for Kitjarra), totalling 2,908 beds.



Wurn Ponds
1,032 beds



Waterfront
445 beds

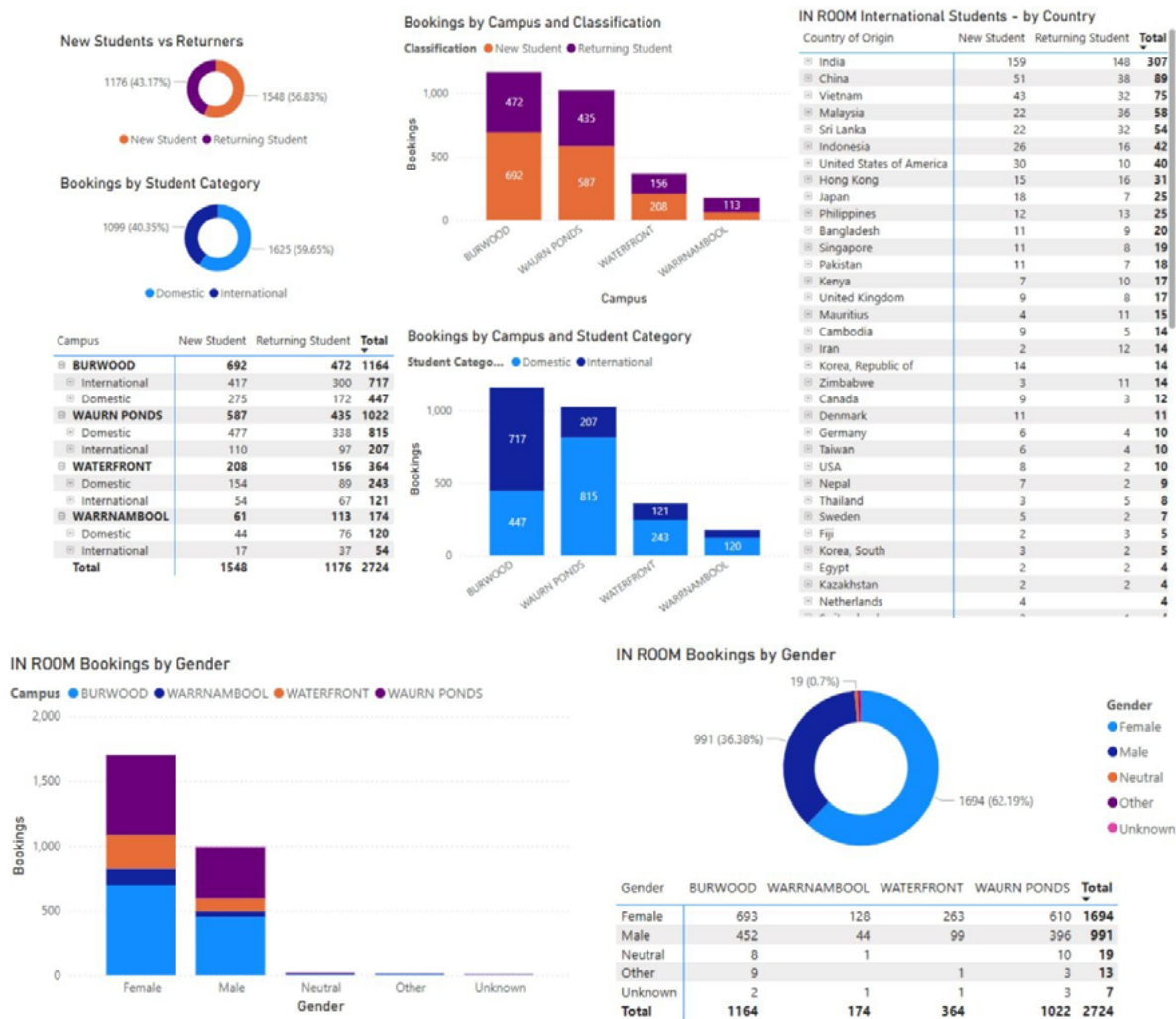


Burwood
1,177 beds



Warrnambool
254 beds

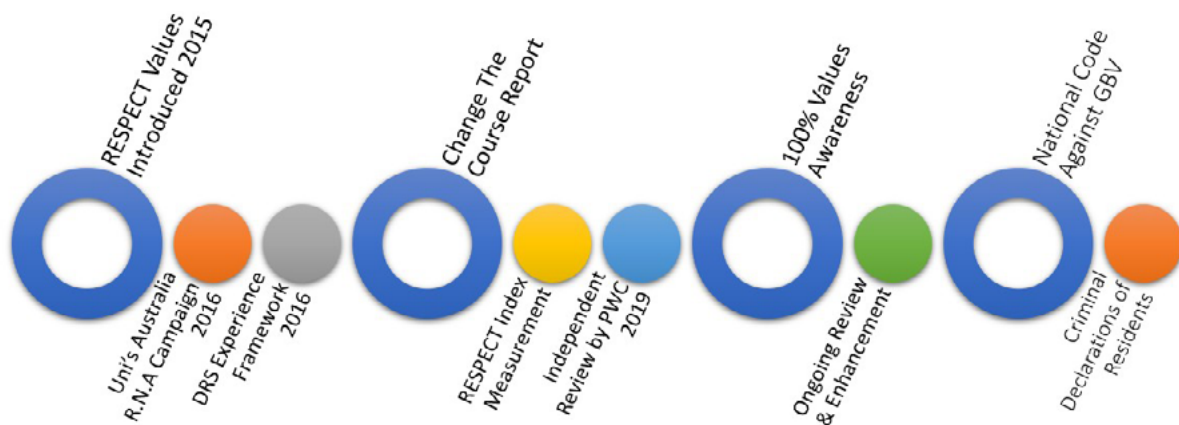
As at Census Date (31 March 2026) the demographics across the DRS portfolio are as follows:



The above trends have been typical for DRS over the past 12 years, with those identifying as female being much of the residential cohort.

DRS has a long history of prevention and education to address gender-based violence amongst its communities, dating back prior to 2015.

The DRS RESPECT community values were established in 2015 to enhance the work completed on the residential handbook, licence agreement and policies relating to incident and discipline.



Students who apply to live on campus in DRS facilities, are required to accept and acknowledge they will abide by the DRS Respect Community Values whilst a resident on campus. This is promoted across our public website and is a criteria to complete their application.

DRS staffing and workforce has been enhanced and operates a true 24/7 student welfare model. Our Campus Life team who works throughout the day are complemented by the DRS Night Welfare and Operations Coordinators (Hew 6) that have been within the DRS structure since 2024. These roles are recruited and trained to provide high level care 24/7 and are supported by direct escalation to senior leaders at DRS (GM's and CEO). There are procedures in place for escalation of matters including compulsory escalation of any GBV related incidents.

Marion Grey (CEO, DRS) was a member the ERG to represent the Student Accommodation Industry and has provided all DRS staff updates throughout the process at regular DRS town halls and all DRS staff meetings as well as via email. DRS townhalls are recorded and circulated to all DRS staff so if they are unable to attend in person as requested, they watch it on their next shift. Recordings of these plus slide decks are available on request.

Whole-of-organisation contribution / involvement

DRS is a part of the DU Action Group.

Standard 7 – owned / operated

7.1 (a) STAFF DECLARATIONS

