



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY

SEXUAL HARM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



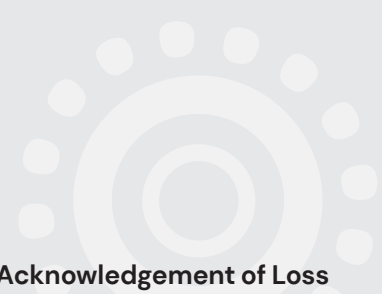
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement of Country

La Trobe University acknowledges that our campuses are located on the unceded lands of many traditional custodians in Victoria and NSW. We recognise their ongoing connection to the land and value their unique contribution to the University and wider Australian society. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and thank them for their ongoing care of the land, skies, and waterways of this beautiful country.

Acknowledgement of the Movement

La Trobe University acknowledges the many victims/survivors of sexual harm and gender-based violence who have courageously shared their experiences, advocated for change, and supported research into these issues. Without their efforts, our work today would not have been possible.



Acknowledgement of Loss

We remember those who have lost their lives as a result of gender-based violence. Their memories strengthen our resolve to continue building a safer future for all.

SEXUAL HARM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE ACTION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, La Trobe University achieved significant progress in implementing the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan, demonstrating its commitment to fostering a safer and more inclusive campus environment. Guided by a "whole-of-institution" approach and informed by intersectional and gender-based principles, the University prioritised prevention, community engagement, curriculum integration, campus safety, and evaluation to address sexual harm effectively.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Key achievements included expanding mandatory training programs such as the *Respectful Behaviour and Culture Module* (within the Learning Management System), completed by 3,335 students, and finalising the *Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Harm* module to strengthen staff capacity. Programs like *Flip the Script* and the *Gender Equality and Bystander Intervention Program* engaged over 1,000 participants, enhancing campus-wide awareness and promoting behavioural change. Tailored initiatives addressed the unique needs of LGBTIQ+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, ensuring inclusivity and cultural safety.

The *Safe and Respected at La Trobe* campaign reached over 35,000 students, contributing to a 60% increase in Safer Community reports in Semester 1 and a 400% surge in Health, Wellbeing, and Inclusion reports. Strategic messaging and focused engagement further amplified the campaign's impact, fostering a culture where students felt empowered to seek support and report incidents.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAMPUS SAFETY

Infrastructure and campus safety improvements included upgrades to lighting and CCTV systems and the development of the *UNISAFE App*, slated for release in 2025. Efforts to embed sexual harm prevention into academic settings progressed through partnerships with Social Work and Physiotherapy schools and the establishment of a Community of Practice for academics.

DATA COLLECTION AND EVALUATION

Data collection and evaluation efforts were strengthened through the introduction of the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning framework and process indicators to the Implementation Working Group. Stakeholders were engaged to support data collection aligned with these indicators. This approach supported evidence-based decision-making and enabled tracking of systemic change.

These achievements laid a strong foundation for 2025 priorities, which will focus on scaling successful initiatives,

integrating prevention efforts with broader inclusion and wellbeing strategies, and enhancing operational efficiency. By continuing to prioritise inclusivity, accessibility, and evidence-based practices, La Trobe University reaffirms its commitment to creating a respectful and safe campus for all.



INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

The Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Annual Report 2024 underscores La Trobe University's ongoing dedication to creating a campus culture free from sexual harm and gender-based violence. Through the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan (2023–2026), the University has embraced a progressive, intersectional approach to addressing these critical issues, prioritising prevention, community engagement, structural support, and evidence-based decision-making.

STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

The Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan is built upon the following foundational goals:

- **Whole-of-Institution Approach:** Integrating sexual harm prevention and response into all aspects of university life, from policy development to individual behaviours.
- **Intersectional and Gender-Based Principles:** Recognising and addressing the complex drivers of sexual harm, ensuring inclusivity and cultural safety for all community members.
- **Enhanced Structures for Disclosures and Reporting:** Strengthening systems to provide accessible, compassionate, and effective responses to disclosures, ensuring a safe pathway for those seeking support.

