

Respectful and Inclusive Communities Action Plan

RICAP 2024 - 2026





Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Message from the Vice-Chancellor | 03 |
| Introduction | 04 |
| Principles and Values | 05 |
| Development and Consultation | 06 |
| The National Student Safety Survey and RICAP | 08 |
| Prevention and Response Continuum | 10 |
| RICAP Action Plan 2024 - 2026 | 11 |

Federation University acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where our campuses are located and recognises their continuing responsibilities to care for country at these sites of teaching and learning. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Nations Peoples. We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, their experiences, cultures, languages and practices.

The Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where our campuses, centres and field stations are located include:

WIMMERA:

Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagulk

BALLARAT:

Wadawurrung

BERWICK:

Boon Wurrung

GIPPSLAND:

Gunai Kurnai

NANYA STATION:

Mutthi Mutthi and Barkindji

Message from the Vice-Chancellor

Respect is the cornerstone of Federation University's Respectful and Inclusive Communities (RICAP) Action Plan 2024–2026

We aspire to show respect by accepting people as they are and celebrating differences. We do this to recognise the unique contributions our people make to the richness of our diverse community.

Key to the success of the RICAP is our ability to work together to generate within each member of our community a sense of belonging, a feeling of safety, and an understanding that students and staff can participate equitably in their academic and professional endeavours without judgement or discrimination.

The RICAP was developed in a consultative and collaborative manner by engaging key stakeholders, building partnerships, sharing knowledge, and working together. Consultations with stakeholders ensured differing views were heard with an open mind and that action will be taken to develop a collective sense of belonging for increased strength and unity within and across campuses.

Being respectful and inclusive are not 'on-occasion' concepts, they are cemented in the aspiration for our graduates to be informed, respectful global citizens.



Professor Duncan Bentley
Vice-Chancellor and President
Federation University Australia



Our Commitment

Federation University is committed to providing all members of our community with equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination, harassment and sexual harm.

We are equally motivated to continue cultivating an environment for our people, which values and protects the social and cultural diversity within the University and the communities we serve. The Respectful and Inclusive Communities Action Plan 2024–2026 (RICAP) is a comprehensive, university-wide strategy aimed at realising Federation University's goal to embody and exemplify the principles of respect, inclusion, belonging, equality and responsibility at all times.

The RICAP applies an intersectional lens to all planned actions to ensure that the University:

- Promotes and fosters a safe, inclusive environment
- Accommodates and celebrates student and staff diversity
- Creates and embeds into its institutional policies, practices and approaches to teaching, learning and research, equivalent opportunities for academic success, regardless of individual backgrounds, (dis)abilities and/or identifications.

The RICAP's key actions and initiatives align with established measures that Federation University has taken to prevent or respond to in a timely and appropriate manner to incidences of sexual harm in university-related contexts and issues identified in the 2021 National Student Safety Survey (NSSS).

The RICAP incorporates input from students and staff, building upon lived experience and extending our existing quality frameworks for safety, diversity and inclusion. The RICAP takes into consideration and builds upon existing:

Strategies and action plans

- FedPride Strategy 2021–2024
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–2025
- Accessibility Action Plan 2024–2026

Procedures and Guidelines




- Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Guidelines
- Guidelines for responding to a disclosure of sexual harm
- Complaint procedures for students and staff
- Student and staff codes of conduct
- Training modules for staff in: prevention of bullying; prevention of discrimination and harassment
- Training module for students in: Equal Rights are Your Rights

As Federation University's quality framework demonstrates, safe, respectful, and inclusive behaviour by all members of the University community is paramount.

Principles and Values

RICAP Principles

The RICAP principles are closely tied with the University's Living Values. The principles acknowledge that our individual and organisational actions, contribute in strengthening our University community.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Respect </p> | <p>Respect calls on each and every one of us to accept the intrinsic dignity of others.</p> |
| <p>Inclusion </p> | <p>Inclusion occurs when diversity is valued, respected and evidenced through equal access to opportunities and resources. The more we embrace diversity, show respect and demand equality in our university dealings, the more our students and staff will impact the broader community.</p> |
| <p>Community </p> | <p>Community enables growth, within ourselves, within others, and within our environment. Federation University is a community of social connection, of mutual benefit, of support and safety, of connection, of acceptance, of learning and working, and of belonging.</p> |

The RICAP and Federation University's Living Values

As Australia's leading regional university we will continue to transform lives and enhance communities, ensuring a strong and sustainable university for all.