Recruitment is undertaken though Deakin University Recruitment team. Recruitment processes have been updated to include the GBV declaration as standard for all applicants (not just student accommodation) for new hires into DRS area of operations at DU.

All incumbent Deakin staff working within DRS were contacted on 9 December to provide FAQs and request declarations.

The National Code and requirements were on the agenda for the following All DRS staff town halls:

- March 2024: Introduction of Accord and National Code information to all staff
- July 2024: Update on completion of ERG and projected timings of National Code
- April 2025: Update on DRS requiring all applications to complete a GBV declaration as part of their application process
- July 2025: General Update on progress of National Code
- October 2025: General Update on compliance with National Code
- December 2025: DRS Planning Days provided in person update on the National Code, declarations and training requirements.

Documentation of any declarations received are kept in line with relevant privacy laws and sent to the eeo@deakin.edu.au inbox.

7.1 (b) DUTY OF CARE

Risk assessment is undertaken by the DU Equity and Inclusion team who receive declarations. Part of the assessment includes any required information on role requirements from the CEO, in order for DRS to establish due diligence.

Documentation is to be stored on the individual's employment file by EEO.

7.1 (c) CONSIDERATION OF ALLEGATIONS WITH RESPECT TO RECOGNITION / PROMOTION

As employees of DU, all staff that work within DRS are subject to the university wide recruitment, recognition and promotional procedures.

7.1 (d) STAFF DECLARE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

To define staff, DRS has implemented procedures relating to Residential Leaders (RL's) who are not staff but volunteer in a community leadership program. To ensure that DRS manages any perceived or actual imbalance of power, the RL's for 2026 have all been required to declare any intimate relationships with residents. The Residential Leadership Policy and Procedure reflect these requirements. Declarations from RL's are via a Microsoft form in their residential portal and are sent to the relevant General Manager of their respective campus for assessment.

