Unimutual Risk Management Services
University Emerging Risk Issue Notice 63

Issue: Campus Sexual Assaults

Most Members would be keenly aware of the growing concern across the sector regarding campus sexual assault. It was addressed by the Mutual in 2016 in **Emerging Risk Report 52**. Also most would be aware of the media driven Freedom of Information Request in late 2016 requiring all universities to report the number of their campus sexual assaults. This story made headlines for many weeks.

Unimutual has discussed this issue during the recent series of Metro Business Continuity Special Interest Groups, where a representative from Universities Australia reviewed the "Respect. Now. Always" campaign and discussed the upcoming Australian Human Rights Commission survey of campus sexual assault. That report was released 1 August 2017. It summarises the results of a survey of over 30,000 past and current higher education students, regarding their experiences with sexual assault and sexual harassment while studying at an Australian university. The 264 page report can be found at: https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/change-course-national-report-sexual-assault-and-sexual.

While the sector is digesting the report, some things are quite clear:

- There is a need for change across the sector regarding tolerance levels for unacceptable harassment behaviour which involves our staff, students and campus visitors.
- There will be a greater emphasis and examination of university incident investigation and responses to reports of sexual assault and harassment on campus, in residential halls and in the community.
- The sector will need to develop a greater sensitivity to the complexities of this issue in terms of victim support and welfare as well as protecting the rights and well-being of those identified in these incidents.
- The sector will become more accustomed to working with criminal matters on campus and supporting the university community with increased investigation skills, improved Police engagement, better social support and liaison procedures, a greater familiarisation with privacy laws and more sensitive victim care.
- There is an increased risk of litigation as result of the findings as university management is now on notice of the prevalence and complexity of this issue.

Most of these issues are already being actively addressed by Members The Mutual is sharing resources across the sector and will release shortly on our Resource Hub, a University Sexual Assault Checklist, compiled as a result of the Membership's contributions. We have published an article on the Australian Human Rights Commission report which can be found at: http://www.unimutual.com/ahrc-report-sexual-assault-sexual-harassment/. In addition we will feature a speaker at our September Conference (http://www.unimutual.com/unimutual-conference-2017/) in Melbourne, who will address the Membership on this issue and its impact on the sector.

Finally, the report outlines nine recommendations to the sector regarding the future management of this risk. Universities Australia, which lead the Respect.Now.Always initiative has this week launched its 10 Point Action responding to the AHRC report. Both documents should be closely examined and

addressed by each individual institution, as they will require tangible demonstration by senior management of leadership and oversight of this issue. Many of these recommendations will require affirmative actions to be taken by an institution and could later be reviewed as part of any future litigated matters regarding the university.

Unimutual will continue to share information and insight on this issue, and welcomes the views of Members.