Murdoch University

Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan 2026-2029



Ngala kwop biddi.
Building a brighter future, together.



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Statement of Commitment

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Everyone at Murdoch University deserves to feel safe, valued, and respected.

Our 2023-2030 Strategy – **Ngala Kwop Biddi: Building a Brighter Future, Together** – outlines our commitment to creating a respectful and inclusive culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all our students, employees and visitors.



This is a responsibility that extends beyond compliance to a genuine focus on creating an environment where mutual respect and dignity are embedded in every aspect of university life, so that everyone can thrive and reach their full potential.

Gender-based violence is a serious societal issue that can affect anyone, regardless of their gender, age, cultural background, sexual orientation, or ability. However, we must acknowledge that gender-based violence disproportionately affects women, First Nations peoples, individuals with a disability, chronic illness or neurodiversity, members of the LGBTIQA+ community and those from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

At the same time, we recognise that men who are impacted by gender-based violence often face additional barriers, with gender norms and societal expectations discouraging them from seeking help or making a disclosure.

Gender-based violence means any form of physical or non-physical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that results in, or is likely to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy. We recognise that gender-based violence exists on a spectrum, ranging from disrespect and harmful

attitudes through to harassment and assault. Our commitment is to respond proportionately and compassionately to all forms of harm while addressing the drivers that allowed them to occur.

At Murdoch University we are committed to supporting all members of our community, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are respected. We are committed to taking meaningful action, listening to lived experiences, developing inclusive support systems and working collaboratively to prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based violence.

Developed in response to the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence, this Plan recognises a long-held commitment to preventing gender-based violence at our institution.

As a comprehensive, whole-of-organisation framework, the plan outlines how we will continue to foster a university community that is grounded in respect, equality, and inclusion. It outlines clear actions and measures of progress that will guide our work, demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement and accountability. By enhancing our policies, building capability, improving our systems and ensuring transparent, trauma-informed processes, we will continue to create an environment safe for learning, growth, and connection.

Preventing gender-based violence is a shared responsibility requiring the collective effort of our entire university community. Through ongoing education and open conversations, we will create a culture where every member of our community feels empowered to speak out and seek support.

I encourage everyone to play an active role in promoting safety and respect, whether through training, advocacy or support. We take these actions not just to prevent gender-based violence on our campuses, but to drive societal change within the broader community.

Thank you for joining us in this vital commitment. Together, we can build a brighter future where every person is safe, supported and empowered to reach their full potential.



Professor Andrew Deeks
President and Vice Chancellor



University Overview

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Founded in 1974, Murdoch University is Western Australia's second university, located in Boorloo (Perth) on the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people. With three campuses across Perth, Rockingham, and Mandurah, as well as international locations in Singapore and Dubai, Murdoch University supports an academic community of approximately 24,900 students and employs over 3,500 staff members.

Murdoch is dedicated to environmental conservation, social justice and inclusion, addressing societal and environmental challenges while creating educational pathways for those previously excluded from higher education.

With students from over 90 countries, Murdoch University is a diverse and globally connected community. Women and gender-diverse students comprise approximately 62% of students studying at Murdoch's Australian campuses. The University has one of the highest proportions of First Nations students in Western Australia, with First Nations students comprising approximately 3% of the student body. The student population also includes a substantial international cohort, with international students comprising approximately 40% of students studying at Murdoch's Australian campuses and contributing more than 60% of equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL). 72% of students with a disability are women and gender diverse. Together, these characteristics highlight the significant cultural, linguistic and social diversity that enriches the Murdoch University community.

This diversity is also reflected within the University's workforce. Women and gender-diverse people comprise approximately 60% of staff. Among employees who have voluntarily disclosed demographic information, women and gender-diverse people comprise approximately 75% of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) employees, 90% of First Nations employees and 76% of people with a disability.

Murdoch recognises that gender-based violence does not affect all individuals equally and that experiences of violence, help-seeking and access to support may be shaped by multiple and intersecting aspects of identity. The University's diverse community reinforces the importance of prevention, support, and response initiatives that are culturally responsive, accessible, trauma-informed, and inclusive.

This commitment is reflected in this Plan and in Murdoch's institutional strategy, *Ngala Kwop Biddi – Building a Brighter Future Together*, which prioritises safety, inclusion and respect. And is further strengthened by key strategic plans, including the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Strategy, the First Nations Strategy, the People Sub-Strategy, and the Student Success Strategy. Collectively, these strategies provide a strong foundation for a safe, respectful and inclusive environment in which all students and staff can belong and thrive.

Gender-based Violence: national, sector and institutional context

Gender-based violence in university settings reflects broader systemic inequalities present across Australian society and addressing it requires a coordinated approach that centres safety, inclusion, and equity for all members of our community.

Murdoch University's commitment to preventing and responding to gender-based violence is grounded in a clear understanding of both internal and external evidence.

Evidence and drivers

Intersectionality and gender inequality

National and internal data consistently show that certain communities are disproportionately affected by sexual violence. According to the National Student Safety Survey (2021) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2025), individuals who are First Nations, LGBTQIA+, female, transgender, non-binary, and people with disabilities experience higher rates of gender-based violence. Murdoch University's own 2024 Employee Engagement Survey echoes these findings, revealing that staff from these communities report less favourable workplace experiences, highlighting persistent systemic barriers to inclusion, safety, and wellbeing.

Intersectionality is central to understanding and addressing gender-based violence. Students and staff who experience multiple and intersecting forms of marginalisation are at greater risk of experiencing gender-based violence.

