

*Respect.
Always.*



COMMUNITY VOICE

**IMPROVING PROGRAM OUTCOMES THROUGH
A NEW COMMUNITY-DRIVEN THEORY OF CHANGE**

FINAL REPORT
OCTOBER 2023



RESEARCH TEAM

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REPORT PRODUCTION

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation upon whose ancestral lands this research unfolded.

We pay respect to Elders past and present, acknowledging them as the knowledge holders of these lands and recognising their continuing connection to land, waters, country, and community.

We acknowledge the oppression of land, language, and culture of First Nations Peoples, and we commit to the healing and decolonising journey that we all share.

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LIST OF FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Definition</i>
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
DIRC	Design Innovation Research Centre
DSS	Department of Social Services
NSSS	National Student Safety Survey
NUS	National Union of Students
RNA	Respect.Now.Always.
SASH	Sexual assault and sexual harassment
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016, the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) joined the national Respect.Now. Always. (RNA) program to prevent and eliminate sexual violence – including sexual assault and sexual harassment – throughout Australian university communities and beyond. RNA also aims to improve how Australian universities respond to sexual violence, including supporting those affected. Specific to UTS, recent cross-sectional research indicates that there are key issues continuing to affect community safety across the University – including rising prevalence of harm occurring in technology-facilitated environments (such as social media, private messaging spaces, and institutionally managed learning and teaching systems), and continued under-reporting of concerns and incidents to the University.

In 2022 and 2023, we undertook a community-driven, asset-based, participatory research project – titled Respect.Now.Always: improving program outcomes through community voice.

We sought to speak with students and staff who were willing to share their experiences of these systems and their wishes for the future in how these systems can better address sexual violence at UTS. The project utilised a qualitative approach operationalised through individual semi-structured interviews for data collection, and internal and community-driven sensemaking processes for data analysis and interpretation. The outcomes of the project include a UTS community-driven theory of change, a series of recommendations in terms of next steps for RNA at UTS, and this research report.

Fifty-four members of the UTS community were interviewed. Interviews took place in November and December 2022, and February and March 2023.

The data gathered provides a rich picture of how different parts of UTS's systems are involved in addressing sexual violence – often with very different impacts and outcomes. Participants shared, at times extensively, their views and experiences in terms of what works well – and what does not work well – in how UTS responds to the issue of sexual violence on campus. Participants also shared what they felt was important to help make more positive experiences of UTS's systems the norm.

To ensure this evidence-based and evidence-generating approach, participants advocated that UTS draw on multiple concurrent sources of evidence – including community feedback, research, policy, and the law – to design and evaluate interventions. Structurally, there was a desire expressed for the re-orientation and introduction of systems and processes to generate evidence at multiple levels (such as individual incidents, clusters of incidents, and institution-wide population-level prevalence of issues). Participants wanted clearer communication and publication of evidence, especially in terms of issues that impact the entire UTS community. There was a strong wish from participants for more meaningful and representative involvement of UTS community members in designing, implementing, and evaluating aspects of RNA. We also heard from participants about the need for more effective monitoring and evaluation.

These insights informed the design of a community-driven theory of change – presented in this report – including the pre-conditions, processes, and outcomes necessary for building a safer and more supportive university community.

Through Community Voice, we found that institution-wide cultural and systemic change to address sexual violence continues to be complex, long-term work. Grounded in participants' stories, and predicated upon the utility of the community-

driven theory of change presented in this report, we argue that UTS address four recommendations:

1. **pursue a comprehensive agenda of community-driven co-design for future directions;**
2. **develop a robust, mixed-methods monitoring and evaluation framework;**
3. **socialise and institutionalise the theory of change throughout the UTS community; and**
4. **renew resources and funding to sustain the complex work of addressing sexual violence at UTS.**

Together, these steps are critical for ensuring that UTS remains a sector leader in designing for social change through a whole-of-community and whole-of-institution approach to addressing sexual violence.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This report has been developed to support the Respect.Now.Always. team, the Respect.Now.Always. Steering Committee, the Office of the Provost, and other key stakeholders directly involved in the Respect.Now.Always. program of work at UTS. It is intended as a primer for further strategic and action planning, including collective thinking on funding and resource allocation. This report is not intended to be used as a directive for which actions must be taken to prevent sexual violence on campus, nor as a holistic and representative view of how sexual violence manifests at UTS.

Please note that while the content of this report does not include specific detail of students' or staff members' experiences of sexual violence, there is still the potential that the content could be distressing for readers. If, at any point, you – or someone around you – needs help, please do not hesitate to contact any of the following free UTS-specific or external community-based support services:

UTS Sexual Harm Support Line	1800 531 626 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
UTS Employee Assistance Program	1300 307 912
UTS Counselling Service	+61 2 9514 1177 or student.services@uts.edu.au
1800 RESPECT	1800 737 732 (24/7)
NSW Sexual Violence Helpline	1800 424 017 (24/7)
QLife	1800 184 527 (3pm to midnight, every day)
MensLine Australia	1300 789 978 (24/7)

BACKGROUND

ADDRESSING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

Sexual violence is a complex and urgent issue in higher education. Global meta-analytic research has found that approximately 17.5% of female students and approximately 7.8% of male students experience sexual violence at university (Steele, et al., 2021). Students with marginalised identities and experiences – such as Indigenous students, LGBTIQ+ students, and students with a disability – are at higher risk of experiencing sexual violence (Coulter & Rankin, 2020; Dion, et al., 2022; Donovan & Roberts, 2022; Edwards, et al., 2023; Harris & Linder, 2017; McMahon & Seabrook, 2020). Staff members' experiences of sexual violence are widespread yet often hidden (Karami, et al., 2020; Kirkner, et al., 2022; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018; O'Callaghan, et al., 2022; Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation, 2020). Technology-facilitated sexual violence is increasingly prevalent (Durbach & Grey, 2018; Powell, 2022). Moreover, structural, systemic, and social barriers lead to under-reporting of sexual violence in university settings (Holland, et al., 2021; Hoxmeier, et al., 2022; Klein & Martin, 2021; Mennicke, et al., 2021; Stoner & Cramer, 2019). These issues call for stronger and more supportive approaches to addressing sexual violence throughout university communities.

In 2016, the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) joined national efforts coordinated by Universities Australia (UA) to launch the Respect.Now.Always. (RNA) campaign. RNA endeavours to prevent and eliminate sexual violence – including sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH) – throughout Australian university communities and beyond. It also aims to improve how Australian universities respond to sexual violence, including supporting those who are affected.

As part of the RNA campaign, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) led a landmark, sector-wide survey to better understand how SASH manifest in university communities. The survey sought data on the population-level prevalence of SASH in university settings, on students' self-reported lived experiences of SASH, and on the extent to which concerns were reported. Findings from the survey were disseminated as part of the publication *Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment in Australian universities* ("Change the Course"; AHRC, 2017). In response to the findings, UA released a 10-point action plan (UA, 2017) – including priorities such as the creation of an interim national student support hotline, the development of good practice guidelines for universities, and the design of training and capacity-building resources for students and staff.

Since 2016, UTS has been an active member of the national RNA program and assured its translation into policy, strategy, programming, and processes at an institutional level. The RNA Program at UTS has been guided by a cross-sectional working group, bringing together people with context- and content-specific expertise. UTS has delivered across several key action areas since the establishment of RNA – including capacity-building, engagement activities, and policy change.

DRIVERS FOR ADDRESSING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT UTS

PREVALENCE AND EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In 2021, UA commissioned the National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) to engender a renewed understanding of SASH across Australian universities. The survey – integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches – was designed, implemented, analysed, and reported on by the Social Research Centre (see Heywood, et al., 2022; Nisbet, et al., 2022). It sought data on the current prevalence of harm, on students' self-reported experiences of harm, and on reporting processes and support services from the viewpoints of students. A total of 43,819 students participated in the NSSS, including 1,835 students who participated in the qualitative component.

The NSSS attracted 1,151 responses from students at UTS. Figure 1 presents six salient findings from UTS respondents' data.

FIGURE 1. KEY UTS-SPECIFIC FINDINGS ARISING FROM THE NSSS



In particular, the NSSS revealed three notable issues specific to UTS:

1. An increased proportion of male students reported having experienced sexual assault in university context over the past 12 months
2. Rising prevalence of harm occurring in technology-facilitated environments, such as social media, private messaging spaces, and institutionally managed learning and teaching systems.
3. Continued under-reporting of concerns and incidents to the University.

These issues suggest that not all interventions and strategies at UTS are effective for all members of the UTS community, nor are they being accessed. The findings speak to a need to re-investigate the strengths, limitations, and opportunities for change in how UTS addresses sexual violence.

RESEARCH THAT CENTRES STUDENT AND STAFF VOICES

In 2017, the Office of the Provost commissioned a large-scale Student Voice Project at UTS ("Student Voice"). Student Voice was a human-centred design piece led by the UTS Design Innovation Research Centre (DIRC) in partnership with the RNA Program Manager. It represented the first in-depth qualitative exploration and analysis of SASH at UTS. Approximately 3,000 students and 200 staff contributed insights to the Student Voice research, shaping a deep understanding of students' experiences of SASH from many perspectives. This report also enabled a clearer understanding of how the UTS system works and how it plays host to drivers of unacceptable behaviours.

The Student Voice project aimed to generate new ways of understanding the complexity of sexual violence at UTS. It also sought to inform the design of UTS-wide

DRIVERS FOR ADDRESSING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT UTS

campaigns and services, with a vision for zero tolerance of SASH. To achieve this, the Student Voice involved research methods derived from applied ethnography and participatory design – including qualitative interviews, participatory design events, co-design, sensemaking, values-based exploration, and problem re-framing. A total of 21 research insights arose from this body of work. Table 1 details these insights. Moreover, as the project progressed, power imbalances were identified as a particularly strong theme and a core determinant of SASH at UTS.