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Inclusion </p> | <p>Innovation </p> | <p>Excellence </p> | <p>Empowerment </p> | <p>Collaboration </p> |
| <p>RICAP actions apply an intersectional lens to university-wide matters so as to champion inclusive practices and ensure equity, access and equal opportunity.</p> | <p>RICAP actions provide innovative, creative and impactful solutions to address stakeholder needs and inspire better ways of doing things.</p> | <p>RICAP actions challenge the status quo, drive continuous improvement, and strive to deliver exceptional experiences to all of Federation University's stakeholders.</p> | <p>RICAP actions will empower our students and staff to create a university that builds trust, enables accountability, supports active listening, and enables inclusive behaviour.</p> | <p>RICAP actions address complex challenges and aim to achieve positive outcomes by adapting practices and evolving mindsets through shared knowledge.</p> |

Development and Accountability

The RICAP was developed after an extensive consultation process across the University.

Consultation sessions were held online and face-to-face for individuals and groups in higher education and TAFE.

Students and staff across all campuses contributed their views and identified opportunities for change. Their lived experience and professional expertise also influenced the depth and breadth of the RICAP actions.

Further consultation sessions were held with action owners regarding the implementation of proposed actions to determine necessary resources and set realistic time frames.

As a dual sector university, the goals and related actions outlined within the RICAP are inclusive of higher education and TAFE.

Governance and Reporting

The University's Inclusion Steering Committee has overall responsibility for the endorsement and implementation of this action plan, led by Student Equity and Inclusion. The Inclusion Steering Committee membership includes students and staff. Progress reports will be provided annually to the Inclusion Steering Committee to ensure the University:

- complies with the requirements of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation, regulations and standards
- implements in line with the University's policy framework mechanisms to support academic activities, including but not limited to reasonable adjustments
- oversees the effectiveness of these mechanisms to maintain and improve the quality of higher education that is offered to students with identified disabilities.



"Alone, we can do so little, together, we can do so much"

– Helen Keller



The National Student Safety Survey and the RICAP

The RICAP—with its key themes of respect, inclusion, and community—considers and responds to findings from the National Student Safety Survey (NSSS), a nation-wide survey that collected data on the scale and nature of university student experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Federation University is working across our university community with students and staff to prevent and appropriately respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault and foster an environment of respect.

Background to the NSSS

In 2017, the Australian Human Rights Commission released *Change the Course*—the first national report on sexual harassment and sexual assault at Australian universities. As part of the ongoing commitment to prevention and response to sexual harassment and sexual assault in Australian universities, a National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) was conducted in 2021, with results published in early 2022.

Results and analysis of the survey responses were conducted and compiled into a quantitative and qualitative national report that included individual infographic reports for each university.

Whilst incidences of sexual harassment and sexual assault at Federation University are lower than the national average, we wish to acknowledge that one incident of this nature is one too many.

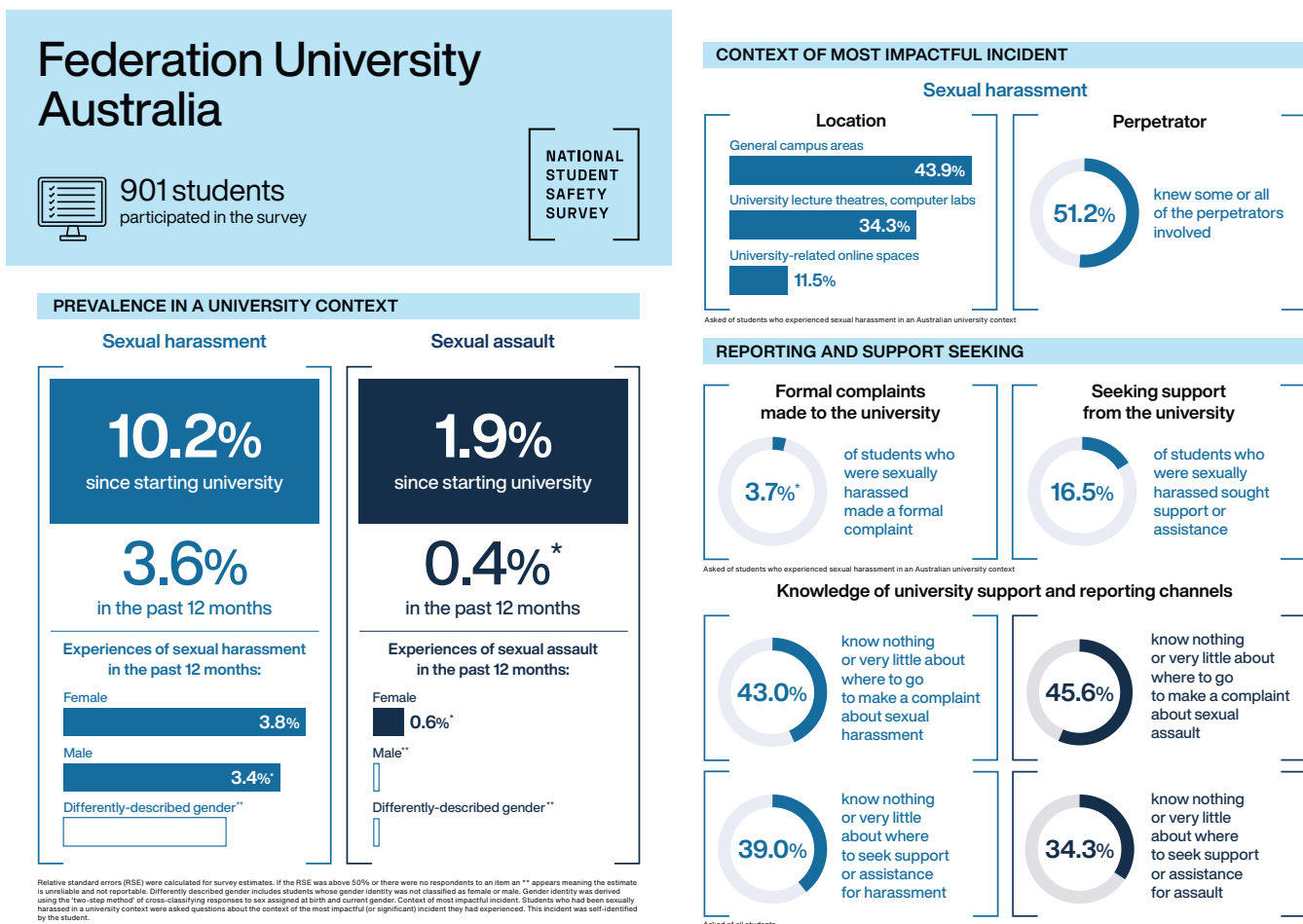
The survey results and national qualitative research report of the NSSS have helped Federation University to:

- understand the contexts in which sexual assault and sexual harassment occur
- develop RICAP actions
- improve support service
- enhance student safety and wellbeing.

Everyone who attends university has the right to be safe, feel safe, and be treated with respect, dignity, and fairness.



Universities Australia administered the NSSS in 2021, within the higher education sector. A summary of findings relating to Federation University is shown:



These findings show the prevalence and reporting in higher education. As a dual sector university, the findings are useful to inform practice across all of Federation University.

Prevention and Response Continuum



From 2024 to 2026 Federation University will implement change across three levels:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Tertiary level actions | Responding and supporting students and staff that have experienced discrimination, harassment or sexual harm. |
| Secondary level actions | Instigating early intervention programs that focus on education, inclusion, safety and respectful behaviours. |
| Primary level actions | Promoting a community and culture of respect and inclusion through a university-wide campaign that addresses the underlying drivers of discrimination, disrespect and gender-based harm. |

Respectful and Inclusive Communities Action Plan (RICAP) 2024 - 2026

Actions

ALIGNMENT TO LIVING VALUES: INCLUSION

1. IMPROVE RECORD KEEPING SYSTEMS TO ENSURE STUDENTS AND STAFF NAMES AND GENDER IDENTITIES ARE RESPECTED
2. ENSURE PROCEDURES PROMOTE SAFE AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE
3. PROMOTE THE AVAILABILITY OF SAFETY PLANS AND THE SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS AND STAFF IMPACTED BY VIOLENCE

ALIGNMENT TO LIVING VALUES: INNOVATION

4. EMBED INCLUSION PRACTICES INTO STAFF DEVELOPMENT

ALIGNMENT TO LIVING VALUES: EXCELLENCE

5. EMPOWER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITIES THROUGH TRAINING AND AWARENESS
6. ENSURE THE SUITABILITY OF UNIVERSITY SAFETY INFRASTRUCTURE

ALIGNMENT TO LIVING VALUES: EMPOWERMENT

7. SUPPORT STUDENTS AND STAFF TO BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES
8. INCREASE VISIBILITY AND INCLUSION OF STUDENT AND STAFF COHORTS
9. REDUCE BARRIERS TO ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS
10. DISTRIBUTE EQUITY AND INCLUSION MATERIALS TO INCREASE STUDENT AND STAFF CAPACITY

ALIGNMENT TO LIVING VALUES: COLLABORATION

11. BUILD PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE BEST PRACTICE IN INCLUSION.

Federation.edu.au

1800 333 864 (1800 FED UNI)

#feduni      /feduniaustralia

Disclaimer: Information contained in this brochure was correct at the time of distribution. October 2023.

Prepared by Student Equity and Inclusion

Status: Final | Version: 1 | Date: October 2023

Designed by Centre for Academic Development | Federation University

Federation University Australia programs are delivered with Victorian and Commonwealth Government funding to eligible applicants.

CRICOS Provider No. 00103D | RTO Code: 4909 | TEQSA No. PRV12151 (Australian University)

Feed