The background of the cover features a low-angle shot of the Monash University crest and motto banner. The crest is a shield with a green field containing a golden rampant lion, and a blue field above with three white stars. Below the shield is a white banner with the Latin motto 'PRO DOMINA RE PUBLICA' in black capital letters. The crest is set against a dark blue sky with light clouds. The entire scene is framed by a series of vertical, golden-brown beams that create a sense of height and structure.

# Independent review of sexual harm prevention and response at Mannix College: Summary Report

Monash University

15 November 2024



**Nous Group** acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, who maintain their culture, country and spiritual connection to the land, sea and community.

This artwork was developed by Marcus Lee Design to reflect Nous Group's Reconciliation Action Plan and our aspirations for respectful and productive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

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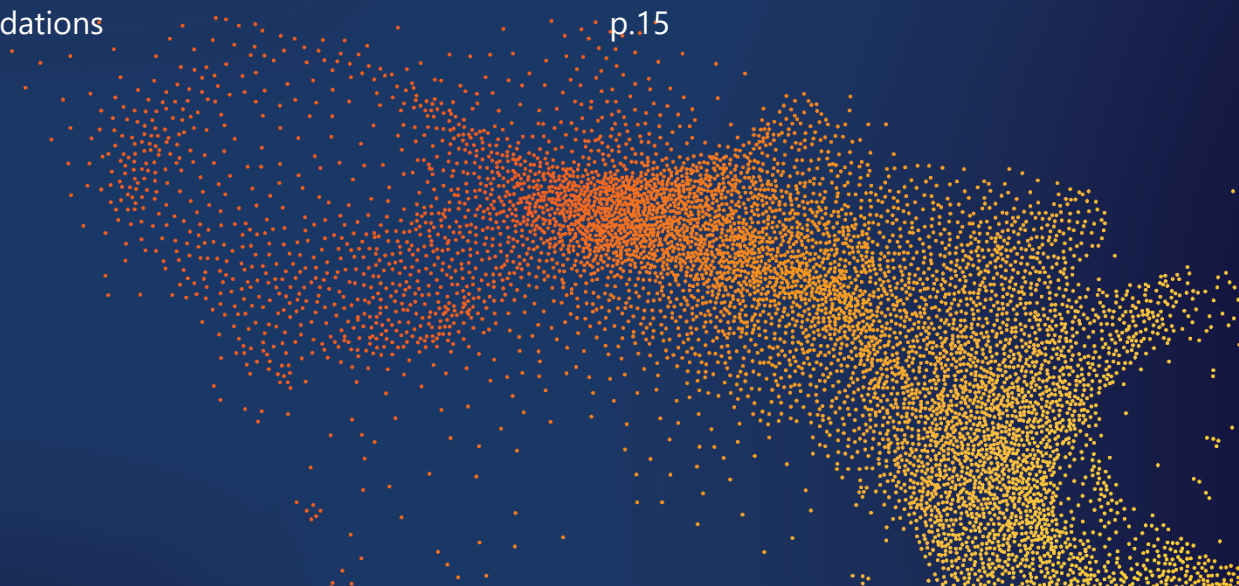
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# 1 SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW

This document presents a summary of findings from an independent review of sexual harm prevention and response at Mannix College (Mannix) conducted by consulting firm Nous Group (Nous). We are delighted to be able to share this summary with you.

Thank you to the Mannix representatives and residents who shared their perspectives and experiences through interviews or surveys with us. Your insights have been invaluable to the review's findings and recommendations.

*This is a summary version of a full review report that Nous delivered to Monash University.*

*If you would like to find out more about the review and its detailed findings, please contact:*

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## About the review

Monash University (Monash) engaged Nous to conduct an independent review of the effectiveness of sexual harm and gender-based violence prevention initiatives and response processes at Mannix.

The review was commissioned as part of Monash's Action Plan in response to the 2021 National Student Safety Survey (NSSS)<sup>1</sup> and demonstrates Monash's ongoing commitment to addressing sexual harm and gender-based violence. Mannix College voluntarily committed to being part of the review to demonstrate its own commitment.

## Why did Monash commission the review?

In 2016 the Australian Human Rights Commission conducted a national survey on experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities<sup>2</sup>. In 2021, the Social Research Centre conducted a National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) on the safety and wellbeing of students.

Both surveys identified a concerning prevalence of sexual harm and gender-based violence at Australian universities. The surveys identified that students who lived in university owned or affiliated residential accommodation were more likely than their peers to have been sexually assaulted or sexually harassed.

In 2018, Monash University commissioned an independent review of its sexual harassment and sexual assault policies and response pathways, including those at Mannix.<sup>3</sup> Six years have passed since the that review. This review provides an opportunity to assess the impact of initiatives and changes implemented over the past six years and identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement specific to Mannix.