A PROGRESSIVE AND INCLUSIVE VISION

La Trobe University envisions a campus where respect, safety, and inclusion are foundational. This vision is supported by initiatives that provide the resources, training, and infrastructure necessary to foster a safer environment for all staff and students.

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR 2024

In 2024, the University focused on several critical objectives to advance the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan:

Objective 1: Expand Prevention Training Programs

Ensure widespread participation in mandatory and elective prevention programs, targeting diverse groups including students, staff, and leadership teams.

Objective 2: Amplify Community Engagement

Deepen the reach and impact of campaigns such as *Safe and Respected at La Trobe*, engaging the broader university community.

Objective 3: Enhance Structural Supports

Develop and integrate new policies and digital tools to streamline reporting and response systems.

Objective 4: Promote Curriculum Integration

Collaborate with academic departments to embed respectful behaviour and prevention content within the academic curriculum.

Objective 5: Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation

Implement and embed the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning framework to support evidence-based decision-making, enable tracking of systemic change, and promote accountability.

“I think the campaign really encouraged people to feel like they can reach out.” (Campaign Evaluation)



PROGRESSIVE APPROACH

La Trobe University is committed to fostering an environment free from sexual harm and gender-based violence. Our ongoing initiatives aim to provide the resources and infrastructure needed to create safer spaces for all staff and students.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

In 2024, La Trobe University made significant strides in addressing sexual harm through the continuation of the *Safe and Respected at La Trobe* campaign. Building on its initial success in Semester 1, the campaign's second phase in Semester 2 demonstrated remarkable outcomes, solidifying its impact as a cornerstone of the University's sexual harm prevention strategy.

During the five-week campaign period from July to August 2024, the University

observed a 50% increase in reports of sexual harm to the Safer Community team compared to the same timeframe in 2023. Additionally, reports through the Health, Wellbeing, and Inclusion intake system rose by an extraordinary 400%, reflecting a growing confidence among students to seek support and report incidents. These figures underscore the effectiveness of the campaign in creating an environment where students feel empowered to come forward.

Awareness metrics also highlighted the campaign's success. Prompted awareness among students reached an impressive 91%, while 71% of students demonstrated unprompted recall of campaign messages.

Importantly, 93% of respondents reported taking action after engaging with the campaign, whether by seeking more information, discussing the topic with peers, or directly reaching out to Safer Community for support. The

campaign design was both impactful and approachable, leveraging La Trobe's secondary colour palette of blue and purple to create a bold yet reassuring aesthetic. Messages were displayed across campus, including on digital screens, bathroom doors, and in high-traffic areas such as the Indoor Sports Centre and La Trobe Stadium. These carefully chosen locations maximised visibility and ensured the campaign reached a broad audience.

Feedback from focus groups and surveys further validated the campaign's approach. Participants praised its clarity and effectiveness, with one student noting, "It helped me realise certain behaviours I had experienced were not okay and that support was available." The campaign not only raised awareness but also educated students on what constitutes sexual harm, reinforcing the University's commitment to safety and respect.



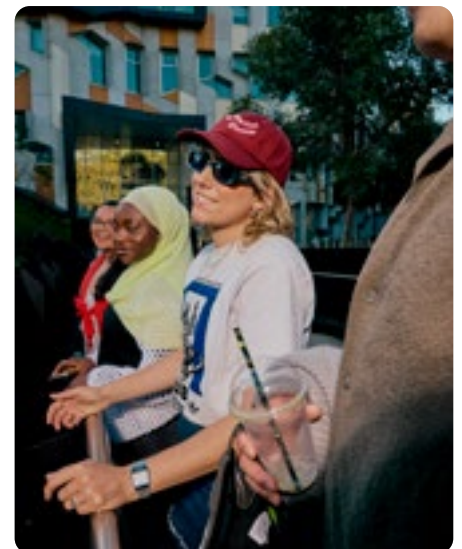
REPORTS OF SEXUAL HARM

Students and staff may choose to either disclose or formally report any incident of sexual harm to Safer Community, including recent or historical incidents, and whether the incident occurred on or off campus.