In 2019, UTS launched its Respect.Now.Always. Strategic Framework (“Strategic Framework”) and accompanying report (see Malcolm, 2019). The Strategic Framework is the University’s institution-wide blueprint for sustainable cultural and systemic change in addressing sexual violence. It was borne from processes of deep listening with students and staff, focusing on their experiences, their needs, and their ideas. Approximately 5,000 students and 400 staff contributed to these processes.

As with the Student Voice, the processes informing the Strategic Framework were led by DIRC in partnership with the RNA Program Manager. The project generated key themes that reflect how members of the UTS community perceive the complexity of sexual violence – including gender norms, gender equality, speaking up, personal costs, organisational trust, and understandings of sexual violence. Students and staff also voiced what they desired and expected in terms of change at UTS.

Figure 2 presents these recommendations within a nested, social-ecological view of multi-level change.

FIGURE 2. UTS COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

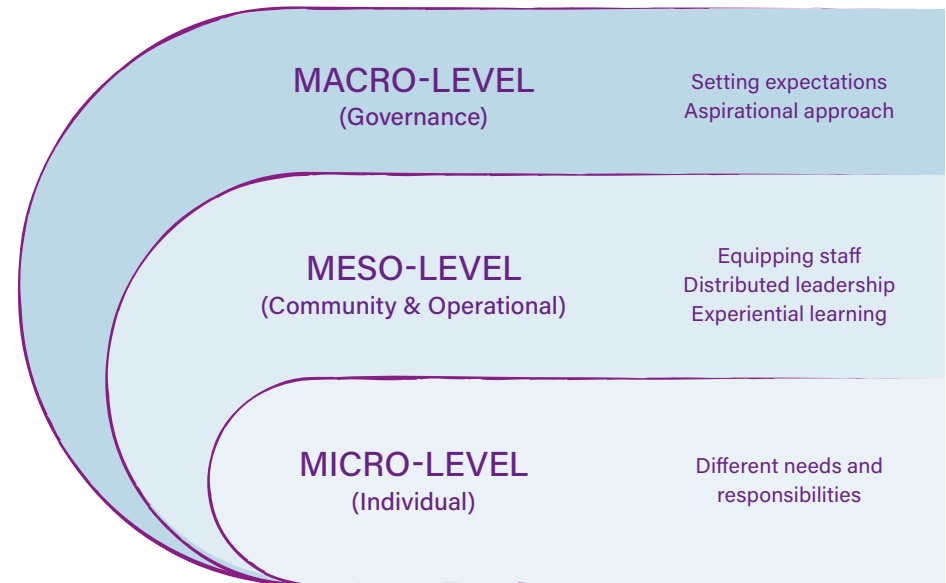


TABLE 1. RESEARCH INSIGHTS GENERATED THROUGH STUDENT VOICE

1. Many students accept sexual harassment as part of their everyday experience
2. Students are seeking a better understanding of appropriate behaviour
3. Students experience complex internal processing about whether to seek support
4. Unknown consequences deter students from seeking support or reporting incidents to UTS
5. Students prefer informal support processes with people they trust
6. Students need clarity on what support services do
7. Students desire a more open conversation about SASH in the UTS community
8. There is a disconnect in UTS's information on SASH and how this was perceived
9. High engagement from student-driven, interactive campaigns
10. Step-change from educational experiences at high school
11. Mixed response to "zero tolerance" wording
12. The word "consent" is not understood by some international students
13. Apprehension and lack of understanding about the purpose of Consent Matters training
14. Students desire more evolution in the engagement around consent - including seeing the impact of their contributions
15. There is a broad range of diversity in the conversation around consent
16. There is still a need to engage and reach disengaged students and Faculties
17. There is a desire from staff to have greater staff-student engagement in the topic
18. A risk management approach may not create change
19. There is a perception that taking action to prevent SASH will require additional time and resources
20. Staff need more of a "licence" to act as informal support for others
21. A balance of activities is needed to practically address the issue

WIDER SOCIETAL DRIVERS: PUBLIC POLICY, LEGISLATION, AND MEDIA

There are key external drivers to consider in how RNA effects change across the UTS community and beyond. These drivers include the following: public policy relevant to violence against women and to higher education; legislative reform with respect to affirmative consent and workplace sexual harassment; and media reporting and representation of sexual violence. These drivers shape activities across several RNA action areas at UTS, such as policy change, communications, education for prevention, and response and support coordination.

PUBLIC POLICY

Public policy shapes individual, collective, and societal efforts to build safer communities. In Australia, the current National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032 ("National Plan"; Department of Social Services [DSS], 2022) recommends that all educational and workplace settings, including universities, integrate trauma-informed actions to prevent and respond to sexual violence. Universities, as institutions in receipt of public funding, also form part of a complex system of organisations and services with a responsibility to address sexual, domestic, and family violence (DSS, 2022). A key output of the National Plan has been committed funding for renewed efforts in both prevention and response of sexual violence, a proportion of which has mobilised a group of universities to develop evidence-based guidelines for the higher education sector. UTS is a contributor to, and co-author of, these guidelines.

Public policy on higher education also shapes how universities address sexual violence. The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 requires universities to assure learning conditions that support students' wellbeing and safety, including provision of needs-informed personal support services, promotion of a safe environment, and maintenance of policies and procedures for managing critical incidents. As the national public agency for higher education regulation, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA, 2018) also maintains sector-wide guidance notes on wellbeing and safety, including on assault and harassment.

LEGISLATION

In 2022, consent laws changed in New South Wales (Department of Communities and Justice, 2023), marking the adoption of affirmative consent. Table 2 details the aims of these reforms.

TABLE 2. AIMS OF THE NSW CONSENT LAW REFORMS

To clarify consent provisions in the Crimes Act 1900, including that consent is a free and voluntary agreement that should not be presumed
To clarify that consent involves ongoing and mutual communication
To strengthen laws to confirm that consent can be withdrawn, and that if someone consents to one sexual act, it doesn't mean they've consented to other sexual acts
To ensure fairer and more effective prosecutions of sexual offences
To address misconceptions about consent in trial proceedings
To improve victim experience of the justice system and juror understanding of the complexities of sexual offending and reporting through the introduction of new jury directions

Key outputs of these reforms have included education and awareness-raising with judges, legal practitioners, and police, as well as a state-wide campaign – called #MakeNoDoubt – to empower young people in ensuring there is consent when engaging in sexual activity (NSW Government, 2023). UTS partnered with the NSW Government to deliver the #MakeNoDoubt campaign, both with curating content, and systematically implementing visual and audio-visual assets across campus and digital environments.

At a national level, the Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect@Work) Act 2022 strengthens legal and regulatory frameworks relating to sex discrimination, and shifts focus to greater prevention efforts in seeking to eliminate sexual harassment in Australian workplaces (Attorney-General's Department, n.d.). One of the key legislative reforms is the introduction of a positive duty in the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, requiring employers to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate specific forms of unlawful sex discrimination – including sexual harassment and prevent a hostile work environment on the basis of sex.

MEDIA

Media coverage and representations of sexual violence have also shifted public discourse. In Australia, journalistic media practices profoundly influence – and are influenced by – the public interest, and this is particularly the case when considering complex social, ethical, and legal issues such as sexual violence (Liu & Mu, 2022). Over the past several years, media reports have spotlighted activist and advocate voices with lived experiences of sexual violence – such as Brittany Higgins, Chanel Contos, and Grace Tame – and in so doing shaped sustained public interest in addressing sexual violence as a gender justice issue (Keddie, 2021). More historical media reports, dating back to at least the early 1970s, have also publicised student activism and demonstrations in calling for universities to better address sexual violence in campus communities (Towl & Walker, 2019).

EVIDENCE REVIEW

This brief evidence review introduces literature that makes a case for comprehensive sexual violence prevention and response in university communities. It identifies the importance of action at multiple levels of the institution to have the best possible chance of success; this is consonant with a social-ecological approach that underpins existing UTS work (for example, the Strategic Framework). It focuses on policy change, campus community involvement and participation, and tailored interventions as vital strategies in seeking sustainable change.

POLICY CHANGE

With respect to sexual violence, institutional policies and procedures articulate what is to be done across a university community to prevent violence from occurring, to provide options for reporting incidents and concerns, and to enable support for victim-survivors (Perkins & Warner, 2017). Across the almost six years since the release of Change the Course report, most Australian universities have established policy and procedural architecture specific to sexual violence. UTS's Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy sits among this architecture.

Policy plays many roles as part of universities' approaches to addressing sexual violence. Research has found, for example, that institutional policies on sexual violence tend to over-emphasise risk and over-rely on deterrence-driven models for preventing the perpetration of sexual violence on campus (Iverson, 2015; Potter, et al., 2000). These findings suggest that through policy, universities often incorporate fear of punishment via criminal law or university procedure as a means of preventing violence from occurring.

More recent scholarship has advocated for university policies on sexual violence with a stronger focus on prevention and a stronger grounding in social justice (Iverson & Issadore, 2018). In particular, there is considerable advocacy for university policies to:

- Codify expectations for deep learning: going beyond stipulating mandates for education and training on consent and sexual violence, and further making clear the types of learning outcomes and competencies required of all campus community members.
- Call for collective and structural efforts: examining how embedded institutional structures create the conditions that give rise to sexual violence and working to change these at a system- and setting-level means of prevention.