<sup>1</sup> Social Research Centre, National Student Safety Survey, 2021, (accessed 15 August 2024). <https://www.nsss.edu.au/>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities, 2017, (accessed 25 September 2024). [https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/AHRC\\_2017\\_ChangeTheCourse\\_UniversityReport.pdf](https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/AHRC_2017_ChangeTheCourse_UniversityReport.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Worklogic, Independent Review of Monash University's Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policies and Response Pathways: Mannix College, 2018 (accessed 15 August 2024). This report was not released publicly.

## What data did the review collect?

### Interviews

with a selection of stakeholders, including

- Mannix staff,
  - Monash staff,
  - Mannix student leaders
- 

### Resident survey

distributed to all Mannix residents between 11 and 22 September 2024. The review received **205 responses from Mannix residents (two-thirds of residents)**.

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### Site visit

to Mannix College in October 2024.

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### Desktop and document review

of an estimated 40 Mannix, Monash and sector documents, including policies and procedures, disclosures data, approaches of and similar reviews at other universities and sector reports.

## A note on the review's scope

The review's primary goal was to assess the effectiveness of prevention initiatives and response processes at Mannix.

The following activities were not in scope for the review:

- An audit of Mannix's and Monash's policies and procedures that relate to sexual harm and gender-based violence. The review accessed policies and procedures to broadly understand approaches at both Monash and Mannix.
- An examination of the content of training programs at Mannix or Monash. The review's assessment of the effectiveness of these programs was largely derived from consultations and the review's survey.
- Examination of Monash's operations and functions more broadly. The review's assessment of relevant units and committees such as the Safer Community Unit (SCU) and Respect at Monash Advisory Committee was high-level with the view of understanding all services available to residents, not reviewing the nature or effectiveness of those services.



## 2 FINDINGS

Overall, the review found that Mannix's prevention initiatives and response processes are effective and there have been ongoing improvements since the appointment of new senior leadership.

Residents report a positive culture at Mannix that prioritises safety and respect and believe Mannix is supportive of its community.

A minority of residents continue to experience sexual assault and harassment. Sexual harm is a systemic social, cultural and structural problem that persists in almost all facets of society. Mannix's sphere of influence is limited to the residents it serves. Refer to Page 9 for further detail.

Within its sphere of influence, there are opportunities for Mannix to fine-tune prevention initiatives and response processes. Refer to Page 15 for recommendations.




*I genuinely feel safe here. I'm not just a resident; I'm part of a community where I'm cared for and connected. That feeling of being seen and supported is what makes Mannix feel like home*

*Survey free-text response*

## Snapshot of survey findings

The review deployed a survey to Mannix residents to understand experiences of sexual harm and gender-based violence and perspectives on the effectiveness of Mannix's prevention initiatives and response processes. A snapshot of survey findings is below.

**205 SURVEY**   
RESPONDENTS, representing a response rate of two-thirds of Mannix residents

**54%** FEMALE

**45%** MALE

**1%** GENDER DIVERSE

**13%** INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

**18%** LGBTIQA+

**98% OF RESIDENTS**   
FEEL A SENSE OF BELONGING AT THEIR RESIDENCE

**96% OF RESIDENTS**  
FEEL SAFE AT THEIR RESIDENCE

**94% OF RESIDENTS**  
FEEL THEIR RESIDENCE IS TRYING HARD TO PROTECT STUDENT SAFETY


**11%** HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL ASSAULT WHILE A RESIDENT AT MANNIX\*

**14%** HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL HARASSMENT WHILE A RESIDENT AT MANNIX\*

*\*These do not indicate the proportions of sexual assault or harassment that occurred on-site at Mannix. Survey questions asked about experiences of sexual assault in many spaces: at Mannix, at another Monash-affiliated residence, at a Mannix-affiliated event or at a non-residence event with other Mannix residents.*

*"The talks and [training] programs we had were really good and made me feel safe, especially as an international student"*  
- Survey free-text response

*"We all know and look out for each other. Whether we're at college or offsite, Mannix people protect and help each other"*  
- Survey free-text response

**24 TRAINING PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS** 



# Sexual assault, sexual harassment and bystander experiences

## Among survey respondents...

**11%** reported at least one experience of **sexual assault** while they had been a resident at Mannix.

**14%** reported at least one experience of **sexual harassment** while they had been a resident at Mannix.

**43%** reported that they had **witnessed or been disclosed to** about at least one incident of sexual assault or sexual harassment while they had been a resident at Mannix.