A disclosure is when a person tells someone about their experience of sexual harm for the purpose of seeking support, advice, and for precautionary or safety measures to be arranged. Disclosures will not generally lead to investigation, unless we are required to by law.

A formal report is when a person provides a formal account of their experience, and this will initiate an investigation. A formal report can be withdrawn at any time, and the matter will then be treated as a disclosure. If someone chooses not to make a formal report to

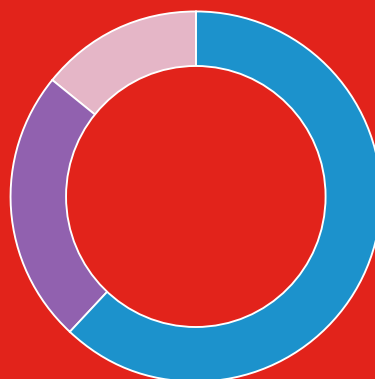
Safer Community, they have the right to change their mind and can decide to formally report the matter in the future. Safer Community will also advise about and assist with external reporting, for example to the police, if that is what the student or staff member wishes to do.



SEXUAL HARM DATA 2024

In 2024, Safer Community received 29 sexual harm reports from staff and students – seven were disclosures and 22 were formal reports. Of these:

- 18** reports related to sexual harassment
- 07** were about sexual assault, and
- 04** were about an historical sexual assault.

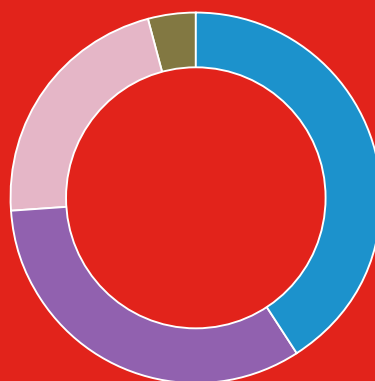


Sexual Harm Reports 2024

- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Assault
- Historical Sexual Assault

Of the 29 reports of sexual harm:

- 11** involved incidents that occurred in student accommodation on La Trobe University campuses across Victoria
- 09** involved incidents that occurred on campus (e.g. campus property, classroom, etc) and
- 06** incidents occurred off campus
- 03** incidents occurred on placement.

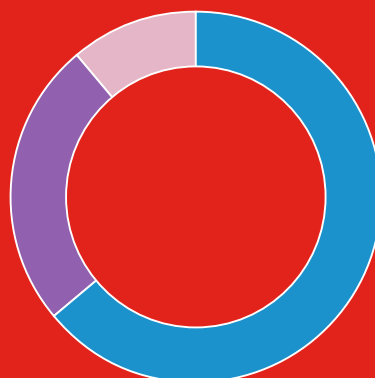


Location

- LTU Student Accommodation
- On Campus
- Off Campus
- On Placement

With respect to respondents:

- 15** In 15 reports the respondent was a student
- 08** reports were about staff or contractor behaviour
- 06** were about the behaviour of people external to the university
- 26** respondents were identified as male, two identified as female, and one were multiple respondents identifying as male and female.

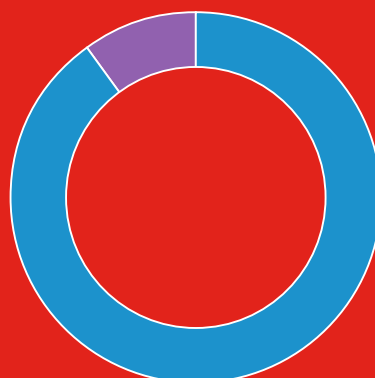


Respondents

- Student
- Staff/Contractor
- External

Given the low reporting numbers, it is not possible to break the data down further due to privacy concerns. However, it is possible to comment broadly on the data and outcomes. Of the affected persons:

- 26** identified as female and three identified as male
- 24** affected persons were students, two were staff or contractors, three were previous students reporting historic matters.