- Demonstrate socio-cultural relevance: ensuring university policies recognise the multiplicity of identities and experiences throughout student and staff communities, and ensuring language in policies avoids a 'one size fits all' orientation.
- Situate policy authorship in a more critical way: considering who is invited and involved in policy development, what opportunities stakeholders have to contribute, and in what ways policy development can be more open, transparent, ongoing, and interactional. This approach seeks to shift the preponderant practice of policy writing as an administrative exercise largely overseen by legal counsel.

This evidence speaks to the importance of campus community involvement in the processes of developing, implementing, and evaluating university policy on sexual violence. Such an approach is especially important if the university's approach to addressing sexual violence is grounded within a community-building and community safety paradigm; designing sensitive, intersectional ways for students and staff to contribute to policy change is key if a university is to 'walk the talk' in campus community-driven sexual violence prevention and response.

CAMPUS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

UTS's approach to addressing sexual violence adopts a social-ecological model that situates violence as an issue for community safety and wellbeing. Accordingly, all members of the UTS community – including students and staff – have a role to play. This includes preventing violence from occurring, in taking action when an incident has occurred (particularly in terms of staff who have mandatory reporting obligations), and in supporting others affected.

The literature refers to this as a whole-of-university approach – one which has been used to address related campus community priorities such as health promotion

and bullying prevention (Beres, et al., 2019; McMahon, Steiner, et al., 2021). Beyond considerations such as leadership and policy change, in seeking to facilitate more community-driven action on campus, a whole-of-university approach needs to:

- Better incorporate students' voices beyond token involvement – this is important as students have valuable expertise to provide in design, outreach, interpretation, and dissemination of policies and programs that aim to prevent sexual violence.
- Better involve staff, even if their role is not directly related to sexual violence – this is important as there are vital opportunities for including information in curriculum, being effective role models in learning environments, setting expectations and norms for students' behaviour, creating spaces for students to address prevention, and connecting students with resources.

More meaningful involvement of campus community members in design, implementation, and evaluation of efforts to address sexual violence is important for promoting acceptability of interventions. When communities are more deeply involved, and when they feel that their voices are genuinely listened to as part of more compassionate institutional work, both the process and the outcome can be far more effective (Wolferman, et al., 2019). Part of this is a function of community members feeling that they have more ownership over solutions – rather than simply being 'targets' of interventions. Part of this also leans into 'grassroots' action, forming part of the re-distribution of power in pursuing campus community change.

TAILORED INTERVENTIONS

Universities have different identities, strengths, missions, histories, and demographics. Addressing sexual violence in a compassionate, context-sensitive way calls for interventions and programs that are tailored to specific groups, populations,

EVIDENCE REVIEW

and issues in the university setting. This has been a key focus of advocacy, research, program management and evaluation, and knowledge-sharing in universities for many years (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009; Clay, et al., 2019; Dills, et al., 2016; McMahon, Burnham, et al., 2020). The core lesson is that one size does not fit all – particularly when considering the highly gendered and deeply emotional nature of sexual violence.

Tailoring interventions can apply across the continuum of action that is needed to comprehensively address sexual violence in a university setting. Institutional policies and procedures, online consent education modules, active bystander intervention training, and staff-focused capacity-building on responding to disclosures of sexual violence affecting students, are just some examples. Detailed tailoring of these interventions means ensuring that: policies and procedures are strongly reflective of the institutional context; education and training are developed to correspond with identities, knowledge, and readiness for change, and staff-focused efforts recognise that staff can often themselves experience sexual violence, and as such universities need to support staff – rather than simply perceiving them as holding roles for supporting students.

LOCALISED EVIDENCE

While the evidence base on addressing sexual violence in university communities continues to grow, most literature reports on action in institutions of higher education throughout North America and the United Kingdom. Comparably, a research agenda specific to Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand is still very much developing.

Downstream, this means we have much more limited localised research evidence on which to draw in determining how we can strengthen sexual violence prevention and response at UTS – particularly as a metropolitan, single-campus university with

a primarily commuter student population and a continuing aim to recover full campus utilisation in the wake of COVID-19-related lockdowns.

McCall, et al. (2023) brought together a collective of practitioners and researchers from four universities across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand – including two members of the Community Voice project team (Catharine Pruscino and Xuan Luu). The collective conducted insider qualitative research to document promising practices for addressing sexual violence across the four universities, resulting in a thematic synthesis of practices and a series of recommendations for further practice-based research. Through mapping of university-specific strategies that span spaces such as policy change, campus community involvement and participation, and tailored interventions and programming, they found six domains of action common across all four institutions. Table 3 presents these domains.

TABLE 3. DOMAINS OF ACTION IN ADDRESSING CAMPUS-BASED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

DOMAIN	SUMMARY
A multi-faceted approach	This involves the adoption of multiple concurrent interventions across prevention and response. Face-to-face prevention programming with students is a strong feature of universities' practices, along with staff-focused training and information on how to respond to disclosures of sexual violence from students. This capacity-building is supported by social norms marketing campaigns, university-wide volunteer networks, public events, and online communications.
Leadership	Strong, clear, consistent, and iterative leadership is needed – both from the top down (such as from the Vice-Chancellor or other members of the institutional executive) and from students and staff occupying leadership roles across a university. With strong leadership must come strong commitment – not just in words and rhetoric, but also in tangible funding and resources to better support the complex work of prevention and response.
Inclusivity and internal collaboration	Building relationships to cut across hierarchical structures and boundaries in university settings. Examples include student-staff partnership to consult upon, co-design, and co-deliver programmes and other interventions, and adopting intersectional approaches to facilitating involvement of students with marginalised identities and experiences in the formulation of policy and culture change.
External partnerships and collaboration	Partnership-building with community-based organisations, local government, and police (when needed) to inform university-level responses to instances of sexual violence. These partnerships bring together different stakeholders and sectors with particular knowledge, expertise, and responsibilities. Such partnerships are best when mutually beneficial, reciprocal, and strengths-based.
Supportive responses and provision of support services	Structural interventions – such as changes to policies, procedures, and pathways for reporting and seeking assistance – are crucial in enabling supportive environments for victim-survivors. This is often supplemented with capacity-building to ensure people throughout the university system – such as staff in frontline student support roles – can utilise those structure for compassionate and supportive action.
Evaluation	Evaluation occurs most commonly at the level of specific strategies, programs, and interventions, with policies proving more difficult to evaluate for impacts and outcomes. Cross-institutional evaluation becomes complex given the inevitable tailoring of interventions to suit specific groups, systems, structures, and processes that may be in place at one institution but not another. Adopting a realistic approach to undertaking evaluation – understanding what works for whom, why, and under what conditions – is recommended.

COMMUNITY VOICE: OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

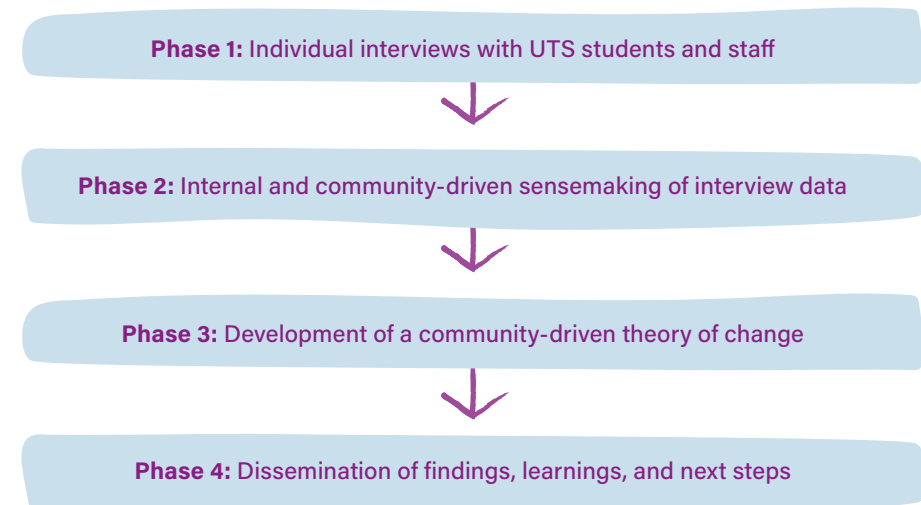
This report presents the processes, findings, and learnings arising from RNA Community Voice ("Community Voice") – a formative research project carried out in 2022 and 2023 that sought to improve the RNA Program at UTS and its outcomes via renewed community involvement. Community Voice focused on fostering a deeper understanding of how UTS addresses sexual violence, being mindful of both the history of RNA to date and the NSSS findings specific to UTS. To do this, the project involved a qualitative and insider approach operationalised using appreciative and participatory methods. The approach and methods were chosen to elevate and amplify the perspectives of students and staff.

PROJECT AIMS

1. **Uncover and build upon existing strengths inherent to RNA at UTS, such as a humanised and participatory approach to effecting sustainable cultural change.**
2. **Empirically extend upon previous research efforts that have centred community perspectives on addressing sexual violence at UTS (e.g., Student Voice).**
3. **Crystallise this community-driven research with relevant insights from a broad academic- and practice-oriented evidence base.**
4. **Develop a community-driven theory of change (see Clark, 2019), including the pre-conditions and outcomes necessary to effect positive change.**
5. **Synthesise this evidence to offer a series of lessons and recommendations that can inform future strategic and action planning for RNA at UTS.**

PROJECT DESIGN

FIGURE 3 PRESENTS AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT DESIGN FOR THIS FORMATIVE RESEARCH.



