

THE HUNTING GROUND AUSTRALIA PROJECT



FINAL UPDATE — JULY 2025

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2025 UPDATE

A decade after The Hunting Ground Australia Project (THGAP) began, we are delighted to report the concrete systemic change THGAP, with community partners EROC Australia, Fair Agenda and Stop Campaign, have been striving for – the establishment of an effective complaints process for student survivors, and reforms to ensure consistent standards and accountability to higher education providers.

Legislation to establish the National Student Ombudsman passed the parliament in 2024, and the new complaints pathway opened its doors in February 2025, providing a safe, confidential and trauma informed complaints resolution mechanism for students. New Legislation to establish the [*National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence*](#), first introduced to parliament in February 2025, has now been introduced to the new parliament. The Code is expected to begin operation in January 2026 and will be oversighted by a new expert unit in the Department of Education. Once established, the Code and Unit will ensure consistent standards and requirements to higher education providers, encouraging higher standards and accountability for preventing and responding to incidents of gender-based violence within the sector. Read more in the Campaign segments following.

BACKGROUND

The Hunting Ground Australia Project (THGAP) was launched at the 2015 Good Pitch Australia event in September 2015. The impact campaign was focused on the critically acclaimed US feature-length documentary *The Hunting Ground*, by Oscar-nominated filmmakers Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering. The film chronicles the personal stories of students who reported sexual assault on campus, and the failure of a number of American universities to respond effectively and appropriately to these reports.

The Hunting Ground Australia Project was highly effective in using the documentary to create a collaborative, comprehensive and unified campaign around the incidence of, and responses to, sexual violence within Australian university communities.

With the continued supported of some of THGAP's funders, actions of our community partners beyond the campaign (2019-2025) have contributed to a decade of strategic activism that has culminated in concrete systemic change.



HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN

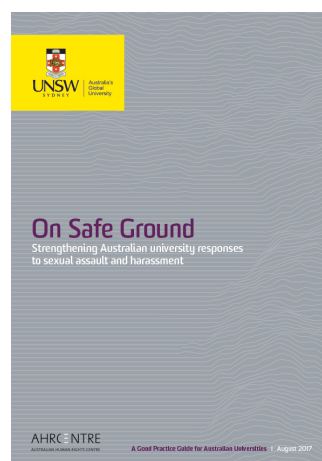
THGAP's multi-faceted impact campaign, accompanied by partner initiatives and ongoing student and activist campaigning, directly led to:

- a national campus **screening program** of *The Hunting Ground* that engaged and shifted attitudes in Australian universities and residential colleges, the media and governments to establish sexual violence in Australian university environments as an issue requiring ongoing attention;
- a **national student survey**, establishing the first national baseline data on the incidence of sexual violence in Australian universities and residential colleges (Australian Human Rights Commission's [Change the Course](#) report, August 2017);
- the development of a comprehensive **good practice guide**, drawing on international precedent, for application in Australian universities (Australian Human Rights Centre at UNSW's [On Safe Ground](#) report, August 2017);
- the adaptation of existing ethics and **sexual consent training programs** to the Australian university context, for delivery in Australian universities and residential colleges (Full Stop Foundation's [Sex, Safety & Respect](#) program, 2016-ongoing);
- significant improvements in residential colleges providing sexual violence prevention training to their students and staff, and in engaging expert sexual assault services in providing that training (Fair Agenda's [residential college campaign](#), 2016-2020);
- the production of **three media factsheets** to improve media coverage of sexual assault and harassment in Australian university environments (Full Stop Foundation Ambassador and journalist Nina Funnell, 2017);

- increased student and stakeholder activism around sexual violence in Australian university environments;
- regular media coverage of incidents of sexual violence in university settings, with a spotlight on institutional responses; and
- strengthened organisational capacity, including the establishment of End Rape on Campus Australia as an incorporated body to support student and survivors' voices and campaign for institutional reforms (from 2018).

These efforts in turn led to:

- sector-wide commitments to improvements in the management and prevention of campus sexual violence (Universities Australia, University Colleges Australia, individual universities and residential colleges, from 2016)
- enhanced regulatory attention on Australian universities in their management and prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment (Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA), from 2017)
- the implementation of a second national student survey (National Student Safety [Survey](#), 2021)



STRATEGIC GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN

Philanthropic funds and pro bono support continued for our community collaborators beyond the end of 2018, and strategic activism continues to the present day.

