



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Regulator welcomes university wide response to sexual assault

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) has welcomed a national initiative that has seen all 39 of Australia's public universities join together to tackle the issue of sexual assault and harassment.

The initiative, Respect. Now. Always. has brought together Australia's universities and the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in an effort to build environments that better protect students from sexual assault and harassment in the future, and support those already affected.

TEQSA chief executive Anthony McClaran said that the release of today's survey by the AHRC, the largest survey on sexual assault and harassment in student communities, will allow universities to offer better support services and more effective policies to ensure students are better protected moving forward.

"The new Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) – a legislative framework that all higher education providers must meet – requires providers to offer students a safe environment," said Mr McClaran.

 As part of a suite of guidance notes on implementing the Threshold Standards, TEQSA has released material aimed at helping all higher education providers understand their responsibilities when it comes to providing access to student support services and fostering a safe environment.

Mr McClaran also noted that while TEQSA's guidance notes – and requirements around notifying the regulator of ongoing sexual assault or harassment issues – are important aspects of addressing the issue, it was encouraging to see Australia's universities working together to establish safe environments and the world's best practice in addressing sexual assault and harassment.

#### More information

- Students in need of help or support can call Universities Australia's 24/7 phone line on **1800 572 224**, or visit their university's dedicated counselling service – details of which can be found at [University Australia's 'Where to seek help at your university' web page](#).
- View our Guidance Note on student wellbeing and safety on [our guidance notes web page](#).

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