ADOPTING A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN, ASSET-BASED APPROACH

Both Student Voice and Community Voice reflect a strong focus on community-based research to guide action at UTS. Peer-reviewed research has called for more community-level research and intervention to improve how universities address sexual violence (Banyard, et al., 2021; Bonar, et al., 2022; Casey & Lindhorst, 2009; DeGue, et al., 2012; McMahon, 2015; McMahon et al., 2019). This is echoed in calls to action from advocates and activists who have argued for universities to better meet community expectations in how they address sexual violence (Fair Agenda & End Rape on Campus Australia, 2022). Community participation in intervention design and strategic planning is key for ensuring greater buy-in and support (Baumeister, et al., 2017; Nation, et al., 2011). For RNA at UTS, spotlighting community voices is therefore key – especially as the University reflects on issues highlighted in the NSSS and charts its next steps.

Community Voice also approaches its remit from an asset-based standpoint. Problem-solving is a dominant approach in seeking social, cultural, and organisational change. It usually begins with identification of challenges and barriers, progresses to interrogation of the root causes underpinning those challenges and barriers, and concludes with formulation of strategies to respond and resolve. Problem-solving is also, however, indicative of a deficit-oriented view (Logue, 2019). To create a more comprehensive approach to change, organisations and institutions need to build on existing strengths and capacities – rather than focusing solely on areas of weakness with much lesser opportunity for long-term intervention (Bhattacharya & Chakraborty, 2019). This calls for an approach that re-orient attention toward assets and strengths.

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Human research ethics approval for Community Voice was granted in October 2022 by the UTS Health and Medical Research Ethics Committee (reference: ETH22-7376).

METHOD

This section introduces Appreciative Inquiry (AI; Cooperrider, et al., 2003) as the guiding research methodology for Community Voice. Originating from the field of organisational change, AI brings an asset-based approach to problem-solving. A narratively rich and collaborative process is used to uncover the strengths across the system.

The process assumes the questions most often asked by institutions set the direction in which they move (Cantore & Cooperrider, 2013). Shifting the dialogue from the deficits to strengths, therefore, is believed to result in positive asset-based narratives that lead to transformational change. Rather than looking at a context as a problem to be solved, the approach uncovers assets and uses these as foundations upon which to build.

The model uses a multi-step process that begins with an inquiry into “the best of what is, in order to imagine what could be” (Bushe, 2013, p. 41). Informed by this process, our approach for this project weaved iteratively through the following phases:

- **Establishing partnerships and setting the foundation for engagement**
- **Project design**
- **Community conversations**
- **Community-led sensemaking**

PHASE 1: INTERVIEWS GUIDED BY APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Phase 1 involved qualitative semi-structured individual interviews with 54 members of the UTS community. The AI approach underpinned the design and facilitation of these interviews. We sought to involve students and staff who were willing to speak to their knowledge and experiences of UTS's response to sexual violence – including any relevant interventions, policies, and processes.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Participant recruitment occurred via selected student- and staff-focused communication channels, via promotion by the RNA team, and via purposive sampling following advice from the Program Manager: Respect.Now.Always. We aimed to recruit approximately 50 participants, seeking representativeness across UTS as a community and as a large, organisationally complex institution. Our goal of 50 interviews also recognised that some evidence recommends a sample size of between 12 to 50 interviews to reach 'saturation' in qualitative research (Dworkin, 2012; Low, 2019).

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Our participant recruitment process included an online form to gather expressions of interest. This form collected standard identifying information (e.g., preferred name and contact details) as well as a foundational level of demographic information to help ensure inclusive and representative recruitment (e.g., self-nominated pronouns and the person's role within the wider context of the UTS system). Table 4 summarises the demographic characteristics of those who participated in Phase 1.

TABLE 4. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC GATHERED	n
Self-nominated pronouns *	
he/him	14
she/her	37
they/them	2
Not specified	1
Role within the UTS system	
Alumni	1
Staff member – academic	2
Staff member – affiliated not-for-profit student-centred organisation	3
Staff member – professional	13
Staff member – university executive	1
Student – currently enrolled	33
Student – formerly enrolled	1
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	54

** Self-nominated pronouns are not always indicative of gender identity. Data on pronouns were gathered to help the research team promote inclusive behaviours and conversation when referring to participants in a range of contexts (e.g., meetings to discuss data analysis, facilitation of sensemaking, etc.).*

PHASE 1: INTERVIEWS GUIDED BY APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

INTERVIEW DESIGN AND PROCESSES

Participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form prior to the start of their interview. Participants returned a signed copy of the consent form to the research team to confirm they were interested and willing to take part in the interview process. Participants were compensated with a Coles supermarket voucher for their time and participation.

Interviews were approximately one hour in duration – including 45 minutes of participant-researcher interaction with 15 minutes additionally allotted if an interview went over time. Appendix A details the interview protocol. Through these interviews, we sought to hold space with participants to explore the following:

- Their perceptions of what has worked well in terms of UTS’s response to the issue of sexual violence.
- Their perspectives on the enablers of these successful experiences – including their own contributions, contributions of the UTS community, and contributions of components of the UTS system and beyond.
- Their perspectives on opportunities for change and improvement.
- Their wishes for the future, imagining a world in which these successful experiences were the norm.

With the permission of participants, interview notes were documented by externally engaged scribes as a rapid and cost-effective alternative to recording and transcription. The involvement of scribes ensured limited disruption during interviews that might arise from usual interviewing practices (e.g., interviewers’ notetaking throughout participants’ sharing of their stories). This created a context in which

interviewers could fully engage in conversation, build rapport with participants, and hold space for participants’ sharing (Eaton, et al., 2019; Vindrola-Padros & Johnson, 2020).

Following the completion of each interview, interviewers responded to several reflective questions as an addendum to the interview protocol. We designed questions to support interviewers in making sense of their interview experiences and of participants’ narratives, as well as in starting to generate key themes. The following questions formed a guide:

- What was the most interesting aspect of the interview from your perspective?
- What excited you about this story?
- Overall, from the perspective of the person you interviewed, what do you think were the most important aspects of the story they shared with you?

ENSURING TRAUMA-INFORMED, EMOTIONALLY SAFE RESEARCH

Positioned within the wider context of research on sexual violence in higher education, Community Voice focused specifically on institutional systems, processes, and policies in exploring responses to sexual violence. This differentiates Community Voice from other research focused on university community members’ experiences of sexual violence and how those experiences have affected them. We acknowledge, however, that attention to institutional phenomena cannot be disconnected from attention to individuals’ lived experiences; the two are intertwined, and it is the complex interplay of the two – mediated by embedded power and privilege – that generates a comprehensive understanding of particular outcomes (Bigs, et al., 2021; May, 2022).

Research on sexual violence calls for consideration of the sensitivities of the topic and

the need for trauma-informed, emotionally safe approaches (Campbell, Goodman-Williams, et al., 2019). Ethical responsibilities in sensitive qualitative research include keeping all parties physically and emotionally safe, minimising the likelihood of participants' distress, and carefully considering impacts of the work on researchers' wellbeing (Williamson, et al., 2020). We therefore sought to establish appropriate processes for preparing and supporting our interviewing work. Table 5 details these practices, organising them into two categories: (1) formative (i.e., adopted during the design and planning stages of the project), and (2) process (i.e., adopted in execution of the project, such as data collection).

TABLE 5. PRACTICES ADOPTED FOR TRAUMA-INFORMED, EMOTIONALLY SAFER RESEARCH

Formative practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design and adoption of a distress protocol (see Appendix B) ▪ Briefing of all interviewers and the research team on trauma-informed research praxis, the distress protocol, the Counselling Referral Grid (a resource designed to assist UTS staff in recommending appropriate support and referral pathways for students), and support services beyond UTS ▪ Planning interviews to occur face-to-face on campus at UTS, to ensure easier use of the distress protocol (if needed) ▪ Assuring a separate and proximal quiet "support space", near the designated interview spaces, in the case of distress ▪ Coordinating with the UTS Counselling Service and UTS Security ahead of time to ensure support would be available on interview dates
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Process practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of UTS and community-based support services information in hard copy to participants before the interview ▪ If a participant became distressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ offering to sit with them in the "support space" ▪ offering to pause the interview and / or continue on a different date ▪ offering to walk with them to a priority appointment with UTS Counselling ▪ offering to connect them with other UTS support areas, including Security, Health Service, or Student Complaints ▪ arranging to follow up with them, either later that day or within a few days ▪ Implementation of debrief meetings, both after interviews and at the end of each day of interviewing ▪ Implementation of COVID-safe practices for each interview
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INTEGRITY OF RESEARCH DATA

All interview data were deidentified. Demographic data were organised and stored in digital files separate to the interview data. In cleaning the interview data, we supported interviewers to ensure that all personally identifying information was omitted from the interview notes. All deidentified interview data were then collated and analysed via an iterative individual and collective sense-making approach. Files were only accessible to project staff in order to protect participants' privacy.

PHASE 2: INTERNAL AND COMMUNITY-DRIVEN SENSEMAKING

We completed data analysis through an iterative approach to sensemaking that is well-documented in the organisational research literature. Richly qualitative in its orientation, sensemaking helps to explore and unpack how individuals and groups make sense of their experiences within specific organisational environments (Cristofaro, 2022). In sensemaking, we worked in partnership with student members of the UTS community to build a theory of change to inform further efforts in addressing sexual violence.

INTERNAL SENSEMAKING

Our first stage of sensemaking was internal. It involved initial reading, coding, interpretation of the interview data by members of the project team. The project team brought together knowledge and expertise across several relevant areas of research and practice – including community-based and other forms of applied social research, public and community health, policymaking, participatory co-design, and institutional-wide program management and evaluation specific to campus-based interpersonal violence. These perspectives enriched our work in unpacking the interview data and uncovering meaning through participants' stories.