Paid staff at DRS, are current DU employees and as such are required to complete the DU COI declaration process as outlined in the DU policies and procedures. All DRS staff were requested to do this at the same time as the GBV declaration.

7.1 (e) COI / RISK MANAGEMENT

The Residential Leadership program policy and procedure outlines the management of any COI, including the movement of RL's to another college if required. RL's are advised at application, selection and recruitment and training that COI's will be managed and may result in a change in them participating in the program and / or being moved.

Paid staff at DU declarations are managed by the DU Legal and Assurance team as per all declarations and COI's.

All staff working within DRS are required to undertake mandatory DU compliance training on conflicts of interest, completion of this sit on their employee file.

7.1 (f) PREVENTION and RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES TRAINING

Staff

All staff working within DRS, have undertaken the DU 'Understanding Gender-based violence and How to Support Others' training. Training was conducted on 12 and 14 January for residential staff, which included specific scenarios relating to residential settings. All staff received a reference sheet following completion of the training.

The training is stored on individual employee records via DU, with expiration dates, reminders and compliance tracking. All incumbent staff working at DRS have completed this training (100% compliance). Individual employees can access their compliance tracking, also managers and area leaders can ensure 100% compliance of all staff within their respective teams via Deakin People (HR System) – examples of learning records for staff working at DRS below.

All DRS staff also attend quarterly town halls and an annual planning day each year and all of these have the National Code and GBV education as a standing item to reflect on scenarios and lessons learnt within our communities.

DRS Night Welfare Coordinators (NWC) who work from 7pm – 5am 365 days of the year also receive additional training at their NWC Forums. Safer Communities attend these trainings and work through case studies and scenarios that are directly related to residences and their roles. Agenda and Minutes of this meeting are in are recorded and provided.

General Managers (GMs) meet monthly with Safer Communities to ensure that accurate reporting and data is being provided and to discuss concerns or actions that are required in education gaps identified.



My Compliance: Respectful Behaviour at Deakin

As a Deakin team member, you have an important role to play in supporting a culture that values diversity, safety,

Compliant

09 Mar 2027

316 days



My Compliance: Declarations of Interest

Ensuring Deakin team members are aware of their obligation to declare all relevant conflicts of interests and gifts and that they have the required

Compliant

03 Nov 2026

190 days

My Overall Compliance

Compliant **100%** At Risk **0%** Non Compliant **0%**

[My Learning Transcript](#)

My Overall Team Compliance

Compliant **100%** At Risk **0%** Non Compliant **0%**

[Manager Dashboard](#)

My Learning Records [Export to PDF](#)

Search for My Courses

All (66) **Completed (54)** Incomplete (1) Not Attempted (6)

Catalogue Item	Created	Completed date	Status
Financial Delegate (Approver) training	10/04/2026	13/04/2026	Completed
My Compliance: Respectful Behaviour at Deakin	7/03/2026	10/03/2026	Completed
Understanding Gender-based Violence and How to Support Others	20/02/2026	19/02/2026	Completed

Residents / Residential Leaders

DRS meets Standard 7.1(f) through compulsory, high completion GBV prevention education delivered via the Welcome induction and reinforced throughout residency. Effectiveness is evidenced through measurable learning improvements in the Welcome Performance Report and low prevalence, appropriate reporting behaviour, and positive response ratings in the Residential annual SASS survey.

The RESPECT community values are embedded in our residential handbook, procedures, events and prevention calendar and understanding and awareness tracked regularly amongst our community.

All new residents are required to attend a compulsory meeting during their first 48 hours on campus in addition to the online Welcome module and the Respect@Deakin module for all students. Within the compulsory in person induction residents are given training on GBV prevention and how to report from the DU EandI team. This training is then continued at compulsory meetings throughout the year.

Residential Leaders undergo 3 weeks of training before commencement of their role as RLs where a large component of this training focuses on Respectful communities, inclusion and GBV and consent training. Training is provided by experts including those from the DU EandI team around GBV prevention, reporting and where to direct students for support if needed.