A core partnership of Dr Allison Henry (THGAP Campaign Director), Sharna Bremner (EROC Australia), Renee Carr (Fair Agenda) and Camille Schloeffel (Stop Campaign) have continued to work for reforms in how universities and governments responded to campus based sexual violence. With the change of federal Government in 2022 their activism shifted to focus on the Government's

Universities Accord process, accompanied by submissions to Senates Estimates processes and parliamentary engagement.

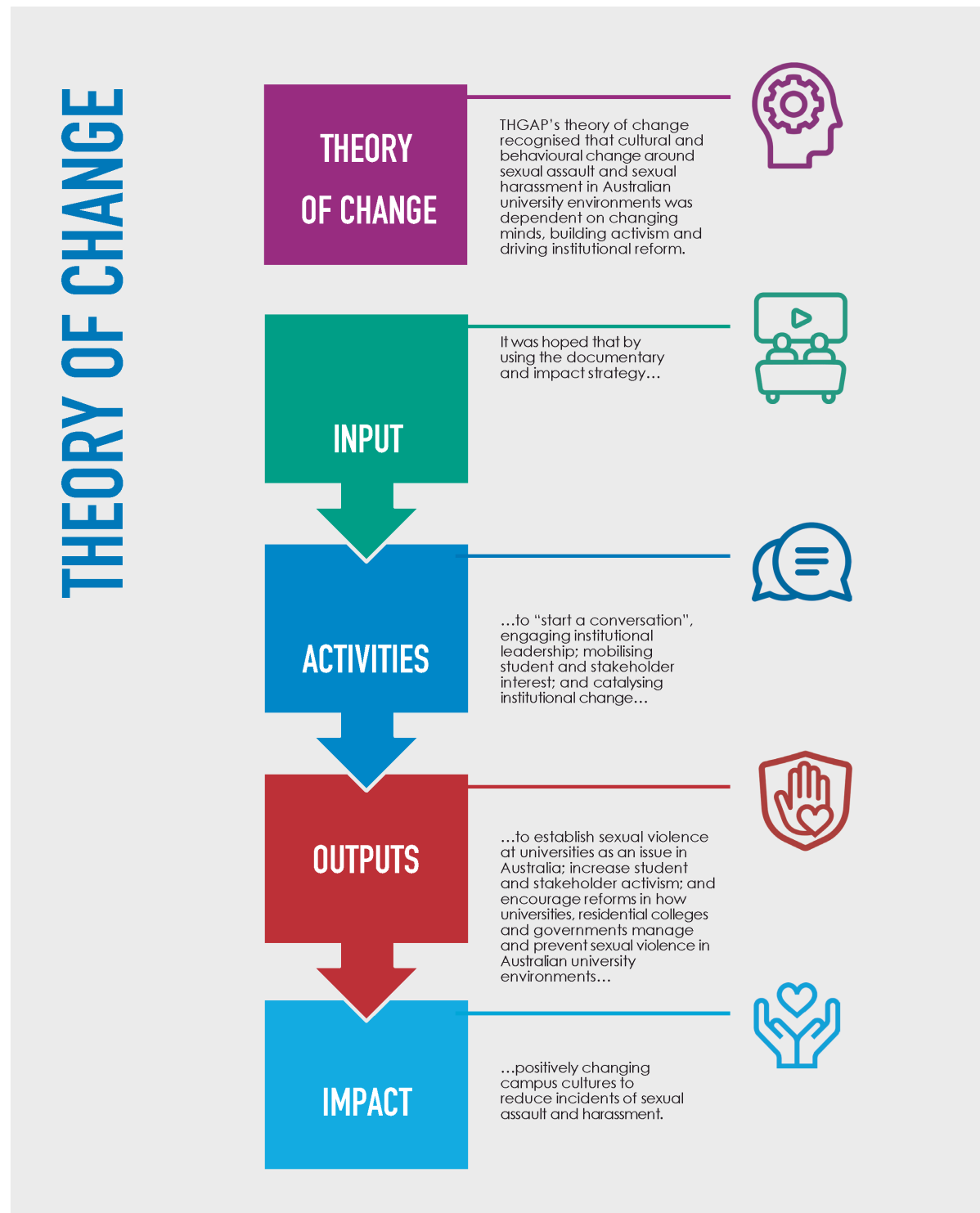
A brief timeline of recent developments:

- In July 2023, the University Accord's Interim Report identified student safety as one of the five priority actions, noting that 'safety, including in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment, required concerted effort'.
- Education Minister Jason Clare established a cross-jurisdictional working group and appointed a sexual violence prevention expert to advise the Education Ministers on developing a draft Action Plan, supported by a Stakeholder Reference Group including Dr Allison Henry, Sharna Bremner, Renee Carr, and Camille Schloeffel.
- In November 2023 the draft Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education was released for consultation and detailed design work.
- In February 2024 the [final Action Plan](#) was endorsed by all Federal, State and Territory Education Ministers. The Action Plan included the establishment of a National Student Ombudsman and the introduction of legislation to establish a National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence.
 - The [National Student Ombudsman](#) commenced operation in February 2025. The NSO provides a safe, confidential, and trauma informed mechanism for students to resolve complaints when they are not satisfied with the response from their higher education provider.
 - Legislation to establish the [National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence](#) was initially introduced in February 2025 and has now been reintroduced to the new parliament. The Code is expected to begin operation in January 2026 and will be oversighted by a new expert unit in the Department of Education. Once established, the Code and Unit will ensure consistent standards and requirements to higher education providers, encouraging higher standards and accountability for preventing and responding to incidents of gender-based violence within the sector.

The creation of the National Student Ombudsman and the forthcoming establishment of the National Code fit directly into the THGAP's Theory of Change, encouraging institutional reforms to manage and prevent sexual violence in Australian university settings.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

THGAP's theory of change recognised that cultural and behavioural change around sexual assault and sexual harassment in Australian university environments was dependent on changing minds, building activism and driving institutional reform.



IMPACT VIDEOS

You can hear directly from The Hunting Ground Australia Project team in these two videos.

- The 2023 evaluation and impact recap video, hosted in [Dropbox, here](#).
- Listen to Campaign Director Allison Henry discussing the campaign in the May 2025 Impact Campaign Workshop produced by Documentary Australia (first 30 minutes):
<https://vimeo.com/1088289648>

IMPACT TEAM

The THGAP campaign was led by a small impact team:

- Allison Henry – THGAP Campaign Director
- Mary Macrae – THGAP Impact Producer (Shark Island Institute)
- Anna Kaplan – THGAP Campus Screenings Producer (Madman Entertainment)
- Isabella Wright and Tamar Simons – THGAP Campus Screenings Assistants (Madman Entertainment)
- Amy Ziering (Producer, The Hunting Ground) – international consultant to the project.

IMPACT CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

The key impact campaign partners included:

- Australian Human Rights Centre at UNSW Sydney
- Full Stop Foundation
- National Union of Students
- End Rape on Campus Australia
- Fair Agenda

The project was also supported by a broad range of collaborating partners and funders including Shark Island Institute, Documentary Australia, The Caledonia Foundation, The Snow Foundation and Madman Entertainment.

CAMPAIGN FUNDERS

The initial funding raised at Good Pitch 2015 was later increased with a grant from The Caledonia Foundation (2017) for the campaign consolidation work and collaborative campaigning following the release of the *Change the Course* and *On Safe Ground* reports in August 2017.

Further grants from the Snow Foundation (2018/2019) and Shark Island Foundation (2023) were provided to continue the work being led by Fair Agenda, EROC Australia and the STOP Campaign.

THANK YOU TO THE DONORS

Ian Darling Shark Island Institute, The Caledonia Foundation, The Paradise Family Foundation, Annabel Montgomery, Anthony and Marina Darling, Jillian Segal, Australian Women Donor Network, English Family Foundation, Thyne Reid Foundation, The Danielle and Daniel Besen Foundation, River Capital Foundation, Georgina Byron, The Snow Foundation, Sydney Community Foundation, George and Freda Castan Families Charitable Foundation, Adair Donaldson, Dobkin Family Foundation, Mim and Michael Bartlett, Konica Minolta – David Cooke, DocRoss Foundation, Sue Jacobs, Phillip Cornwell, Seri Renkin and Anonymous donors

THANK YOU

The content in this wrap-up letter is written from the THGAP Donor Reports and the article by Allison Henry (21 Jan 2025): [The critical role of civil society in driving institutional accountability for sexual violence in Australian universities](#), *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, DOI: 10.1080/1323238X.2024.2435685

Thank you to: Allison Henry, Sharna Bremner, Mary Macrae and Shark Island Institute.