Our internal sensemaking also included the initial development of a theory of change. This 'first pass' synthesised three key forms of evidence: (1) initial interpretations of the interview data across the project team, (2) outcome statements developed from themes and sub-themes, and (3) mapping of change needed to lead to the outcome statements, guided by a systems-thinking approach and grounded within the stories shared by participants.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN SENSEMAKING

More recent perspectives in sensemaking research have called for deeper consideration of power, context, identity, and plausibility – particularly when aiming to make sense of gendered and discriminatory practices within organisational contexts (Helms Mill, et al., 2010; Ng, et al., 2020; Schildt, et al., 2020). We reflected on these perspectives in our approach to community-driven sensemaking. We began with a recognition and appreciation of UTS students and staff as having significant and deeply personal expertise of how the University's systems work – and perhaps do not work – to address sexual violence. This expertise meant that their voices were crucial in working alongside us to shape our research and its findings – not just as participants in qualitative interviewing.

We considered the impacts of power differentials in developing our sensemaking processes. For this community-driven stage of sensemaking, we were cognisant that students can often occupy very different roles when compared with staff in a university. Research has suggested that students can feel pressured to report primarily positive outcomes and experiences, particularly when asked for feedback directly by university staff (Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2017). We wanted to create as safe as possible a space in which student members of the UTS community could join us to work through our initial interpretations of the interview data gathered, and to refine our 'first pass' at developing a theory of change.

Three UTS students (CB, CV, SD), recruited from the wider pool of interviewees, worked with us in this second stage. They were remunerated as staff for their time and wisdom.

PROCESSES FOR SENSEMAKING

Table 6 outlines our processes for sensemaking – including their duration and the people involved.

TABLE 6. PROCESSES FOR SENSEMAKING

ACTIVITY	DURATION	PEOPLE INVOLVED
<p>Individual analysis and initial theme-building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team selected up to four interviews to independently analyse as a test, and all analysts worked with the same four interviews to assure consistency Analysts constructed themes and sub-themes based on this initial analysis process 	Approximately five hours	3 team members (CP, LA, MG)
<p>Development of analysis template</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team brought together themes and sub-themes and took turns to describe their analysis and its outcomes Integration of all analyses to form an agreed template as a coding manual to structure analysis of remaining data 	3 hours	3 team members (CP, LA, MG)
<p>Individual analysis of remaining data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team divided the rest of the interview data among all members for analysis All team members contributed to deductive and inductive analysis, using the coding manual and adding new themes or sub-themes as relevant 	1 hour of analysis per interview; 3 hours of cleaning data and adding new codes	5 team members (AL, CP, LA, MG, XL)
<p>Mid-point check-in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team met to discuss new findings and to merge or rename themes or sub-themes based on analysis 	1.5 hours	5 team members (AL, CP, LA, MG, XL)
<p>Data consolidation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merged all coded data into one file and printing for further analytic activities 	2 hours	2 team members (LA, MG)
<p>Internal sensemaking workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection upon consolidated coded data, plus themes and sub-themes Triangulation of themes and sub-themes with existing research evidence to develop an initial theory of change 	10 hours (5 hours per day over 2 days)	4 team members (AL, CP, LA, MG)
<p>Community-driven sensemaking workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unpacking of the drafted theory of change with student community members, including dissecting and revising language, layout, and areas for improvement 	7 hours	4 team members (AL, CP, JT, LA) and 3 members of the student community (CB, CV, SD)
<p>Consolidation of learnings</p>	3 hours	4 team members (AL, CP, LA, MG)
<p>Finalisation of theory of change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team met to go through questions or comments and to finalise the theory of change 	3 hours	4 team members (AL, CP, LA, MG)

PROCESS EVALUATION

Our process evaluation for Community Voice generated several learnings and limitations in terms of research project implementation. We discuss these below, including brief recommendations for future iterations of similar on-campus, community-based participatory research that may take place at UTS.

PLANNING FOR HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW

While we initially submitted our human research ethics application in July 2022, we did not receive approval for the Community Voice project until October 2022. This meant some delay to subsequent project milestones such as kick-off meetings of the project team, distress protocol briefings with all team members, and data collection and analysis. For future projects, we recommend that more time is built into planning for human research ethics review and approval in future, giving greater amounts of 'buffer time' for factors such as frequency and deadlines of human research ethics committee meetings, as well as the time and effort required to develop responses and amendments following committee feedback.

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

Initial project planning focused on implementation of qualitative interviews in Quarter 4, 2022, particularly during the months of November and December. This did not eventuate; we were able to facilitate half of our goal of 50 interviews during that time. As a result, we carried out a second round of participant recruitment, and therefore a second round of interviews, in February and March 2023 to reach our goal.

This experience taught and reminded us that context matters in participant recruitment – and particularly so when conducting insider research within a complex, matrix-based institutional environment such as a university. Over half of our eventual participants were UTS students. Given that Spring Session – as part of the University's semester-based schedule of teaching periods – concluded in November, there was reduced likelihood of students' attention and engagement around that time of year. This reflection influenced our second round of participant recruitment and interviews; February and March marked the start of Autumn Session, and therefore presented a more opportune time to elicit students' interest and participation.

PROCESS EVALUATION

The importance of timing also applied to recruiting and interviewing staff for Community Voice. November and December are conventionally popular times of year at which full-time and part-time staff at UTS start to take leave for the upcoming holiday period. This likely influenced the extent to which we could engage with staff across the University for the purposes of our research.

For future projects, we recommend incorporating consideration of these larger contextual factors into the planning phase as much as possible. This can help to ensure that participant recruitment is sensitive to the patterns of engagement across student and staff communities at UTS throughout the year.

ENSURING APPROPRIATE SPACES FOR QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWING

We undertook some changes in the on-campus spaces booked for the purposes of conducting interviews for Community Voice. These changes occurred after the first round of interviews. For that first round, several large collaborative spaces – proximate to one another – were booked to ensure a support space would be available nearby and multiple interviews could occur concurrently. Given some reflections on how to best implement principles of trauma-informed, emotionally safe research processes, we booked smaller and more accessible spaces for the second round of interviews. This change was instrumental in assuring safer and more appropriate spaces in which to facilitate conversations.

For future projects, we recommend taking physical context and environment into account when establishing spaces for qualitative interviewing and data collection. This can help to promote participants' comfort, safety, and wellbeing as part of upholding principles of trauma-informed, emotionally safe research.

LIMITATIONS

We encountered several limitations as part of our work to carry out Community Voice. We discuss these below, including their implications for interpreting our findings where relevant.

Participant recruitment for Community Voice was purposive and therefore not randomised. Purposive sampling is a widely utilised approach in qualitative research as it allows for the identification and inclusion of information-rich cases in line with the overarching research questions (Gentles, et al., 2015; Palinkas, et al., 2015). Within the context of our project, we confined our recruitment to UTS students and staff with existing experiences of how the University's systems respond in situations involving sexual violence. This limits the ability to generalise our findings to other contexts, such as comparator campuses or institutions.

We did not collect a comprehensive number of demographic characteristics from participants as part of our project. This was a key decision given our aims to unearth a broad-based picture of people's perspectives on how UTS systems work within the context of addressing sexual violence. While we recognise that gender, race, class, and other aspects of lived experience contribute to every person's unique interaction with institutional systems, a complete understanding of the ways in which such dimensions shape those interactions was not a primary aim of our work.

We also acknowledge a limitation in the number of UTS students who worked with us as part of the community-driven sensemaking process. While our efforts to recruit these three UTS students took into consideration principles of intersectionality, diversity, representation, and equitable participation, the proportion of funding allocated to support this aspect of the project limited how many people could be involved.

A NEW COMMUNITY-DRIVEN
THEORY OF CHANGE FOR
SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION
AND RESPONSE AT UTS

A NEW COMMUNITY-DRIVEN THEORY OF CHANGE FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AT UTS

This section sets out our results from Phases 1 and 2 of Community Voice. It firstly presents the theory of change arising from our iterative sensemaking processes. It then discusses this theory of change in detail, providing a narrative explanation and guidance on interpretation.

Community Voice has generated a clear, community-driven theory of change with respect to ways forward for UTS's efforts to address sexual violence. Arising from 54 interviews with students and staff across the UTS community, the theory of change provides a conceptual framework for positive social, cultural, and systemic change in the long term, and sets out the conditions that are needed to bring about this change. Figure 4 presents this theory of change.

Here, we provide a narrative explanation of the theory of change, including its desired outcomes, the conditions needed to realise those outcomes, and the principles that underpin all steps for UTS to take in bringing about change. We preface this explanation with guidance on navigating the theory of change. As we lay out the theory of change and discuss its components, we interweave example quotes from UTS students and staff who participated in interviews for Community Voice. This helps us to ground the theory of change within community perspectives, strengths, needs, and wishes for the future.

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change utilises a numbering and lettering system to systematically map actions and priorities, as well as to draw relationships between them as they work in concert to bring about change. Table 7 provides a guide to interpreting this system.

TABLE 7. GUIDE TO INTERPRETING NUMBERING AND LETTERING IN THE THEORY OF CHANGE

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Multi-level numbering (e.g., 1, 1.1, 1.1.1)	This system is used to refer to the two outcome areas inherent to the theory of change, as well as to the actions and priorities needed to work towards those outcomes.
Capital lettering - with sub-numbering as needed (e.g., A, A.1, B, B.1)	This system is used to refer to the backbone of the theory of change - that is, the institutional standards and structures needed for effective prevention and response.
Non-capital lettering (e.g., a, b, c, d)	This system is used to refer to the principles that guide the theory of change, drawn from interview findings and crystallised through synthesis of best-practice research.

Table 8 provides a glossary of language that we use to refer to different components of the theory of change. This language is informed by relevant guidance on theory of change as a methodology in practice-oriented social research (see Clark, 2019).