The recognised drivers of gender-based violence include condoning violence against women; men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence; rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity; and male peer relationships and cultures that emphasise aggression, dominance and disrespect towards women. These drivers are grounded in gender inequality and may be reinforced by intersecting forms of discrimination, disadvantage, exclusion and marginalisation.

Within Murdoch's context, relevant reinforcing factors include power imbalances in employment, supervisory, teaching and research relationships; disparities in promotion, pay and leadership representation; limited awareness of reporting and support pathways; concerns about confidentiality and retaliation; cultural and language barriers; visa-related concerns; accessibility barriers; and a lack of trust or clarity regarding University processes. These factors may affect people differently depending on their circumstances, identities and relationship with the University.

Barriers to safety and reporting

These drivers and reinforcing factors also shape whether people feel able and safe to seek support or report their experience. Both internal and external evidence highlight significant barriers:

- Lack of awareness about reporting pathways and support services is common among students.
- Nationally, victim-survivors often do not report due to fears of not being believed, difficulty proving their experience, or concerns about stigma and repercussions.
- Cultural norms, language barriers, and visa concerns may contribute to underreporting, especially among international, migrant, and culturally and linguistically diverse students and staff.
- Lack of clarity and mistrust of University processes and fear of retaliation are significant issues identified in Murdoch's internal feedback.

Societal attitudes also play a role. The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) found that some Australians still hold beliefs that minimise violence, shift blame, or reinforce gendered stereotypes, further discouraging survivors from seeking help.

Enablers of change

Internal feedback at Murdoch University highlights the importance of support, both formal (specialist services) and informal (peers, colleagues) in enabling engagement with reporting processes and building trust in the institution's commitment to safety and equity. National data supports this, showing that informal support is often the first avenue pursued, especially among younger individuals.

How evidence informs our plan

Murdoch University's approach is informed by robust internal and external evidence, recognising that gender inequality is a key driver of gender-based violence and lack of awareness of and trust in processes are key barriers to reporting. The Plan's actions and outcomes framework are designed to address these challenges, build trust, and create a safer, more inclusive university environment.

Actions and outcomes framework: The Plan's objectives and actions and are designed to address drivers and barriers, with a focus on leadership, systemic change, procedural transparency, developing capability and building trust. The plan also articulates how we will measure our progress.

Intersectional approach: The Plan embeds trauma-informed, person centred, culturally safe practices, recognising that barriers to support and processes may differ across the University's diverse community. This understanding informs targeted engagement, accessible communication and reporting pathways, culturally appropriate supports and the ongoing review of initiatives.

Support pathways: Both formal and informal support networks are strengthened to foster a responsive and inclusive environment.

Continuous improvement: Regular audits, feedback, and data analysis ensure that our interventions remain targeted, inclusive, and effective.

Institutional history and foundations

The University has an established history of work in preventing and responding to gender-based violence, with the foundations centred on sexual harm.

Year	Action
2017	Following the release of the Change the Course Report, Murdoch created the Vice Chancellor's Respect Now Always (RNA) Advisory Group.
2018	The first RNA Action Plan was established. This saw the introduction of training for responding to disclosures, Active Bystander training, online app-based reporting, a student reference group to advise on RNA communications and initiatives, and increased information across University webpages.
2020	The second RNA Action plan was developed. This led to the creation of a sexual harm policy and procedure, increased Senior Leadership engagement with Active Bystander training, enhanced campus safety mechanisms, such as CCTV, and increased pathways for reporting of confidential and anonymous disclosures through web and app-based forms.
2021	Engaged in National Student Safety Survey (NSSS), attaining a higher than national average participation. Co-coordination of the Safer Communities National Symposium, held online.

2022	Appointment of new Vice Chancellor, and establishment of new Senior Leadership Team. Release of the NSSS results identifies obstacles to reporting, such as limited awareness of reporting pathways, concerns regarding trust in the process, and the necessity of treating all matters as genuine. Vice Chancellor's Respect Now Always (RNA) Advisory Group was disestablished, as part of broader governance review.
2023	Launch of University Strategy 2023-2030: Ngala Kwop Biddi: Building a Brighter Future Together. First Nations, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Sustainability as strategic pillars, and new executive portfolios. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion portfolio to provide strategic leadership for prevention and response of sexual harm. Contributed to the Primary Prevention of Sexual Harm in the University Sector – Good Practice Guide (Universities Australia). Active Bystander training suspension and review was implemented to reflect emerging evidence base and respond to attendee feedback.
2024	Conducted comprehensive gap analysis to assess organisational alignment and compliance with the following key legislative and regulatory frameworks: Respect at Work Legislation; WA Work Health and Safety Act; Proposed National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence. Audit Report for Internal Student Complaints Management completed, with key recommendations for improvement. Murdoch University Grievances and Complaints Response Framework Steering Group established to develop a consistent and compliant university wide framework, methodology and workflow for grievances and complaints management, with gender-based violence an explicit focus in TOR. Release of Murdoch University Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Report. Training on trauma informed organisations and practices, provided to frontline staff and Murdoch University Grievances and Complaints Response Framework Steering Group. Specialist training in service provision for perpetrators of sexual harm provided to University Counselling Service. Awarded the SAGE Athena Swan LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Cygnet Award.
2025	Established Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Group to drive University response to National Code. Recruited dedicated Program Manager for Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response. Piloting psychosocial hazard management program resulting in a university wide risk register, which includes gender-based violence related risks and associated mitigation strategies. Trauma Informed Investigations training provided to Chief People Office and staff responsible for investigations of student matters. Awarded the SAGE Athena Swan Parents and Carers Cygnet Award.