Table 9: (7.1(f)) PREVENTION and RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES TRAINING

Code Requirement (7.1(f))	DRS Practice	Evidence / Artefacts	Outcomes and Effectiveness
All residents receive GBV prevention education	Compulsory Welcome (Browser Welcome) induction for all residents prior to or at commencement of residency.	Deakin Res – Welcome Performance Report (Jan 2026) Welcome induction modules Completion records	98% completion rate (4,944 of 5,069 residents). Strong engagement (74%+ engagement rate; 14+ minutes average session duration).
Education improves GBV awareness	Interactive GBV, consent and respectful behaviour modules within Welcome induction.	Welcome Performance Report (pre/post learning metrics)	Understanding of GBV increased from 68% pre-Welcome to 85% post-Welcome.
Students understand support and reporting pathways	Clear explanation of support services, reporting options and emergency pathways.	Welcome Performance Report Resident Handbook	Disagreement with knowing where to get support reduced from 28% pre-Welcome to 0% post-Welcome.
Education tailored to accommodation risks	Content framed around shared living, peer interactions, social events and hazing risks.	Welcome content Resident Handbook Res SASS Survey	95% of residents reported no unwanted gender-related behaviour; 96.9% reported no hazing.
Clear and accessible reporting pathways	Multiple reporting options communicated (staff, security, Safer Community, external supports).	Resident Handbook DRS GBV Response Procedure Res SASS Survey	52.2% of those experiencing incidents reported to staff or another authority.
Appropriate and effective staff responses	Incidents managed under DRS GBV Response Procedure with escalation to specialist services.	DRS GBV Response Procedure Res SASS Survey	66.6% rated staff response to GBV matters as Very or Quite well; 100% positive ratings for hazing responses.

Contractors who work predominantly in Student Accommodation

DRS has worked through the list of contractors that work their substantive role within student accommodation facilities as the following:

- Cleaning Contractor (ISS)
- Security Contractor (Spotless)

Both contracts were contacted to discuss the requirements of the code and compliance obligations. Meeting with Spotless 15 October at Deakin Downtown and ISS onsite at DRS and via email dated 28 November 2025.

Security and Cleaning staff working within DRS were required to complete a declaration in line with standard 7.1 (a). This process was done via the LinkSafe contractor management system. GBV declarations from contracts will go to the eeo@deakin.edu.au inbox as per staff to manage in accordance with 7.1 (a).

Other contractors that come onto site for maintenance or vendor services work across the University and externally at various locations.

LinkSafe is the University wide approved contractor management system which provides induction and sign in / out of contractors across all areas of the University. DRS contracts are required to be compliant via this system. Meetings were held with LinkSafe team about a specific Student Accommodation Induction for ALL contractors working within the accommodation areas.

7.1 (g) RECEIPT OF DISCLOSURES AND ACTIONS REQUIRED

As all staff and students within DRS are part of the University, compliance with the DU GBV Policy and Procedure is mandated. Noting DRS operates a 24/7 model and to meet the timelines for risk assessment and immediate safety planning, the creation of the DRS Response Procedure was documented alongside the DRS Risk Assessment tool. These procedures are for immediate and out of hours response to a formal disclosure or report to DRS staff and are to be applied for safety planning and where necessary and appropriate removal of a respondent.

As per the DU policy, DRS is required to report all GBV disclosures to Safer Communities to ensure their expertise and risk assessment during University hours. All reports are referred to Safer Communities in line with the victims wishes (either anonymous or connecting them directly for relevant supports).

The DRS Licence Agreement and Residential Handbook provide details on ongoing eligibility, and the DRS Incident and Discipline policy provides DRS with the ability to move residents (temporarily or permanently) if needed or if they cannot comply with the DRS Respect Community Values. This allows instant action to be taken for safety first response and does not require a substantiated claim of GBV or formal university misconduct to take steps should behaviour have crossed the threshold of our community values or have an impact on another resident's health and wellbeing.

Table 10: 7.1 (g) RECEIPT OF DISCLOSURES AND ACTIONS REQUIRED

Code Requirement (7.1(g))	DRS Practice	Evidence / Artefacts	Assurance / Effectiveness
Clear, accessible and trauma-informed response procedures	DRS maintains a dedicated gender-based violence (GBV) Response Procedure outlining immediate response, survivor-centred practice, escalation, confidentiality and referral to specialist services.	DRS GBV Response Procedure	Ensures consistent, trauma-informed and person-centred responses aligned with the National Code.
Structured incident reporting and escalation	All safety and GBV related incidents are formally recorded, categorised and escalated in accordance with the Incident Entry and Reporting Procedure, with senior oversight for high-risk matters.	Incident Entry and Reporting Procedure	Provides auditable reporting pathways and enables monitoring, escalation and governance oversight of safety risks.