The number of incidents reported cannot outline how many incidents occurred on-site at Mannix but does indicate how many Mannix residents may need support

- Survey questions asked residents about experiences of sexual harm during their time as a resident, not just on-site at their residence. This was done to give an overall picture of the incidents occurring in the broader lives of Mannix residents but means the review could not outline the number of incidents that occurred specifically at Mannix.
- The proportion of bystander experiences may be inflated as multiple people may have witnessed or been told about the same incident. Survey respondents may have reported bystander incidents that were more informal or less discrete conversations (i.e. gossip) circulating rather than definitional bystander experience.

Some populations experienced higher rates of sexual assault and harassment

- Women and residents who are LGBTIQ+ or living with a disability experienced disproportionately higher rates of sexual assault or harassment.

About two-thirds of respondents who experienced sexual assault or harassment never disclosed the experience to an Mannix or Monash representative.

- Underreporting is known to be a systemic issue for sexual assault and harassment and Mannix has not escaped this reality. It means that any formal numbers reported by Mannix or Monash are likely to be underreported and that residents who do not report may not be accessing or receiving the care and support that is available to them..
- Common reasons that victim-survivors cited for not reported including not thinking they needed any help, thinking others would not find it serious enough and feeling embarrassed or ashamed.

# Culture at Mannix

**Mannix is supportive of its community and has a culture that enables conversations about sexual health.**

- Stakeholders broadly reported that Mannix has a very tight knit community in which residents look out for one another.
- Stakeholders reported that there are clear behavioural expectations, and that student leaders and residents alike feel comfortable calling out inappropriate behaviour when it occurs. Regular discussion, training and events about respectful relationships have embedded this in the culture.
- It is the student leaders, RSOs, and senior staff who drive Mannix's healthy culture from year to year.

**Attitudes about sexual harm and gender-based violence are mostly good at Mannix**

- Residents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a set of attitudinal questions about sexual harm and gender-based violence that were derived from the NSSS.
- In general, Mannix residents had attitudes that contribute to effective prevention of sexual harm. For example, 88 per cent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that sexual assault is actually consensual sex that someone regrets afterwards.
- While still mostly favourable, international students, men, and heterosexual students held slightly less favourable attitudes than regional students, women, and LGBTIQ+ residents.



## Among survey respondents...



**94%** felt Mannix's culture around sex is safe and healthy.



**93%** and **91%** reported they are treated with respect by staff and other residents, respectively.



*We talk about respect and safety all the time, whether at formal dinners, weekly floor meetings, or at events run by the Respect at Mannix [Committee].*

*Survey free text response*



# Culture at Mannix

Though the review does not assess these systemic issues as pronounced or common at Mannix, there is work to do to continue monitoring toxic masculinity, alcohol consumption and gossip.

- A minority of residents used qualitative free-text responses or consultations to reference toxic masculinity, alcohol consumption and gossip as contributors to sexual harm and gender-based violence at Mannix.
- These respondents commented that some male residents at Mannix make inappropriate jokes or comments about women in group settings, that unsafe alcohol consumption can impair residents' judgement, and that gossip has the potential to isolate and shame victim-survivors who might have experienced or disclosed an incident, as well as discourage disclosure where residents are not confident that their confidentiality is certain.
- Survey data indicate that these issues are not systemic at Mannix, but should be monitored nonetheless. For example, 93 per cent of Mannix residents find the culture around alcohol use safe and 80 per cent believe women are treated equally to men.

## Among survey respondents...

92% felt there is a clear sense of socially acceptable behaviour among Mannix residents.



*"I think there can be a culture of toxic masculinity sometimes which can negatively impact the culture around gender based violence. Student leaders do well in calling it out but I still notice when a guy is with his group of mates he is more likely to make inappropriate jokes"*

*Survey free text response*



# Prevention initiatives at Mannix



*The educational programs right at the start of the year are really good at setting a foundational understanding. The ongoing [prevention initiatives], such as formal dinners or the Newmann lecture [build on this] understanding*

*Survey free text response*

## Among survey respondents...

**70%** reported that Sexpectations increased their confidence and competence in preventing or responding to incidents of sexual harm or gender-based violence.

### Mannix's prevention initiatives are effective overall

- Training is mostly comprehensive for Mannix residents, student leaders and staff alike. Mannix and Monash collectively offer a range of online and in-person training programs, some of which are mandatory. These are focused on educating residents about consent, sexual health and respectful relationships, as well as sexual harm and gender-based violence.
- Mannix provides several in-person training programs and events throughout the year, including mandatory Respectful Relationships training and the Respect at Mannix formal dinner. Continual educational opportunities throughout the year help to reinforce the importance of respectful relationships and embed these ideas in Mannix's culture.
- Mannix proactively and visually shows information in common areas that promotes sexual health, training programs and support services available to Mannix residents.
- Student leaders and staff reported feeling well equipped to respond to incidents of sexual harm, supported by the additional training they receive to be first responders.
- Mannix senior leadership are astute to the fact that student leaders are mainly young and are themselves residents and students, and they carry emotional load and responsibility to be a first point of contact in this context. The review found that there are many measures in place to ensure student leaders are supported.