ON NEXT PAGE: FIGURE 4. COMMUNITY-DRIVEN THEORY OF CHANGE

Respect.
Now.
Always.

THEORY OF CHANGE



HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

UTS acts as a sector leader



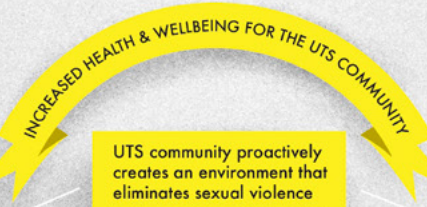
STATE & NATIONAL POLICIES

UTS utilises its good practice to inform policy & practice



BROADER SOCIETAL CULTURE & MESSAGES

UTS takes up its role as part of the broader community to shape culture & practice



UTS community proactively creates an environment that eliminates sexual violence



1 Prevention of sexual violence within our community

2 Increasingly effective institutional responses to sexual violence

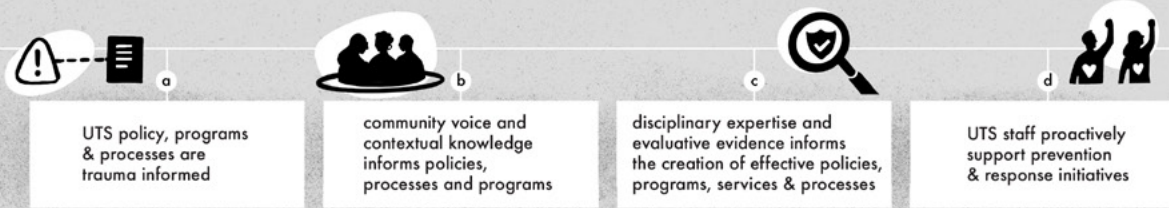
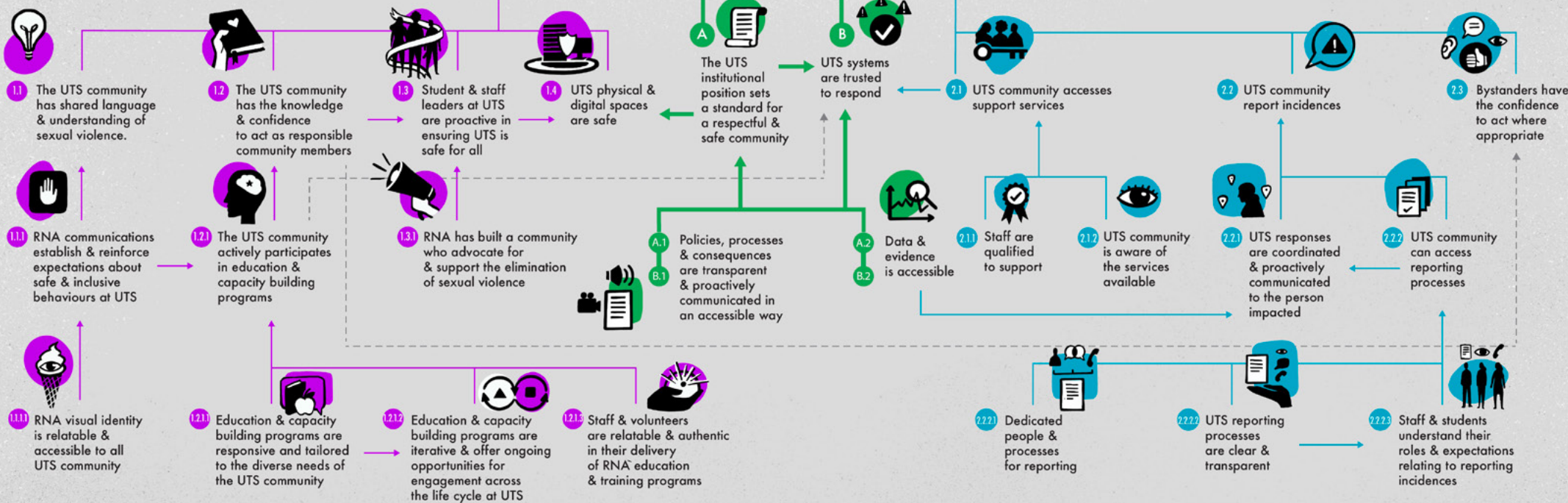


TABLE 8. GLOSSARY OF LANGUAGE FOR DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF THE THEORY OF CHANGE

TERM	DEFINITION
SHARED VISION	This articulates what community members wish to create and accomplish as a collective. It reflects common interests and a common purpose. A shared vision plays an important role in motivating the movement from a current state to a different state.
OUTCOME AREAS	These are areas in which we expect to see, through the long term, a change in the condition of a specific population, policy, system, behaviour, or attitude. Long-term outcomes are framed by the vision that is conceived and shared across the community.
PRE-CONDITIONS	These are the changes that need to happen earlier in order to work towards, and achieve, a particular outcome. Pre-conditions are necessary actions in the shorter term, often working both independently and together to bring about longer-term change.

OVERVIEW OF THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The RNA Theory of Change sets out a renewed roadmap for change at UTS, focusing on what is needed to strengthen community safety throughout the University. It considers the external drivers that influence efforts across prevention and response – including societal and cultural factors, the local and global higher education sectors, and public policy enacted at state and national levels. Grounded within UTS community voices, the Theory of Change spotlights the importance of meaningful data and evidence, evidence-informed policies and programs, and proactive members of the campus community in collectively addressing sexual violence.

The RNA Theory of Change spans the continuum of action on addressing sexual violence, from well-tailored primary prevention (i.e., stopping violence before it starts) through to compassionate, coordinated, and trauma-informed response (i.e., ensuring that better care and systems are in place when violence has occurred). It recognises that prevention and response are both crucial, though often in very different ways. Both are necessary, but neither is sufficient.

The RNA Theory of Change is intended as a useful tool to advocate for further measures, resources, and support needed to work towards eliminating sexual violence at UTS. As such, it is also intended to facilitate further strategic and action planning for the RNA Program. A copy will be provided to UTS leadership, helping to shape discussions and decision-making on next steps for campus-wide and whole-of-institution change.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Universities' responses to the complex health and social issue of sexual violence do not unfold in a vacuum. As we discussed at the outset of this report, key drivers operate well beyond the scope of UTS. In doing so, they inform – and are informed by – how UTS takes steps to address sexual violence affecting students and staff. The RNA Theory of Change identifies three key drivers which share bi-directional relationships with UTS:

- I. **The higher education sector.**
- II. **State- and national-level policies.**
- III. **Broader societal culture and messaging.**

THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR



UTS is a part of the Australian and global higher education sectors, across which sexual violence remains a universally persistent and pervasive concern. The formation of the national RNA campaign to address sexual violence throughout Australian university communities and beyond – is an example of sector-level action. At the sector level, key evidence exists to shape how individual universities address sexual violence in their unique contexts – including TEQSA guidance notes, UA practice guidelines, and lessons learned from approaches and practices at other institutions. UTS also contributes to this growing body of evidence – such as through the current preparation of further guidelines in partnership with three other universities. In this way, UTS is a part of sector-leading work to strengthen how universities build safer communities among students and staff.

STATE- AND NATIONAL-LEVEL POLICIES



UTS looks to state- and national-level policies, in part, for the impetus to address sexual violence across its specific community context. The National Plan, for example, paints a broad picture of the whole-of-society and whole-of-system change needed to better address violence against women and their children – including recommendations for action based on best-practice evidence. UTS also has a role to play, however, in informing future policy and practice development – such as through strengthening research dissemination and impact, supporting knowledge and evidence translation, contributing to policy submissions, and lobbying in partnership with external community-based organisations and services.

BROADER SOCIETAL CULTURE AND MESSAGING



UTS, as an institution and organisation, is also influenced by broader societal and cultural determinants. The ways in which media outlets represent and report on sexual violence are key examples; students and staff can be affected by – and learn from – these media strategies, and then bring these impacts to how they interact as part of the UTS community. However, as a provider of education with considerable structural and systemic power in society, UTS also has a crucial responsibility to drive social change – particularly through research and research impact, through knowledge and evidence translation, through learning and teaching, and through community and cross-sector engagement. Applying a lens of sexual violence prevention and response to these responsibility areas presents an important opportunity for UTS to help shape societal norms within its locus of control and set the standard for a safe and respectful community.

SHARED VISION AND OUTCOMES FOR DESIRED CHANGE

At the heart of the Theory of Change is a broad, shared vision for UTS: increased health and wellbeing across the UTS community. This shared vision reflects the importance of supporting the health and wellbeing of every student and member of staff. To work towards this shared vision, UTS must support the campus community in proactively creating an environment that is conducive to eliminating sexual violence. This acknowledges that sexual violence is a health and social issue with ripple effects throughout the institution, calling for effective action to prevent and respond. Addressing sexual violence is, therefore, everyone's shared business and responsibility at UTS.

To create such an environment, the UTS community must work together to realise two key outcomes:



1. Prevention of sexual violence within the UTS community



2. Increasingly effective institutional responses to sexual violence at UTS.

These two outcome areas are facilitated by a range of pre-conditions, many of which are themselves interdependent. They are discussed in detail throughout the coming sections.

THE BACKBONE

The backbone of the RNA Theory of Change comprises two key areas of institutional practice:



A. UTS's institutional position sets a standard for a respectful and safe community.



B. UTS's systems are trusted to respond.

These two areas are considered the backbone as they are central to all other components of the Theory of Change as it is applied to sexual violence. They speak to the institutional standards and structures needed for effective prevention and response. For example, transforming how people and collectives behave on campus requires the disruption of norms, power, and relationships through language (Skrlac Lo & MacDonald, 2021). Thus, the prevention of sexual violence on campus depends on the language that the institution uses, the means through which the institution uses such language to establish its position, and the ways in which that language use effects change.