Engagement and Inputs

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This Plan's development was informed by meaningful engagement with students, staff, specialist practitioners and key operational areas across the University, and grounded in a robust evidence base. We have examined internal data from surveys such as the Employee Engagement Surveys in 2021 and 2024, Student Experience Surveys, and the National Student Safety Survey (2021). By centring the lived experience of our community, our process has ensured that the Plan is relevant, informed, and aligned with best practice prevention and response.

Beyond surveys, targeted feedback sessions were conducted with staff and students, inviting open and safe discussions about the challenges, barriers, and enablers to reporting experiences of gender-based violence. These sessions surfaced important themes, such as lack of visibility and clarity of processes, a level of distrust in procedures and fear of retaliation. These insights have directly informed our priorities for procedural transparency and support.

A comprehensive gap analysis in 2024 assessed the university's alignment with key legislative and regulatory frameworks including Work Health and Safety legislation, Respect at Work legislation and the proposed National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (National Code). This process identified strengths in existing policies and training but also revealed critical areas for improvement, particularly in grievance and complaints management, procedural transparency, and trauma-informed practice. We undertook a detailed review of our grievance and complaints processes, examining how cases are managed, communicated, and resolved. As a result, the Plan includes actions to develop a consistent, compliant whole-of-university framework for grievances and complaints, with gender-based violence as an explicit focus.

The development of the new Gender-based Violence Policy and Procedure, a significant enabler of the Plan, was shaped by consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, including academic and professional staff, leaders, those responsible for implementation, and staff and students from groups disproportionately affected by gender-based violence. This inclusive approach ensured the Policy, Procedure and Plan to address gender-based violence within the university is trauma-informed, practical, and responsive to the diverse needs of the university community.

The University also considered the findings and recommendations of the National Student Ombudsman's report, *Can I Talk About This? The use of confidentiality requirements in university complaint-handling*, as part of its review of complaint handling policy and procedures. This reinforced the importance of ensuring that confidentiality expectations are clear and consistently communicated, and do not restrict the access of support. These considerations informed amendments to the Complaints Policy, Complaints Procedure, and Student Appeals Procedure, and will continue to inform communication, training, and continuous improvement activities.

Regular audits, compliance checks, and trend analyses, guided by ongoing engagement, will ensure that the university remains responsive to emerging risks and evolving best practice. The Plan commits to continuous improvement through regular feedback, data analysis, and consultation with diverse cohorts, including victim-survivors and those disproportionately impacted by gender-based violence.

How engagement shaped the Plan and actions

We heard	How this is reflected in the Plan
Reporting and support pathways are not always visible or clearly understood.	Actions focus on clear, accessible information; visible disclosure and reporting pathways; training; and targeted awareness campaigns.
Lack of clarity and transparency can reduce trust in processes.	Actions include coordinated support protocols, improved case management practices, and clearer communication templates.
Fear of retaliation and uncertainty about confidentiality may discourage people from seeking support.	The plan prioritises safe processes, risk assessment, confidentiality, agency and trauma-informed support.
Different communities may experience distinct barriers to support seeking and reporting.	The Plan includes culturally appropriate supports, targeted engagement, and accessible communication.
Engagement needs to continue.	The plan includes ongoing student and staff engagement, review of lived experience insights and continuous improvement through feedback and data.



Approach

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Murdoch University's approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence is grounded in principles of safety, cultural responsiveness, and trauma informed practice. We recognise this is a shared responsibility and that creating meaningful impact requires university wide commitment. Our approach is designed to avoid isolated or reactive initiatives through the careful and deliberate development of a sustained, aligned and connected approach.

Murdoch University will respond to gender-based violence wherever it is experienced by a student or staff member and where the University has a role in facilitating safety, support, risk management or access to an appropriate support pathway. This includes gender-based violence experienced on campus, online, during placements, fieldwork, research, travel or other University related activities, in off-campus environments, and in the context of family or domestic violence.

Access to information and support does not depend on the behaviour having occurred on campus or during a University activity. The University's response will be informed by the person's circumstances and preferences, immediate safety concerns, and the most appropriate pathways for support, safety management and resolution.

Our approach recognises that gender-based violence is not limited to severe or criminal acts. Harm often begins with subtle behaviour, such as intentional disrespect, coercive comments and sexist microaggressions that might go unchallenged and accumulate over time. By acknowledging the full spectrum of behaviour, it ensures our prevention and response strategies are proportionate, targeted and able to address harm early, safely and consistently.

Our goal is to create a safe environment for work and study, with a long-term view where incidents of gender-based violence are rare to non-existent, and an immediate commitment to ensuring safe, clear, accessible and supportive reporting mechanisms and investigation processes for victim-survivors and respondents.



We achieve this through early intervention initiatives that build understanding of prevalence, causes, antecedents, predictors and harms; increased capability for all members of the University community to intervene and respond early; transparent, psychologically and culturally safe reporting and investigation processes; strengthened systems and capabilities, and a commitment to continuous quality improvement in this space.

Prevention: We focus on preventing gender-based violence before it occurs by building a culture of respect, inclusion and belonging and addressing the social and structural drivers of harm. Prevention efforts include clear behavioural expectations, education and awareness, safer environmental and systems design. Prevention is a shared responsibility and is the foundation of long-term impact.

Early identification: Early identification helps to reduce harm by increasing the visibility of unsafe behaviour, supporting those who seek support, and enabling earlier interventions when risks emerge. This involves strengthening the skills and opportunities to notice concerns, recognise subtle signs, and understand how to raise issues. Early identification responds to relationships where there is a significant power imbalance; intervening and immediately addressing subtle sexism and inappropriate behaviours before they escalate; and identifying and responding to trends in institutional data through cross-referencing of anonymous, formal, informal, student, staff and community datasets which reference gender-based violence and its antecedents.