Affected Persons

- Female
- Male

SAFER COMMUNITY

“I really liked this campaign. It definitely paints the picture that sexual harm is never okay. It is very relevant in a university setting”. (Campaign Evaluation)

DISCLOSURES REPORTED TO SAFER COMMUNITY

All disclosures were managed with support, advice, and information. Of the 29 formally reported matters, 22 were investigated. Six investigations were limited due to respondents not being affiliated with the University, and one remains ongoing, expected to conclude in 2025. Ten matters were substantiated, resulting in outcomes and/or penalties. Eleven investigations did not result in outcomes due to reasons such as unsubstantiated allegations, non-student respondents, incidents occurring off campus or outside University scope, the historic nature of the case, or insufficient evidence. Allegations may be unsubstantiated for various reasons, including the complainant not wishing to proceed or a lack of sufficient evidence, and this does not imply the alleged behaviour did not occur.

Outcomes and penalties included referral to Workplace Relations and Support for investigation and actioning (in cases where the respondent was a staff member), educational responses such as the requirement to complete Respectful Behaviours training, Safer Community local level outcomes included reminders of behavioural expectations, reasonable directions of no contact, accommodation probation, removal from student accommodation, referral to the University's general misconduct process, and conditions placed on enrolment. Specific penalties for 2024 matters include exclusion from student accommodation, as provided by the general misconduct process.

RANGE OF SUPPORTS OFFERED

A range of interim measures were put in place during both the preliminary and formal investigation process. These included no contact orders, relocating students and restriction of access to campus or areas of the University, changes to study timetable and requirements, and temporary standing down of staff for the duration of an investigation.

Local level supports for students included safety planning, referrals to Student Wellbeing Connect and counselling, referral to relevant internal stakeholder support (e.g. International Student Support), alterations to study requirements and timetables, specialist external wellbeing support such as the Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault, as well as the option to make a formal report to Safer Community, or externally to police. Students were offered assistance with connecting with external organisations. Staff were offered referral to Staff Wellbeing Connect and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for wellbeing assistance, in addition to ongoing support from Safer Community.

All students who met with Safer Community to discuss a report of sexual harm were offered support from a member of the Student Wellbeing Connect team, to be present in the meeting. This ensured that students did not need to disclose traumatic or distressing information to University staff multiple times and is in line with a victim/survivor-centred approach. Respondents were also offered wellbeing support throughout the process. Staff were offered referral to Staff Wellbeing Connect, in addition to liaison with senior staff to assist with management of disclosure impact on work/life balance and wellbeing.



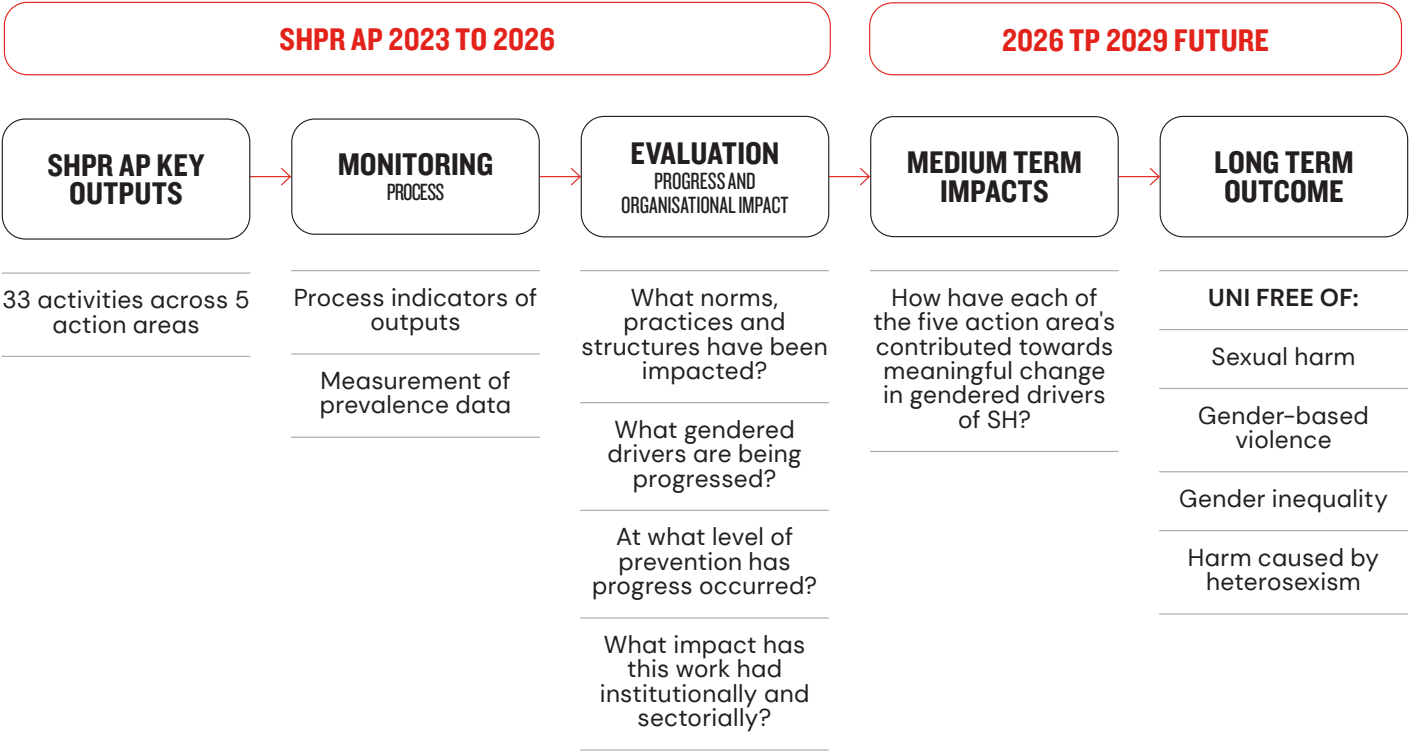
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK

In 2024, La Trobe University advanced its commitment to continuous improvement through the implementation of the **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework** for the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan. This framework provided the foundation for evidence-based decision-making, leveraging structured data collection

and robust evaluation to enhance the effectiveness of sexual harm prevention initiatives across the University.

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework focused on capturing individual and systemic changes through **Theories of Change**, enabling detailed tracking of knowledge, behaviours, and institutional processes. The introduction of cascading Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning frameworks allowed for

streamlined data collection across diverse university settings, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of reach, engagement, and satisfaction metrics. This structured approach was further supported by the integration of a linked reporting system, which significantly improved data accuracy and collaboration among key stakeholders, including the Strategy, Prevention, and Education, Safer Communities, and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion teams.



WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2024

In 2024, La Trobe University made significant progress in implementing the five action areas of the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan, achieving impactful results across training, community engagement, curriculum development, campus safety, and evaluation.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mandatory training initiatives advanced substantially, with the *Respectful Behaviour and Culture Module* completed by 3,335 students (22% of the student population) and accessibility enhancements underway to boost participation. The online *Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Harm* module was finalised for launch, supplementing live training sessions completed by 70% of security staff and 100% of residential leaders. The *Gender Equality and Bystander Intervention Program* trained 115 staff and students, achieving a 96% satisfaction rate.

Culturally safe programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff were co-designed in collaboration with the Office of Indigenous Strategy and Education. Preparations for senior leadership workshops on gender-based violence also commenced.



COMMUNITY AND CAMPUS LIFE

The *Living at La Trobe Respect Program* focused on residence-specific prevention strategies informed by culture and safety audits, supported by a newly appointed Senior Coordinator for Student Gender Based Violence Prevention. The *Student Ambassadors Program* actively drove campaigns and consultations, contributing to the *Safe and Respected at La Trobe Campaign*, which reached the majority of students through a range of channels, including email, social media, and on-campus posters. This campaign led to a 60% increase in Safer Community reports in Semester 1 and a 50% rise in Semester 2, alongside a 400% surge in reports to the Health, Wellbeing, and Inclusion team. Campaign messaging, strategically displayed on posters in high-traffic campus areas, was praised by students for its clarity and impact in the campaign evaluation. Additionally, women-only fitness sessions and *Neurodivergent Safe Spaces* were expanded, with a sector benchmarking study launched to guide future improvements.