"It would be good for more of a focus on the normalised behaviours. Like, de-normalise it. You have to first make it not OK. I don't really know what is effective in that space, but I do appreciate seeing the messaging from UTS."

"Those are all good signs that the university is kind of somewhat progressive and it doesn't feel super fake."

"When I first got started (at UTS), I think it was a really great way to be like: 'Oh yeah, this is a really different environment to school, and this is what you need to be aware of.'"

"I've been at UTS and at another university, and other universities felt very token when they spoke about respect. It's productive here, and people know that it's taken seriously."



A.1

B.1

There are many means through which universities can articulate their positions, approaches, actions, and consequences in relation to sexual violence. One such means is institution-level policy design and implementation. Therefore, underpinning both (A) and (B) is a pre-condition that policies, processes, and consequences are transparent and proactively communicated in an accessible way (A.1 and B.1) at UTS.

"But we also need to create better policies so that people do report even minor things. We need better policies to support people, more messaging to explain how that stuff progresses and why it's important for us to address it very early on and then for people to see repercussions."



Beyond language, universities must also establish and maintain processes for collecting, sharing, and acting upon data and evidence in order to address sexual violence, and inform and guide tailored prevention programs and

A.2

campaigns. Data and evidence – of needs across both prevention and response –

B.2

are crucial in coordinating actions. In principle, the greater the level of accessibility of data and evidence, and specifically for coordinating responses and care, the better the outcome. The extent to which these data and evidence are accessible – while balancing this accessibility with larger legal obligations and requirements – is a nuanced area of consideration for UTS. Therefore, underpinning both (A) and (B) is a pre-condition that data and evidence are accessible (A.2 and B.2).

“It might be, you know, you saw some behaviour in [a particular place], and it’s linked to some support ... or, you know, you don’t have to do anything about it. [It’s] getting some intelligence for, for example, saying: ‘Ten of your managers over the last 12 months reported this same sort of thing - you may have a cultural problem’.”

“It’s really good around helping identify whether something is a pattern or an incident. I have all these little bits of data – is it big enough of an issue to action, or is it just something that we need to do via comms?”

The following two sections – and their inherent sub-sections – thematically set out the pre-conditions to be pursued for each outcome area.

OUTCOME 1: PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE WITHIN THE UTS COMMUNITY

In order for UTS to prevent sexual violence more effectively, four pre-conditions need to be met:



1.1. The UTS community has shared language and understanding of sexual violence.



1.2. The UTS community has the knowledge and confidence to act as responsible community members.



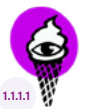
1.3. Student and staff leaders of UTS are proactive in ensuring UTS is safe for all



1.4. UTS physical and digital spaces are safe



A sense of shared language and understanding of sexual violence across UTS (1.1) means that institutional communications – and particularly those led by the RNA team – need to establish and reinforce expectations about safe and inclusive behaviours (1.1.1).



Key to the success of these institutional communications is humanised and supportive branding; if messaging looks and comes across more humanised and supportive, students and staff can be more likely to engage with different language and ideas. Therefore, an additional pre-condition is that the RNA Program's visual identity needs to be relatable and accessible to all members of the UTS community (1.1.1.1).



Flowing on from shared language and understanding, all members of the UTS community need to have the knowledge and confidence to act as responsible community members (1.2). This reflects the proposition that addressing sexual violence across the campus community is everyone's shared business and responsibility. As such, students and staff contribute equally – though often in markedly different ways – to building a safer community at UTS. To support campus community members in doing this, participating in education and capacity-building programs (1.2.1) is vital. These programs present, in particular, key opportunities for RNA-led institutional communications to further establish and reinforce expectations about what constitutes safe and inclusive behaviour at UTS (1.1.1).

“But we also need to create better policies so that people do report even minor things. We need better policies to support people, more messaging to explain how that stuff progresses and why it's important for us to address it very early on and then for people to see repercussions.”

In order for these programs to be most impactful, they need to reflect several qualities:



1.2.1.1. Responsive and tailored to the diverse identities, needs, and circumstances of UTS community members.



1.2.1.2. Iterative and offer ongoing opportunities for engagement across the lifecycle at UTS.



1.2.1.3. Staff and volunteers are relatable and authentic in their delivery of programs.

“It’s important to see other people of colour involved in these initiatives – especially student groups, like the Women’s Collective and the Disability Collective.”

“We can’t say that we’re for students by students without being for students and by students. So if we don’t have students in casual positions working with us in developing our programs to get that, then we’re not actually led by student voice.”

“... more could be done around it, in particular more consultation with diverse communities.”



1.3.1

With greater knowledge and confidence, student and staff leaders across UTS have especially proactive roles to play in ensuring the University is a safe place for all (1.3). Leadership positions in university settings – across both student and staff populations – can significantly influence social and cultural norms throughout the campus community. People can derive much insight, guidance, and direction from leaders and from the power that leaders hold. Therefore, the RNA Program needs to continue to build an active community – including students and staff in leadership positions – who advocate for and support the elimination of sexual violence (1.3.1).

“Yeah, that’s what that’s important because you’re teaching these leaders that essentially dealing with people coming to them because we’re the welfare branch. We’re here to help students. So people do come to us. Then we are trained. But again, the downside is when we’re not required to do it.”

“I’m President of a society. When we have talks it’s [RNA] something that I really encourage a lot of our players to listen to and focus on. That’s always been really important – even when I went to camps like with the Law Society and things, when I went back in 3rd year as a leader, I was the one who did the team talk. And because I remembered it from how important it was in the first year and how like how it can be something so small but important.”

“I went on society executive this year and I don’t believe we’ve put it [RNA] on there. That’s something we should change.”

“The supervisor then has to have these really difficult meetings and we haven’t created an environment where we’ve been enabled to have these conversations, or there is no development for a difficult conversation with staff when they’re sexually harassed.”

This Theory of Change acknowledges that while the UTS, as an institution and organisation, creates and maintains spaces in a structural way, it is the community who build safety throughout those spaces. Such spaces can be physical (for example, lecture theatres, fitness centres, and offices) as well as digital (for example, learning management systems, online collaboration platforms, and hybrid meetings). As students and staff interact with and within these spaces – building on a shared language and understanding of sexual violence (1.1), acting on knowledge and confidence as community members responsible for nurturing safety (1.2), and proactively leading efforts to facilitate safety (1.3) – both the physical and the digital can be rendered safer (1.4).

OUTCOME 2: INCREASINGLY EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT UTS

In order for UTS to respond to sexual violence more effectively, the University needs to ensure that three pre-conditions are met:



2.1

2.1. The UTS community access support services.



2.2

2.2. The UTS community report incidents.



2.3

2.3. Bystanders have the confidence to act where appropriate.

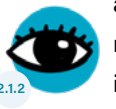
UTS maintains and seeks to strengthen support services for the wellbeing and safety of all campus community members. Access to these services, and rates of access among students and staff, will therefore help to indicate the

extent to which UTS's responses to sexual violence are effective (2.1).



2.1.1

Among campus community members, perceptions about the accessibility, trustworthiness, and helpfulness of support services matter. To positively influence these perceptions, UTS must ensure that staff are qualified to provide support (2.1.1) and that all members of the UTS community are aware of the services available (2.1.2). Specific to the context of sexual violence, this means



2.1.2

assuring that support staff are accessible, appropriately trained and resourced in communicating about, promoting, and enabling trauma-informed care.

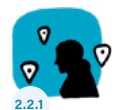


"Staff need to be better trained on it. Minority groups may not get the help they need in these situations. Abusive things from small or big issues can be mishandled. Education around intersectionality for staff who are handling these things."

"More interactive education. As staff, we have to do things like, how to not be racist or how to be conscious of accessibility. The current code of conduct is so un-interactive. Just because people know about rules, it doesn't mean people will follow them."



Provision of support can hinge on several other dimensions of responding to sexual violence at UTS. Assessment and care can be prompted by members of the UTS community reporting incidents that may involve – or are related to – sexual violence



2.2.1

(2.2). Reporting sexual violence within university settings can be a systematically, and professionally challenging space in which an institution operates. A critical area of consideration is how to better dismantle barriers to reporting; greater reporting of concerns and incidents can provide the University with much greater information about where risks lie, what the root causes of risks may be, and how institutional activities can otherwise give rise to sexual violence, fail not to prevent it. Therefore, to facilitate reporting, UTS must ensure that responses to sexual violence are consistent, coordinated and proactively communicated to inform



2.2.2

any campus community members affected by an incident (2.2.1), and that all members of the UTS community can access processes and systems for reporting their concerns (2.2.2).

“So, I think maybe we do need just a centralised point to really help, and something that needs to change, I think, is the response times. I’ve heard a lot of issues with that - like it can take months to get a response - and I understand investigations are hard. This stuff is very traumatic and having to report it ... and then months later you get a response. The suspense kills you.”

“Maybe also an anonymous reporting system and knowing that it does actually get followed up on. People don’t know what happens when a report gets made, if they even know how to make a report.”

“Agency of people who have lived experience and want to know what happens next ... agency about whether to report ... agency and decision-making power on their terms and not what a university or service thinks is most important.”

“[It’s] going straight out to that person [who made a report] and having a really clear approach that all Faculties and all areas of the University take, which is: ‘This happened, this is really serious, we’ll be contacting the person, asking them what they’d like to do.’”

Access and uptake with respect to support services and response systems are enabled by people – and in this case, particularly by members of the UTS community who become aware of sexual violence and act upon that awareness. A widespread term for these people is “bystanders”. Intervention on the part of bystanders is an important component of addressing sexual violence in any setting – including universities. Bystander intervention can prevent harm from occurring. It can also ensure people who are affected have the appropriate access to reporting and support systems they might need. Therefore, it is central that bystanders have the confidence to act (where appropriate) throughout the UTS community (2.3).