Support and response: The University aims to ensure people feel safe to disclose, report and respond to incidents of gender-based violence. This is achieved through building trust, awareness and an understanding of University reporting mechanisms, support services and investigation processes. When a person chooses to disclose or report their experience, our approach is built on trauma informed, person centred practices, recognising the need for individual agency, the disproportionate impact of intersectionality, and the importance of building culturally sensitive safeguards into the process.

System and capability strengthen: A continual learning mindset is central to our approach. Keeping updated with best practice, regular evaluation of training, systems and processes, and establishing the right levels of governance and oversight will continually strengthen and improve our practices and systems.

Together these elements create a cohesive framework that reinforces shared responsibility, builds capacity, and delivers a consistent approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence across the University community.

Murdoch University Prevention and Response Framework

Prevention

Build the conditions that reduce the likelihood of gender based violence across the University.

- Promote gender equality, respect and inclusion
- Embed prevention education and training
- Design safe physical, digital and social environments
- Challenge harmful norms and behaviours
- Strengthen leadership commitment and visibility

To address the drivers of gender-based violence before harm occurs.

Early identification

Detect risks, patterns, and emerging issues early.

- Campus security report trends
- Environmental risk assessments, hotspot monitoring
- Staff and student feedback, surveys, case trends
- Identifying situations where there might be elevated risk
- Data and evidence that inform action

To recognise risk early and intervene before harm escalates.



System and capability strengthen

Improve systems, culture, capability, data and governance over time.

- Clear governance, roles and responsibilities
- Data collection, analysis and reporting
- Capability building
- Policy and procedure review cycles
- Review of Plan, incorporating lived experience insights

To learn, refine and embed sustainable institutional capability.

Support and response

Provide safe, timely and trauma-informed and culturally appropriate responses.

- Clear and accessible disclosure pathways
- Coordinated support
- Culturally safe protocols
- Transparent processes
- Escalation and emergency pathways

To ensure every person who discloses and reports gender-based violence is supported respectfully and safely.

How the Plan will be implemented

This Plan will be implemented through a coordinated whole-of-university program. Responsibility for delivery will sit with the operational areas that have the authority and ongoing responsibility for the relevant activity. The approach will embed the requirements of the National Code within established university systems and support their transition into sustainable business as usual practice.

Where actions involve multiple areas, significant change, complex risks and dependencies, delivery will be supported through cross university working arrangements and collaboration. These may included time limited implementation teams, specialist advice and engagement with staff, students and people with lived experience.

Decision making and oversight will be proportionate to the impact, risk and size of each initiative. The University's gender-based violence governance arrangements will provide oversight of implementation, monitor risks and progress, and support reporting to senior leadership and Senate.

The Plan identifies the activities, responsible areas, key collaborators, implementation timeframes and review cycles through which the commitments will be delivered. Progress will be monitored through the Outcomes Framework and will inform continuous improvement over the life of the Plan.



Action Plan

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1. Leadership and Governance

Objective: To embed strong, visible leadership that drives commitment to preventing gender-based violence, ensuring shared responsibility, clear lines of accountability, and governance structures that enable continuous learning, oversight and improvement.

Objectives, Actions, Activities	Responsible	Implementation & Review Cycle	Resources*
1.1. Establish and endorse a Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response governance framework, outlining roles of Senate, Executive, Committees and operational areas • Map governance structures against National Code requirements • Develop implementation and reporting arrangements • Establish a Gender-based Violence Advisory Group to provide oversight to implementation activities	USO: Governance PVC EDI: Program Delivery	Complete by Q3 2026	Governance documentation Secretariat support Executive, Senate and Committee participation Representative participation
1.2. Establish biannual reporting to the Senior Leadership Team and Senate via relevant governance committees, raising awareness and visibility of prevention and response activities. • Develop reporting dashboards and metrics • Establish reporting cadence and approval pathways • Embed review of risk, trends and actions into governance cycles	PVC EDI	Complete by Q4 2026, then biannually	Data collection / analytics Reporting dashboards and templates
1.3. Continued engagement with staff and students to collaborate and receive feedback on initiatives to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. • Establish structured staff and student consultation mechanisms • Develop a lived experience engagement approach and safeguards • Conduct targeted engagement with priority cohorts	Program Lead: PVC EDI Key Collaborators: PCO, CXO	Commence Q4 2026, then ongoing through targeted activities	Engagement Survey Student Survey Workshops – staff and student representation Committee consultation Communications support Lived experience consultation mechanisms

**Not all resources are currently available; where appropriate, resources will be developed or sourced.*

2. Safe Environments and Systems

Objective: To create and maintain safe physical and systemic environments that continually improve prevention and response capabilities, embedding trauma-informed and culturally safe principles throughout university operations.

Objectives, Actions, Activities	Responsible	Implementation & Review Cycle	Resources*
2.1 Implement Gender-based Violence Policy and Procedures; coordinating systems, structures, processes and capability. • Include Policy and Procedures on Policy and Procedure Manager (PPM) • Map operational processes against Policy documents • Develop guidance documents and supporting resources • Deliver communications and awareness activities • Monitor implementation and identify improvement opportunities	Program Lead: PVC EDI Key Collaborators: PCO, CXO, USO	Complete by Q1 2027, then reviewed annually	Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) Internal SME's Policy implementation change management Communications campaign Process mapping
2.2 Review and update relevant adjacent policies, assessing gender impact and incorporating trauma-informed and culturally safe principles. • Identify priority policies requiring review • Apply gender impact assessment	CPO: Staff Policies OQS: Academic Policies	Commence Q1 2027, then in line with policy review cycles	Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) Gender impact assessment mechanisms Internal SME's for development Stakeholder engagement External SME's for review if required
2.3 Review and update the Conflict-of-Interest Policy, Procedure and system to provide for staff disclosures of past and present intimate partner relationships where there is, or is likely to be, any supervisory, oversight, academic or decision-making responsibilities of other staff members or students, including the management of such declarations. • Review and update Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure • Ensure the reporting and management system is updated to reflect changes • Ensure reporting thresholds include past and present intimate relationships, and where there is, or is likely to be, any supervisory, oversight, academic, or decision-making responsibilities • Update management of declarations guidance • Develop and implement change, communication and awareness materials	Lead: ARCM Office Key Collaborator: CPO, CXO	Complete by Q2 2027, then reviewed as part of policy review cycles	COI Management App (including reporting) Oversight governance Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) Communication platforms
2.4 Include gender-based considerations in campus development activities. • Incorporate safety principles into infrastructure planning • Incorporate gender-sensitive design and CPTED principles into refurbishment and new build projects	Campus Development	Commence Q4 2026, then applied to all new developments	Campus Development stakeholder engagement Capital works funding as required Design for Safety expertise

**Not all resources are currently available; where appropriate, resources will be developed or sourced.*

Objectives, Actions, Activities	Responsible	Implementation & Review Cycle	Resources*
2.5 Utilise incident data, environmental assessments and risk management processes to respond to emerging risks and priority areas. • Conduct environmental safety assessments • Review incidents for risks, trends, and priority areas • Develop escalation pathways for identified safety risks	CXO: Operational Activities CPO: M-Report review	Commence Q4 2026, then quarterly	Safety audits Incident data analysis
2.6 Ensure all contractors and on-site providers understand obligations and expectations regarding gender-based violence behaviour and safety. • Update procurement and contract documentation • Develop contractor induction materials • Establish monitoring and compliance arrangements	USO: Legal contracts CPO: Contingent workers CFO: Contract management	Commence Q1 2027, then annually	Procurement Policy and Procedures Contract management Induction program Engagement with contractors and providers
2.7 Ensure student placement partners meet safety and gender-based violence expectations. • Define minimum partner requirements • Integrate expectations into partner agreements • Develop placement provider assessment framework • Review placement risk and feedback escalation pathways • Integrate gender-based violence education and support for students entering WIL program • Establish feedback, monitoring and review processes	DVC E	Commence Q1 2027, then annually	WIL program integration Contract management Education and awareness for students and providers Monitoring and compliance mechanisms
2.8 Ensure student organisations and affiliated organisations understand and commit to meeting expectations of the University and the National Code. • Review current contracts • Develop guidance and expectations • Incorporate expectations in contracts • Establish reporting and review pathways	USO: Contracts	Commence Q1 2027, then annually	Contract management Awareness raising
2.9 Integrate the gender-based violence risk assessment based on declarations into recruitment practices. • Define risk assessment procedures • Define risk assessment thresholds • Develop communication and reporting pathways for candidates • Develop education and awareness for recruiting managers	CPO	Complete by Q4 2026	Recruitment processes and systems Risk Assessment protocols

**Not all resources are currently available; where appropriate, resources will be developed or sourced.*

3. Knowledge and Capability

Objective: To build a confident, capable community where students and staff understand their role in prevention, early identification and safe response, through sustained education and tailored learning.

Objectives, Actions, Activities	Responsible	Implementation & Review Cycle	Resources*
3.1 Implement training that build the capability to recognise and appropriately respond to the full spectrum of gender-based violence. • Identify capability and training needs • Develop foundational learning programs (linked to Actions 3.2, 3.4, 3.5) • Develop specialist learning (linked to Action 3.6) • Pilot and refine content • Establish evaluation framework	DVC E: Students CPO: Staff	Completed by Q2 2027	External provider for training design expertise Potentially external providers for delivery Evaluation methodology Existing LMS
3.2 Embed gender-based violence prevention and response content in student onboarding and orientation. • Review existing onboarding touchpoints • Embed mandatory content • Evaluate reach and effectiveness	DVC E Key Collaborator: CXO	Commence Q1 2027, then annually and key intakes	Existing orientation systems for delivery External provider for training design Student communications Operational Funding where required
3.3 Integrate gender-based violence prevention and response concepts, strategies, and practices into curriculum where appropriate. • Identify curriculum opportunities	DVC E	Commence 2028	Internal and External training design expertise Academic engagement Learning and teaching governance
3.4 Embed gender-based violence awareness into preparation for placements, work-integrated learning, and study abroad programs, to address safety, reporting and behavioural expectations (linked to Action 2.6). • Develop pre-placement and departure material and resources for students and providers • Review feedback and incidents	DVC E	Commence Q2 2027, then each placement cycle	Pre-placement / travel resources Post-placement / travel feedback Support materials Provider engagement Monitor and compliance mechanisms
3.5 Include gender-based violence prevention and response training in annual compulsory compliance training for staff. • Review existing onboarding touchpoints • Embed content • Evaluate completion and effectiveness	CPO	Commence Q1 2027, then annually	LMS administration Reporting dashboards External provider for training design Compliance monitoring