CURRICULUM AND ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Efforts to embed sexual harm prevention into academic settings gained traction, with partnerships established to incorporate gender-based violence and respectful behaviour content into courses within the Social Work and Physiotherapy schools. Collaborations with *Our Watch* informed curriculum resources, while the Prevention and Inclusion team has been working directly with the Social Work and Physiotherapy schools to weave respectful behaviour and sexual harm prevention into their programs. Updates to the Learning Management System templates ensured students had access to information on respectful behaviour and reporting pathways. The Classroom Respectful Behaviour Community of Practice supported academics in fostering safe and respectful learning environments.



CAMPUS SAFETY

Campus safety enhancements included twice-yearly audits of lighting, CCTV, and duress alarms, resulting in critical upgrades such as new CCTV installations in parking areas. More than 200 duress alarms were actively maintained across campuses, with devices strategically placed in reception areas, counselling rooms, student-facing service points, and other identified high-risk locations. Monthly maintenance ensured infrastructure reliability, while the development of the *UNISAFE App*, to be launched in 2025, promises improved safety escort booking and incident reporting. Safety-focused design principles were embedded in infrastructure projects, including plans for all-gender toilets with enhanced privacy.



REPORTING AND EVALUATION

The interim Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning framework guided evidence-based improvements, capturing systemic and individual changes. Reporting rates to Safer Community increased by 60%, reflecting greater confidence in reporting mechanisms. Disclosure pathways for staff and students were streamlined in collaboration with Safer Community, ensuring clarity and accessibility. Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan data requirements were integrated with the Gender Equality Action Plan and institutional surveys, ensuring comprehensive insights.



Through these achievements, La Trobe University demonstrated its commitment to creating a safer, more inclusive environment, fostering systemic change through evidence-based strategies and sustained community engagement.

2025 PRIORITIES AND NEXT STEPS

In 2025, La Trobe University continues to build on the achievements of its Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan, focusing on enhancing program effectiveness, increasing accessibility, and addressing resource efficiency.

PRIORITIES

In late 2024, the Strategy, Prevention and Education team was re-named as Prevention and Inclusion and repositioned within the Academic Portfolio of the University, to have a greater opportunity to integrate sexual harm prevention with broader student engagement and wellbeing initiatives and with the student community more directly. The team will have a more cohesive approach to the plan, promoting inclusivity and improving operational coordination of key stakeholders across the university.

Key priorities for 2025 include scaling successful programs such as the *Respectful Behaviour and Culture Module* and continuing the *Living at La Trobe Respect Program*. Enhanced

training and engagement strategies will ensure a wider reach, including tailored support for LGBTIQ+ students and culturally safe programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The plan will embed these programs into onboarding processes, strengthen leadership capacity, and improve accessibility through updates to the Learning Management System.

Social marketing campaigns will continue, with the *Safe and Respected at La Trobe* initiative addressing sexual harm.

