

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017**

**Australian Human Rights Commission**

**Question No. BE17-147**

**Senator Waters asked the following question on 13 June 2017:**

1. Can you please provide any written research framework governing or guiding the Sexual Assault on Campus research project?
2. In particular, can you provide, or describe, any written memorandum of understanding or other arrangement between universities and the Commission in relation to survey design and the role of universities in designing the project?

**The response to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:**

**1. Can you please provide any written research framework governing or guiding the Sexual Assault on Campus research project?**

There are two elements to this project: a national survey sent to students at all 39 universities and an open call for submissions on sexual assault and sexual harassment at universities.

As is usual practice for the Commission, we have consulted with a wide range of individuals with expertise in these issues, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Department of Defence, Australian Human Rights Centre at the University of New South Wales, Rape and Domestic Violence Service Australia and 1800RESPECT.

The Commission has significant expertise in conducting surveys of this kind, having conducted the National sexual harassment prevalence survey since 2003, as well as other prevalence surveys within the Australian Defence Forces and in relation to pregnancy and age discrimination.

Roy Morgan were engaged as our survey consultant and assisted with the survey design. The survey instrument went through a process of cognitive testing before going into the field.

The survey instrument received ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of New South Wales in August 2016.

A chapter describing our research methodology for the University sexual assault and sexual harassment project will be included in the National report, to be released on 1 August.

**2. In particular, can you provide, or describe, any written memorandum of understanding or other arrangement between universities and the Commission in relation to survey design and the role of universities in designing the project?**

The Commission has a contract with Universities Australia, the peak body representing all 39 Australian universities, to independently undertake the university student survey of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

This agreement does not contain provisions relating to the design of the survey instrument.

However, it does set out the responsibilities of Universities Australia in assisting the Commission to ensure that Australian universities participate in the survey. It also sets out the responsibilities of both Universities Australia and Commission in relation to the promotion of the survey to students, stakeholders and throughout the higher education sector.

The Commission does not have any written agreement with individual universities directly.