**Not all resources are currently available; where appropriate, resources will be developed or sourced.*

Objectives, Actions, Activities	Responsible	Implementation & Review Cycle	Resources*
3.6 Conduct a role audit and training needs analysis to determine roles that require foundational, intermediate and advanced knowledge and capability in gender-based violence prevention and/or response. • Conduct role mapping • Identify capability tiers • Develop appropriate training to reflect tier	CPO	Complete by Q2 2027, then reviewed every two years	Organisational design for training needs analysis Workforce analytics Stakeholder consultation
3.7 Create clear and accessible gender-based violence information for staff and students to build awareness, knowledge, and easy access to support and escalation pathways • Review current materials to identify gaps and user experience • Undertake accessibility, cohort and sensitivity review • Review and update current website and intranet	Program Lead: PVC EDI Key Collaborators: MCO, CXO, CPO	Commence Q4 2026, then reviewed annually	Website development Translation services where required Stakeholder input and feedback
3.8 Deliver a targeted and informed communications and awareness campaign to demonstrate the university's commitment to prevention and response to gender-based violence. • Develop and implement a communications strategy • Develop and implement annual awareness campaign calendar • Deliver targeted campaigns • Evaluate reach and effectiveness	Program Lead: PVC EDI Key Collaborators: MCO, CXO, CPO	Commence Q2 2026, then annually	Communications strategy Creative design Event coordination

**Not all resources are currently available; where appropriate, resources will be developed or sourced.*

4. Safety and Support:

Objective: To ensure all students and staff can access safe, trauma-informed and culturally appropriate support pathways, with multiple, trusted options for disclosure and assistance. To provide timely, coordinated responses that promote wellbeing, agency and dignity.

Objectives, Actions, Activities	Responsible	Implementation & Review Cycle	Resources*
4.1 Provide timely trauma-informed support and management of disclosures and reports of gender-based violence. • Establish triage processes for disclosures and reports	CXO: Student CPO: Staff	Commence Q1 2026, then ongoing	Expertise and dedicated resources for case management. Student and staff support services. External support providers
4.2 Ensure access to culturally appropriate supports and expertise to support and advise on gender-based violence matters. • Identify specialist support staff • Develop process and protocol resource materials	Program Lead: PVC EDI Key Collaborators: PVC FN, PCO, CXO, USO	Commence Q1 2027, then reviewed annually	First Nations, Accessibility, LGBTIQA+, CALD expertise Interpreter services where required External support providers
4.3 Publish clear, accessible and trauma-informed pathways for disclosers and bystanders, including options for anonymous reporting • Review current website and intranet • Develop pathway maps • Review accessibility and sensitivity	Program Lead: PVC EDI Key Collaborators: MCO, CXO, CPO	Complete by Q4 2026, then reviewed annually	Website development Communications Support Stakeholder/user feedback
4.4 Identify investigators and assistance officers who have demonstrated knowledge and skills to provide trauma-informed and culturally safe investigation and/or support to disclosers and respondents in matters of gender-based violence. Provide specialist capability training for this group. • Define capability requirements for investigators, assistance officers, panel members • Identify current capability and gaps • Establish operating framework • Establish selection processes • Develop peer supervision/support arrangements • Establish Community of Practice (or similar) for cohorts • Identify training needs, including refresher training • Establish principles and framework for engagement to minimise vicarious trauma and impact	Program Lead: PVC EDI Key Collaborators: CXO, PCO, OQS	Commence Q3 2026, then maintain capability	Internally resourced cohort of internal investigators, case managers, assistance officers, administrators. Specialist training. External investigator panel Peer supervision and support arrangements

**Not all resources are currently available; where appropriate, resources will be developed or sourced.*

5. Safe Processes:

Objective: To manage gender-based violence disclosures and reports efficiently and consistently, prioritising confidentiality, safety, agency, cultural sensitivity, and documentation to support fair and safe outcomes.

Objectives, Actions, Activities	Responsible	Implementation & Review Cycle	Resources*
5.1 Enhance and integrate gender-based violence reporting and case management systems ensuring confidentiality, triage and risk assessment capabilities, anonymous reporting, and documentation management. • Review existing systems • Define requirements • Design workflows • Explore solutions • Implementation and change management • Monitor implementation and effectiveness	PVC EDI Key Collaborators: CXO, CPO, OQS	Commence Q3 2026, with staged implementation through 2027 and ongoing enhancement	IT project support System review / development Privacy and security review Data governance
5.2 Enhance case management procedures, documentation practices, and case tracking systems to ensure greater rigour and accountability. • Develop case documentation standards • Establish audit protocols	Program Lead: PVC EDI Key Collaborators: CXO, PCO	Complete by Q1 2027, then reviewed annually	Process mapping / workflows Guidance documents Case management and reporting systems
5.3 Apply structured risk assessment tools at first contact and scheduled contact with disclosers and respondents. • Review existing risk assessment tools • Define framework, tool • Define risk thresholds/descriptors/measures • Train assessors • Conduct quality review	PVC EDI Key Collaborators: CXO, CPO	Complete by Q4 2026, then reviewed annually	Risk assessment framework Risk assessment tool Training for assessors Specialist clinical, wellbeing and WHS advice
5.4 Review and update communication templates to ensure trauma-informed and consistent responses to gender-based violence matters. • Review existing templates • Co-design and test with specialists for sensitivity • Establish feedback protocols	Program Lead: PVC EDI Key Collaborators: CXO, CPO	Complete by Q4 2026, then reviewed annually	Trauma-informed communications review User feedback

**Not all resources are currently available; where appropriate, resources will be developed or sourced.*

6. Data, Evidence and Impacts:

Objective: To build a strong evidence base and capability that informs prevention and response initiatives, using data to analyse trends, guide decision making, measure progress and contribute to knowledge and evidence base.