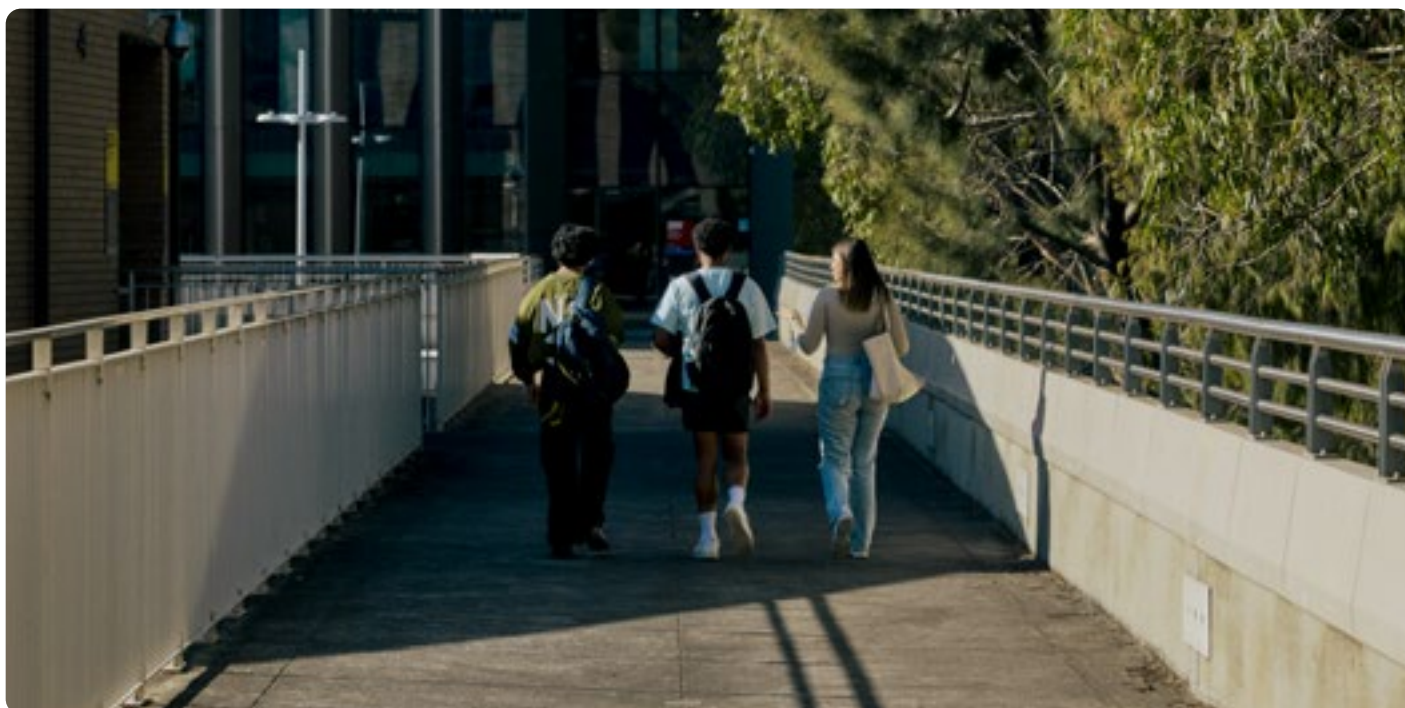
Resource management and capacity planning will underpin these efforts. Activities such as infrastructure enhancements, risk assessments, and the integration of positive duty obligations into occupational health and safety

frameworks will further institutionalise prevention and response strategies.

These priorities will solidify La Trobe's commitment to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive community while ensuring sustainability and alignment with broader wellbeing goals. The initiatives aim to empower students, staff, and leadership to actively contribute to a culture of safety and respect in 2025 and beyond.

CLOSING REMARKS

La Trobe University remains steadfast in our commitment to creating a community free of sexual harm. We acknowledge the progress made and are energised to continue building a safer, more inclusive environment for all.



“I would like to see these posters up all year to continuously remind people of the message.” (Campaign Evaluation)

RECOGNITION OF STAFF, STUDENTS, AND STAKEHOLDERS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE 2024 EFFORTS

We extend our deepest appreciation to all staff, students, and stakeholders who contributed to La Trobe’s efforts in preventing and responding to sexual harm and gender-based violence in 2024.

In particular, we acknowledge the Prevention and Inclusion team whose commitment to evidence-based approaches, respectful engagement, and inclusive practice has been central to this work.

Our sincere thanks also go to students and colleagues across La Trobe University, including:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Safer Community
- Student Ambassadors
- Integrity Office
- La Trobe Sport
- School of Psychology and Public Health
- Office of Indigenous Strategy and Education
- People and Culture
- School of Allied Health, Human Services and Sport (Social Work and Physiotherapy)
- Security and Residential Services
- Student Engagement and Inclusion

We also acknowledge and thank all academic and professional staff across schools and campuses who contributed time, energy, and insight through the Classroom Respectful Behaviour Community of Practice, curriculum integration efforts, and campaign activation.

We are grateful to our external partners, including Women’s Health in the North, whose expertise and collaboration continue to strengthen regional prevention efforts, as well as external service providers such as the Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault.

Together, these contributions form a powerful foundation for the continuing work ahead, grounded in care, respect, and a shared commitment to a safer La Trobe.



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