

## **Combative to Collaborative: International perspectives on preventing sexual violence at Australian universities**

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### **Background:**

Sexual violence at Australian universities is highly prevalent and institutions are failing to safeguard students from harm. Universities have a major influence on young people's attitudes, values and behaviours. This influence, coupled with the prevalence of violence and harm in university settings, means these institutions can play a key role in condemning and deterring perpetrator behaviours, and supporting victim-survivors.

Therefore, my research sought to find:

- new mechanisms of preventing sexual violence through collaboration between university institutions, community organisations and activists
- models where these collaborative relationships have been productive and influenced positive change on campus.

### **Methods:**

For 11 weeks, I travelled to the USA, Canada, England and Scotland, and attended an international conference in Mexico. I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews, observed and participated in workshops and events, shadowed leaders and attended conferences. I interviewed 96 people over 58 interviews, met with 24 people in informal meetings, attended two conferences and participated in two workshops. In total, I spoke to more than 120 people from university offices, student groups, researchers, gender-based violence practitioners, frontline service providers, grassroots activists, and victim-survivors.

### **Results:**

I identified seven core principles for effective prevention of sexual violence at universities. The seven core principles for effective prevention are:

1. Comprehensive
2. Collaborative
3. Trauma-informed
4. Intersectional
5. Anti-oppressive
6. Feminist
7. Person-centred.

To support the implementation of these core principles in the Australian context, I provided 61 recommendations which provide a roadmap for change.

### **Conclusions:**

My research confirmed that there are a wide range of impactful solutions to address campus sexual violence. The problem in Australia is the lack of prevention being delivered in ways that are comprehensive, collaborative, trauma-informed, intersectional, anti-oppressive, feminist and person-centred. My research and findings confirm that partnerships between national and state governments, university institutions, activists and advocates, and community action and support groups are necessary to ensure student safety.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

N/A - However more than happy to provide one if relevant and I have misunderstood.