From a systems perspective, dismantling barriers to reporting is – as we have discussed – important for ensuring that all members of the UTS community can access informed and timely processes in relation to reporting (2.2.2). To help in this dismantling effort, UTS needs to ensure the following pre-conditions are met:



2.2.2.1

2.2.2.1. Dedicated people and processes are in place for reporting



2.2.2.2

2.2.2.2. UTS reporting processes are clear and transparent.



2.2.2.3

2.2.2.3. Staff and students understand their roles and expectations in relation to reporting incidents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through Community Voice, we found that institution-wide cultural and systemic change to address sexual violence continues to be complex, long-term work. Participants in Phase 1 spoke extensively about times in which UTS's response to sexual violence involved positive people, processes, and outcomes. But they also spoke of how – despite these positive examples of the system working effectively – there remain opportunities to change and strengthen what RNA does at UTS.

Having reflected on the voices, wishes, and needs of participants, on the Theory of Change imbued by participants' narratives, and on the triangulation of these with the existing literature, this section details a series of recommendations for RNA-specific strategic and action planning in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Pursue a comprehensive agenda of community-driven co-design for future directions

The UTS RNA team should build on the Theory of Change presented in this report by co-designing an 'ideal future state' for RNA, working in partnership with students and staff drawn from across the University. This future state focus should include a clear roadmap of interventions, projects, and other mechanisms for change with a view to building a safer and more respectful UTS community. The co-design exercise should bring together interviewees from Community Voice, the RNA team, key UTS subject matter experts and members of UTS senior leadership to create a shared vision and understanding in terms of what is to come next.

Campus community involvement and participation is a prominent focus of the literature on addressing sexual violence in university communities across the world. We found a similarly prominent focus on this theme throughout participants' narratives in Community Voice. Moreover, we heard from many participants that there can be a perceived disconnect or distance between UTS leadership and what happens 'on the ground' to address sexual violence. Coming together to co-design the next steps for RNA – including bringing into the room a plurality of knowledge, expertise, experiences, and levels of power and influence – is critical for ensuring UTS 'walks the talk' in its commitment to putting community safety first.

RECOMMENDATION 2:**Develop a robust, mixed-methods monitoring and evaluation framework**

The UTS RNA team should work together with relevant subject matter experts at UTS – such as research and evaluation specialists in the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion, as well as academic researchers as relevant – to design a rigorous monitoring and evaluation framework for RNA. Such a framework should correspond with the pre-conditions, processes, and outcome statements set out in the community-driven Theory of Change presented in this report. The framework should adopt mixed-methods and multi-method approaches that reflect the complexity of particular interventions, the relationships between different interventions, and the bigger picture of how interventions work together to create change throughout the UTS community.

Robust monitoring and evaluation are particularly important given what the evidence base indicates about whole-of-institution approaches to addressing complex health and social issues – including sexual violence. A whole-of-institution approach is conceptually very promising, offering a comprehensive view of the factors that contribute to sexual violence, the structures and processes that can affect what happens in the aftermath, and the roles that people can play in both prevention and response. That said, more empirical evidence is needed to assess effectiveness, inform future priority-setting, and support decision-making on resource allocation. Research has determined that few evaluations of whole-of-institution approaches exist at present, with some of these providing mixed findings (McMahon, Steiner, et al., 2021). However, this provides great opportunity for UTS to think through innovative, considered, and thorough directions for monitoring and evaluation.

RECOMMENDATION 3:**Socialise and institutionalise the Theory of Change throughout the UTS community**

The community-driven Theory of Change presented in this report, as well as the report itself, should be socialised and used as a tool to motivate social, organisational, and structural change across UTS. Pragmatically, this should be carried out through actions such as:

- Tabling the Theory of Change for review and endorsement by the University Leadership Team.
- Distributing the Theory of Change throughout key governance groups across the institution (for example, committees relevant to social justice and inclusion, health and safety, wellbeing, learning and teaching, and research and research training).
- Publishing this report on the UTS RNA webpage alongside other similar resources and publications (for example, the Student Voice final report and the Strategic Framework).
- Using the findings and Theory of Change to inform further campus activations and events that gather further opportune data from students and staff (for example, as is the current RNA practice with interactive boards during the Orientation period with newly commencing students).

These steps are important for demonstrating that UTS is committed to adopting a distributed leadership approach to driving sustainable behavioural, cultural, and systemic change. They recognise that senior leadership, local-level governance bodies, institutional communication channels, and large-scale campus community engagement experiences are some of the many crucial means through which to effect positive change throughout the University.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Renew resources and funding to sustain the complex work of addressing sexual violence at UTS

Members of UTS leadership should renew and strengthen funding and other resources to help sustain the efforts needed to continue to address – and work towards eliminating – sexual violence across the University community. Good practice examples have highlighted the importance of strong leadership support and dedicated budgets. Both of these considerations need to translate into clear, tangible action by assuring appropriate and adequate staffing, as well as more broadly ensuring coordination of resources that correspond with the intensity and scale of interventions.

For example, implementation of consent education and bystander intervention training is time-intensive work that is often interpreted based on outcomes – such as whether a module has been made mandatory for all students and staff, the extent to which training is embedded into all student leadership programs across the institution, or how many staff complete capacity-building on responding to disclosures of sexual violence. Equally important to account for is the hidden, ‘behind-the-scenes’ work needed to bring about these outcomes – including emotional labour, staff time, relationship-building, inter-dependencies such as stakeholder deadlines, and use of systems to generate the meaningful evidence needed.

Research has repeatedly noted that numerous challenges exist in the implementation of a comprehensive, whole-of-institution approach to addressing sexual violence – yet these challenges are well within universities’ control to surmount. Planning, infrastructure, capacity and buy-in are vital for success – but they are often missing (Goldberg, et al., 2019; McMahon, Steiner, et al., 2021). Without these, there can be concern that institutions’ commitment to addressing sexual violence is weakening (McCall, et al., in press). By taking the steps to renew, strengthen, and ensure the continuous funding and resources needed, senior leadership of the University can demonstrate that there is deep structural support for UTS’s whole-of-community approach to addressing the many complexities of sexual violence.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

PREAMBLE: TALKING POINTS TO OPEN THE INTERVIEW

- Good morning / afternoon and thank you again for agreeing to participate in this interview.
- I'm here to create space for you to speak today. Although our research project focuses on Respect. Now. Always. and the issue of sexual violence in universities, this interview doesn't intend to focus on experiences of sexual violence. We want to focus more on how UTS and its systems have addressed the issue of sexual violence.
- Sometimes we can't control where stories go. As an interviewer on this project, I'm not trained or licensed to provide support. We do, however, have processes in place to help you connect with trained and licensed professionals if you'd like to do so. This can be within or outside UTS.
- Please let me know at any time if you need a break or feel you'd like to access support.
- We'll start with a focus on strengths that can help us create a safer, more supportive UTS community – including how UTS addresses sexual violence. We want to learn from you about how things can be different in the future.

SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE INTERVIEW

Everyone has the right to live, study and work safely. We have a long journey ahead of us before we get to the point where this is a reality for us all. To help us get there, UTS became an active member of the Respect.Now.Always. campaign.

For the last 5 years we have invested in work that aims to eliminate the experience of sexual assault and harassment for our community. Acknowledging the road ahead – we want to learn from the experience of our community to ensure the next 5 years are informed by what we know works.

Think about a moment where you thought UTS's handling of sexual assault and harassment was the best that it could have been. This could be anything across any aspect of the system – it could be story about prevention that meant a good outcome for those involved, or a story about the handling of reporting and the support systems that were in place. It could be anything at all.

I'm going to give you a few minutes to think about a story that you would be happy to share with me.

Tell me about this moment.

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOCUSING ON THE 'MOMENT'

1. What are the things that you value about this story? What is it about this story that makes it meaningful to you? (Name up to three things)
2. If I were to ask someone who knows you the best, what would they say was your role in the story? What was it about your strengths, your capabilities and your contribution that resulted in this experience?
3. What was the role of others in this story? Who else was involved? How did they complement you or how did they support and enable the experience?
4. What was the role of services or other organisations? How did they contribute?
5. What were the enablers? What conditions, factors, or environments were present?
6. Imagine a future where these forms of experiences are the norm. What 2 or 3 things do we need more of, or what 2 or 3 things need to change, for us to get to this new reality from where we are today? What are your wishes for the future?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOCUSED ON ONLINE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 – where 1 is not prevalent at all and 10 is extremely prevalent – how prevalent do you think sexual harassment is online, within the context of your experiences at UTS? This can include teaching and learning, extra-curricular activities, and experiences in different online spaces.
2. Imagining a future where we move this towards the 1 – a future where we are eliminating online harassment. What 2 or 3 things do we need more of or what 2 or 3 things need to change for us to get to this new reality from where we are today?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOCUSED ON STRENGTHENING REPORTING

1. This diagram shows a continuum of different behaviours that can span sexual harassment through to sexual assault. Based on your interpretation of this, at what point would you report an incident at UTS?
2. Why did you select this point on the continuum?
3. What 2 or 3 things do we need more of or what 2 or 3 things need to change on a capability and system level for us to see this reporting to happen further down the scale?

QUESTIONS TO PROMPT INTERVIEWER REFLECTION

1. What was the most interesting aspect of the interview from your perspective? What excited you about this story?
2. Overall, from the perspective of the person you interviewed, what do you think were the most important aspects of the story they shared with you?

APPENDIX B. DISTRESS PROTOCOL

CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE

