

THE HUNTING GROUND AUSTRALIA PROJECT

The Hunting Ground Australia Project welcomes Commission's report on university sexual violence

The Hunting Ground Australia Project has today welcomed the release of the Australian Human Rights Commission's *National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities*.

"For too long, many Australian universities and residential colleges have sought to deny that sexual violence is an issue on their campuses – more concerned to protect their reputations than ensure safe environments for their students," said The Hunting Ground Australia Project Campaign Director Allison Henry.

"We now have an evidence base about sexual assault and harassment on Australian universities to hold both perpetrators and institutions to account.

"As we had expected, the Commission's report highlights the failure of Australia's universities and residential colleges to appropriately respond to, and prevent, sexual violence. The Commission's findings certainly reflect experiences related to us by students during our campus screenings of *The Hunting Ground*."

Ms Henry said that she was particularly concerned by the Commission's finding that only 2% of students who experienced sexual harassment and 9% of students who experienced sexual assault in a university setting in 2015 or 2016 said they had made a formal report or complaint to the university, demonstrating a lack of confidence in university processes.

The Hunting Ground Australia Project is looking forward to concerted action by universities, residential colleges and governments to address the issues raised in the Commission's report.

"The Commission's findings, together with the recommendations in the landmark research report by the Australian Human Rights Centre at UNSW Sydney, *On Safe Ground: A Good Practice Guide for Australian Universities* –

to be released on Thursday 3 August 2017 – provide a roadmap to tackle sexual violence at Australian universities.”

The Hunting Ground Australia Project is proud that the funding raised and partnerships developed through Good Pitch Australia instigated the Commission’s survey.

“Contrary to universities’ claims, The Hunting Ground Australia Project instigated the national student survey. When we started this Project in 2015 we immediately recognised the dearth of data available around the incidence of sexual violence in Australian universities. A key element of our impact strategy was to initiate this survey by providing seed funding and other support to the Australian Human Rights Centre at UNSW Sydney and the Australian Human Rights Commission,” said Ms Henry.

The Hunting Ground Australia Project paid tribute to the students and survivors who had participated in the Commission’s survey and submission process.

“We would not have this report today but for the thousands of students and former students who participated in the survey or provided a submission,” said Ms Henry. “For many, we appreciate that telling their story was a harrowing experience and we thank those survivors for their vital and courageous contribution. We hope that today is a turning point and that the necessary changes will now be implemented.”

Further information about The Hunting Ground Australia Project is available in the July 2017 Project Update:
http://www.thehuntinggroundaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Progress_Report_The_Hunting_Ground_Australia_Project_July2017_e.pdf

Further information about the launch of *On Safe Ground: A Good Practice Guide for Australian Universities* by the Australian Human Rights Centre at UNSW Sydney is available at: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/on-safe-ground-a-good-practice-guide-for-australian-universities-tickets-35503001433>

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About The Hunting Ground Australia Project

The Hunting Ground Australia Project has for the past two years used the critically acclaimed 2015 documentary *The Hunting Ground* as a tool to engage Australian universities, and the broader community, in a conversation around issues concerning sexual assault and harassment, consent, disclosure and reporting in Australian universities.

The Hunting Ground Australia Project has played a critical role in:

- facilitating a national campus screening program of *The Hunting Ground*,
- instigating the Australian Human Rights Commission's national student survey,
- supporting the Australian Human Rights Centre at UNSW's development of effective and appropriate institutional responses to sexual assault and harassment in Australian universities,
- commissioning the Full Stop Foundation to adapt existing ethics and consent training programs to the Australian university context and
- partnering with Fair Agenda to support the first ever record of the quantity and quality of sexual violence prevention training provided by university residential colleges.

The Hunting Ground Australia Project originated through the Good Pitch Australia model, which galvanised philanthropic support and a broad coalition of partners to work together on a comprehensive campaign to tackle sexual violence within university communities. Partners include the National Union of Students, Australian Human Rights Centre, Australian Human Rights Commission, Full Stop Foundation, Madman Entertainment, End Rape on Campus Australia, Fair Agenda and Universities Australia.

In April 2017, The Hunting Ground Australia Project was recognised by Philanthropy Australia, with the Gender-wise Award presented to The Caledonia Foundation and Good Pitch Australia, for The Hunting Ground Australia Project.

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