Objectives, Actions, Activities	Responsible	Implementation & Review Cycle	Resources*
6.1 Establish a comprehensive data and reporting framework to better understand prevalence, predictors and patterns related to gender-based violence in the university community, integrating confidentiality and safety principles. • Define data required • Establish collection methodology, including current gaps • Define ownership and governance • Establish privacy and safety protocols	PVC EDI Key Collaborators: CXO, CPO	Complete by Q4 2026	Data governance for collecting and analysis Evaluation expertise
6.2 Build and maintain a de-identified and confidential gender-based violence data dashboard for reporting to committees, Leadership and Senate. • Develop dashboard specifications • Pilot and refine reporting	PVC EDI Key Collaborators: CXO, CPO	Complete by Q3 2026, then biannually through governance reporting	Data collection / analytics Reporting dashboards and templates
6.3 Conduct regular analysis of key drivers, hotspots, trends or themes influencing gender-based violence risk. • Define review schedule • Identify hotspots • Develop benchmarking and trend analysis	PVC EDI	Commence Q1 2027, then annually	Reporting dashboards Research / analytical expertise Benchmarking
6.4 Integrate regular gender-based violence data insights into broader institutional reporting and prevention and response initiatives.	PVC EDI: Program USO: Governance	Commence Q4 2026, then biannually through governance reporting	Reporting dashboard Reporting governance

**Not all resources are currently available; where appropriate, resources will be developed or sourced.*

7. Accommodation Providers

Objective: To foster safe, collaborative and accountable partnerships with student accommodation providers by embedding shared expectations, clear obligations and trauma-informed practices, enabling coordinated responses and environments where residents feel safe, supported and included.

Objectives, Actions, Activities	Responsible	Implementation & Review Cycle	Resources*
7.1 Review and confirm that all contractual obligations with accommodation providers meet requirements of the National Code. • Review and develop standard contractual expectations	USO, CFO	Complete by Q4 2026, then reviewed on contract renewal	Legal review Contract management expertise
7.2 Strengthen ongoing partnership with accommodation provider to share insights, review risks and share respective initiatives.	CXO	Commence Q1 2026, then quarterly partnership meetings	Relationship management Information sharing protocols and cadence
7.3 Provide accommodation providers with relevant training, briefings and awareness initiatives regarding National Code compliance, and the university's approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence. • Develop briefing materials	PVC EDI	Commence Q1 2027, then annually	Training materials
7.4 Implement an annual information sharing process of de-identified disclosures, reports and risk data from accommodation providers.	PVC EDI	Commence Q1 2027, then annually	Data sharing agreements Privacy reviews Reporting templates

**Not all resources are currently available; where appropriate, resources will be developed or sourced.*

Outcomes Framework 6

Outcome	Sub-Outcomes	Indicators	Measures of impact or progress
Standard 1: **Effective governance and a whole-of-organisation approach, prioritising safety and support, in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence**	Governance structures provide active oversight of GBV prevention and response activities.	• Governance participation • Decision making and accountability • Risk Oversight • Reporting and escalation • Data-informed governance	• Attendance rate and representation • % actions arising from governance forums completed within agreed timeframes • Number of GBV risks reviewed through governance processes • Minimum bi-annual reporting, including dashboard reporting, to governance bodies
	Responsibilities are understood across the university with visible role modelling by leaders.	• Visible role modelling • Awareness of GBV and where to report • Disclosure and Reporting feedback • Confidence to report	• Leader communications • Staff engagement survey – trust, confidence to report measures • Student survey incl NSSS
	Prevention and response approaches continuously improve through stakeholder feedback and engagement.	• Engagement activities occur regularly • Engagement reflects diverse voices and experiences • Feedback informs decision-making and improvement activities • Continuous improvement processes are embedded	• Number of consultations and engagement activities • Diversity and representation of participants involved • Evidence of data, reporting, and stakeholder feedback incorporated into initiatives • Number of improvements, changes or initiatives implemented following engagement activities.

Outcome	Sub-Outcomes	Indicators	Measures of impact or progress
Standard 2: **Environments are safe, and systems continuously improve to prevent and respond to gender-based violence**	Policy suite consistent and integrated regarding gender-based violence.	• Policy alignment • Policy documents include a gender impact assessment • Policy documents demonstrate trauma-informed principles	• % of priority policies reviewed • Number of policies incorporating gender impact assessment • Evidence of trauma-informed principles within policies
	Contract providers, placement, partnership and affiliated organisation agreements and practice show gender-based violence prevention and response expectations and behaviours.	• Partner compliance • Awareness of expectations by providers • Monitoring processes established	• Number of contracts containing GBV requirements • Number of provider contracts reviewed • Incident reporting
	Environmental risks identified, mitigated and documented.	• Safety assessments completed • Risks documented • Mitigation activities implemented	• Number of risk and safety assessments completed • Number of identified risks mitigated • Risk trends over time
	Effective recruitment strategies contribute to safe work and study environments.	• Expectations are clear and visible at the recruitment process • Disclosure processes clear	• Number of disclosures of GBV • Number of reviews and assessments of risk • Trend analysis of disclosures and risk assessment
	Conflict of interest disclosures and management plans contribute to safe and inclusive work and study environment.	• Conflict of interest process clear and visible • Management plans implemented • Confidence to report CoI	• Number of CoI's reported • Number of management plans implemented • Trend analysis
Standard 3: **Build knowledge and capability to safely and effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence**	Staff and students demonstrate increased awareness of gender-based violence concepts, drivers and behaviour expectations.	• Awareness of concepts • Understanding of behavioural expectations • Understanding of responsibilities	• Completion rates for training • Training evaluation • Reports of concerning behaviours
	Staff have an active understanding of their role in preventing and responding to gender-based violence.	• Confidence in responding • Appropriate referrals • Correct use of pathways	• Number of staff referring disclosers to report • Referral pathways utilised • Case review outcomes
	Awareness and communication campaigns show reach and engagement.	• Communication reach • Engagement with campaigns • Training and event participation	• Website analytics, engagement metrics • Training completion rates • Attendance numbers at events • Trends in disclosures and reports following campaigns