Code Requirement (7.1(g))	DRS Practice	Evidence / Artefacts	Assurance / Effectiveness
Risk assessment and safety planning to prevent further harm	DRS applies a GBV Risk Assessment and Management Toolkit to assess risk following disclosures, identify safety indicators and implement proportionate safety and relocation measures.	DRS GBV Risk Toolkit	Demonstrates systematic, evidence-based risk assessment and safety planning to prevent further GBV and protect residents and staff.
Students are informed of behavioural expectations and consequences	Behaviour expectations relating to safety, harassment, GBV and misuse of power are clearly communicated contractually and through resident facing materials.	Licence Agreement Master Resident Handbook	Residents acknowledge expectations and consequences as conditions of residency, ensuring enforceability and transparency.
Provider can take proportionate action to protect safety	The Licence Agreement empowers DRS to impose conditions, restrict access, implement relocation, or issue Notices to Vacate where conduct poses a risk to safety.	Licence Agreement Master GBV Response Procedure and GBV Risk Toolkit	Provides clear contractual and operational authority to intervene swiftly and prioritise resident safety.
Accessible complaints, grievances and dispute resolution	Residents are provided with clear complaint and grievance pathways relating to staff conduct and resident-to-resident behaviour.	Resident Handbook Licence Agreement Master	Supports fair, transparent and timely resolution of concerns, consistent with procedural fairness.
Confidentiality and information handling	Personal information collected during incident reporting, risk assessment and GBV response is managed in accordance with privacy legislation and institutional requirements.	GBV Response Procedure Incident Entry and Reporting Procedure GBV Risk Toolkit Licence Agreement	Protects dignity, confidentiality and trust in reporting and response processes.

7.1 (h) PROVIDER CAN TAKE ACTIONS NECESSARY

As per the above evidence, the GBV response procedure, risk assessment toolkit, licence agreement and residential handbook all support DRS should they determine a resident is required to be moved for the immediate safety or subsequent substantiation of a GBV incident.

DRS issues Notice to Vacates and has a procedure relating to this for all matters but that can be activated for GBV removal as is consistent with the outcomes of disciplinary matters within residences.

Our 24/7 accommodation team can logistically organize and pay for emergency accommodation offsite to allow for immediate safety planning with approval from the escalation line (GM's or CEO). The emergency accommodation policy and procedures detail how this is possible and that cost is covered by DRS.

StarRez Housing Database Conduct / Community Module which is detailed in our incident reporting procedure is the storage of all information relating to incidents. Actions taken are time stamped and detail all steps taken by DRS staff.

Table 11: 7.1 (h) PROVIDER CAN TAKE ACTIONS NECESSARY

Continuous Improvement and assessment	DRS Practice	Evidence / Artefacts	Assurance of Effectiveness
Provider monitors effectiveness of GBV prevention and response measures	DRS monitors GBV-related risks, disclosures, incidents and responses through formal incident reporting systems, surveys and governance oversight.	Incident Entry and Reporting Procedure Res SASS Survey Results	Provides ongoing visibility of trends, prevalence and response effectiveness across accommodation.
Use of student feedback to inform improvement	DRS uses Residential SASH (Res SASS) survey data to measure prevalence of GBV, reporting behaviour and resident confidence in staff responses.	Res SASS Survey dashboards and analysis	Low prevalence rates and positive response ratings demonstrate effectiveness and guide future prevention actions.
Evaluation of education and prevention activities	Compulsory Welcome (Browser Welcome) induction metrics are reviewed to assess reach, engagement and learning outcomes related to GBV and support awareness.	Welcome Performance Report (January 2026)	98% completion rate and strong learning uplift provide assurance that prevention education is effective.
Risk-based review of safety controls	GBV Risk Assessment and Management Toolkit is applied following disclosures to identify ongoing risk and inform safety and accommodation decisions.	DRS GBV Risk Toolkit De-identified risk assessments	Ensures controls are reviewed and adjusted based on risk, preventing further harm.
Review and enforcement of behavioural standards	Resident behaviour standards and consequences are reviewed through incident outcomes, licence enforcement and disciplinary processes.	Licence Agreement Master Resident Handbook Incident records	Demonstrates that expectations are actively enforced and reviewed for effectiveness.
Governance oversight and continuous improvement	GBV prevention and response data is escalated to senior DRS and University governance bodies to inform policy, training and system improvements.	Governance reports Procedure review cycles	Supports systematic, continuous improvement as required under the National Code.

Ongoing Actions

- Review and audit of GBV Reporting to ensure compliance with procedure.
- Review and audit of monthly GBV Incident reporting with Senior Coordinator Residential Experience roles now in place.
- Review of experience framework to clearly articulate RESPECT community values, inclusion, sense of belonging and prevention of GBV.
- Twice yearly campus life forums and night welfare coordinator forums to ensure ongoing training, review of incidents and audit of actions taken.

