



**Jenny Aitchison MP**

**Member for Maitland**

12 May 2017

Universities Australia  
GPO Box 1142  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir / Madam,

As Shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I join with End Rape On Campus Australia to call for the establishment of a national, centralised, 1800 Hotline to be run by Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia for those who have experienced sexual assault on campus. I urge Universities Australia to support this hotline, and to fund it to provide assistance to the many people who have experienced, and continue to experience, this crime at Universities.

For too long universities have done the bare minimum in terms of prevention, reporting and responding to sexual assault and violence on campus. Thousands of past and present students have signed a petition which calls on Universities to put in place mandatory consent training, reporting policies and specialist sexual assault services on campuses. Universities Australia have undertaken to provide support for sexual assault victims and survivors in the wake of the forthcoming release of the Australian Human Rights Commission's report on 1 August 2017. Given the pervasive nature of sexual assault on campus, this support must have the capacity to respond to what is expected to be a huge and ongoing need. Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia are the only organisation which already has the capacity and experience to meet that need from 1 August 2017.

For universities to fund an independent, world leading service with extensive experience in trauma informed counselling for survivors of sexual assault will only confirm their commitment to healing the past betrayals of victims and survivors and their resolve to work towards a respectful and transparent process of reporting of and addressing sexual assault on campus. It will also allay victims and survivors fears of retribution and discrimination from universities for reporting sexual assault.



Importantly, an independent funded service will greatly assist Women's Officers, Queer Officers, and other student representatives who have been inundated and overwhelmed by victims and survivors who have had no formal training, and are at great risk of vicarious trauma. I understand that Women's Officers have concerns about referring victims and survivors to 1800 RESPECT since the service moved to a triage model.

Finally, having sexual assaults on campus reported to an independent specialised service will ensure a greater transparency on an ongoing basis about the extent of sexual assault on university campuses.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Aitchison', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Jenny Aitchison MP**  
**Member for Maitland**  
**Shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault**  
**Shadow Minister for Small Business**