Outcome	Sub-Outcomes	Indicators	Measures of impact or progress
Standard 4: **Responses and support services are safe and person-centred**	Students and staff report improved awareness of reporting pathways and support available.	• Awareness of pathways • Awareness of support	• Support access numbers • Support access trends • Number of disclosures and reports made • Reporting awareness experience of disclosers • Website analytics
	Disclosers and respondents receive consistent, trauma-informed, culturally safe support.	• Consistency of support • Trauma-informed practice	• Internal review of de-identified case management records • Feedback • Support access trends
	Coordination across the university is improved and consistent.	• Warm hand-overs between areas • Coordination between teams • Consistent documentation	• Case reviews • Feedback
	Assistance officers and investigators show capability and consistency in practice.	• Training participation • Consistent practice and experience for all parties	• Internal review of de-identified case management records • Training records • Feedback
Standard 5: **Gender-based violence responses are safe and timely**	Case management approach demonstrates improved consistency and completeness of records.	• Documentation quality • Procedure consistency • Documentation consistency • Record completeness	Internal review of de-identified case management records Documentation completeness Days to finalise case
	Structured risk assessment is conducted and recorded consistently across support and assistance officers.	• Risk assessments completed • Risk framework applied	• Internal review of de-identified case management records • Review for consistency
	Singular case management system implemented for gender-based violence disclosures and reports.	• System implementation • Adoption rates • User experience	• System implementation stages • Utilisation rates • Feedback measures
	Trauma-informed communication templates are developed to improve experience and transparency of process.	• Transparent process • Process awareness	• Templates created • Template utilisation • User feedback

Outcome	Sub-Outcomes	Indicators	Measures of impact or progress
Standard 6: **Use evidence to approach, measure change and contribute to the national evidence-base**	Data collection is consistent, secure, de-identified, across the university.	• Consistency • Data governance • Privacy and security safeguards in place	• Governance compliance • Privacy incidents
	Regular analysis identifies trends, prevalence and emerging risks, guiding initiatives and actions to be undertaken.	• Regular analysis • Evidence informed actions • Risk identification • Feedback opportunities	• Reports produced • Evidence of data informing decisions or actions • Number of risks investigated
Standard 7: **Student accommodation is safe for all students and staff**	Affiliated Accommodation Provider Gender-based Violence plans and reports are received, reviewed and discussed annually.	• Provider compliance • Contract management • Briefings and information sharing	• Provider plans are reviewed annually • Contract compliance
	Providers demonstrate participation in briefings, trainings and awareness sessions.	• Briefings and information sharing	• Attendance at sessions
	Issues raised through the University or accommodation are managed in accordance with University Policy and Procedures.	• Pathways and processes followed • Case management meetings	• Case management review
	Emergency and escalation pathways are understood and enacted when required.	• Escalation pathways visible and accessible • Case Management records	• Case management review • Times and context for escalation pathways

Progress pathway

As we implement the actions outlined in this Plan, Murdoch University's maturity in preventing and responding to gender-based violence will grow. We acknowledge that our progress as we mature in this work is not strictly linear. Our current self-assessment places the University at a strong foundational position. Initiatives will drive progress to developing and consolidating phases in the coming years, with sustained practice a goal to be reached in 2030 in alignment with *Ngala Kwop Biddi*.

Foundation

Characteristics

- Awareness of the National Code and requirements.
- Core policies exist and are being updated and aligned.
- Disclosure pathways exist, inconsistently understood.
- Fragmented prevention activity.

Focus

- Build governance structure.
- Clarify pathways, roles and responsibilities.
- Establish data and reporting rigour.
- Build foundation training and awareness campaign.

Developing

Characteristics

- Prevention and response work is coordinated.
- Staff and student education is available, and uptake is increasing.
- Regular risk assessments occur.
- Data informs early action.
- Trauma-informed practice is consistently demonstrated by critical responders.

Focus

- Strengthen integration of practice and capability.
- Improve early identification and risk monitoring.
- Expand tiered GBV training, awareness campaigns.
- Enhance data analysis and reporting.

Consolidating

Characteristics

- Prevention principles embedded across policy, teaching, leadership.
- Data, trends, risks analysed and inform action.
- Students and staff know how to access support and reporting.
- Capability building across all leadership levels.

Focus

- Enhance cross-portfolio collaboration.
- Strengthen accountability.
- Regular evaluation of disclosure and report management.
- Integrate lived experience insights.

Sustaining

Characteristics

- Prevention and response is culturally embedded and understood as a shared responsibility.
- Evaluation shows improved outcomes and reduced harm.
- Contribute to sector knowledge and innovation.
- Prevention and response approaches are continually improved.

Focus

- Drive innovation and sector influence.
- Sustain long term cultural change.
- Deepen the integration of diversity and equity led approaches.

Gender Equity Action Plan

6

Murdoch University's Gender Equity Action Plan complements this Prevention and Response Plan by addressing the institutional structures, practices and inequality's that can enable gender-based violence. Together, the two plans establish actions relevant to students, staff and the broader University community across the 2026-2029 period. Progress against the Gender Equity Action Plan will be monitored, reviewed and reported through the University's governance arrangements.

The terms gender equity and gender equality are often used interchangeably. At Murdoch University, we implement gender equity practices and initiatives to tailor support and remove barriers with the aim of achieving gender equality across our staff and student environments.

Murdoch University Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Strategy 2023–2030

Annual reporting to Senate to progress and achieve Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for staff and students.

View document

Murdoch University Gender Equity Action Plan 2027-2030

View document





Murdoch University

Ngala kwop biddi.
Building a brighter future, together.

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