### There are opportunities to fine-tune Mannix's prevention initiatives

- While mandatory online training is critical, it does not receive deep engagement from residents and could be made more engaging. Stakeholders interviewed by the review emphasised that some residents can treat mandatory online training as a tick-box exercise. Over one-third (37 per cent) of survey respondents did not recall completing mandatory online training. There is an opportunity to enhance online training to build stronger knowledge and awareness among residents.
- Mannix and the Safer Community unit (SCU) have an emerging partnership, but there is more work to do raise what is currently moderate awareness of it and willingness to use it among residents. Less than half of Mannix residents felt mostly or very confident seeking support or assistance within Monash University (i.e. the SCU) about an experience of sexual harm. There are opportunities to increase resident awareness of the SCU and the services it offers through increased visual promotion and a strengthened partnership.



# Response processes at Mannix

## Mannix's response processes are effective overall

- Stakeholders reported that staff and student leaders respond in an appropriate and trauma-informed manner, provide helpful information and regularly follow up with victim-survivors.
- Response processes are logical, centred on the victim-survivor's health and wellbeing and designed to ensure the victim-survivor feels safe and validated.
- The newly established RSO role is welcome, although the RSOs have not yet become fully normalised for all Mannix residents (some residents continue to preference talking to student leaders over RSOs). The review expects the RSOs will be normalised further in the coming years.

## Among survey respondents...

**69%** felt Mannix responds to and supports residents affected by incidents of sexual harm and gender-based violence mostly or very well.

**89%** reported being very or mostly confident in their knowledge of where to seek immediate support within Mannix about an experience of sexual harm or gender-based violence.



*Our student leaders get thorough training, and I feel confident helping anyone who reaches out.*

*Survey free text response*



*The Resident Advisor that [!] disclosed to did an amazing job at supporting and explaining the process. The friends involved did a great job too. It is clear that everyone had proper training and skills*

*Survey free text response*

# Response processes at Mannix

## There are some opportunities for Mannix to fine-tune response processes

- Mannix's escalation process requires that if a resident advisor receives a disclosure of harm, they escalate the incident to a staff member immediately. This approach is designed to shift the burden from resident advisors to professional staff who have received additional training in trauma-informed responses. While the process is appropriate and Mannix' approach to monitoring and reporting of incidents has improved, student leaders do not always report into Mannix's system, often to respect the wishes of victim-survivors who want to remain anonymous. There are case-by-case instances in which escalation may not be the most trauma-informed response, but escalation nonetheless remains important for safety and for accurate monitoring of incidents.
- To address this, the safe, confidential, supportive and potentially anonymous or de-identified nature of disclosure could be emphasised to residents, as could the benefits of the escalation process to resident advisors.
- There are opportunities to review Mannix's data sharing policies and procedures with Monash to streamline monitoring and reporting.
- There is moderate awareness of the SCU among Mannix residents and low use of it among residents who had experienced sexual assault or harassment. Efforts to raise awareness and willingness to use the SCU could also be enhanced.

## Among survey respondents...

**A sub-sample of 9 residents** described one incident of sexual assault or harassment that they had disclosed to someone.

### Of these 9 residents...

- **Most** who had disclosed to a representative from Mannix felt listened to, believed and supported once they disclosed
- **No residents** decided to visit the Safer Community Unit, Monash's formal unit that responds to reports and disclosures of sexual harm and supports Monash students.



*My resident advisor supported me very well and made me know that it wasn't my fault and offered multiple variations of support including counselling. Mannix also explained to me the processes of reporting if I chose to do so and I was not pressured to make a decision but I was supported with whatever I decided to do.*

*Survey free text response*



## 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the review found that the prevention initiatives and response processes at Mannix are effective and appropriate, and that Mannix staff and student leaders are conscientious in this space. These recommendations are opportunities to fine-tune Mannix's approach to preventing and responding to sexual harm and gender-based violence.

- 1 Mannix should further strengthen its partnership with Monash by opting into a rolling review process every five years.
- 2 Mannix should reinforce to student leaders the importance of reporting incidents, doing so in a timely manner and the option of de-identified reporting.
- 3 Mannix should reinforce the safe, confidential, supportive and potentially de-identified nature of disclosure to residents, including its benefits to reporting and individual and collective safety.
- 4 Monash and Mannix should review data sharing policies and procedures to explore opportunities to align monitoring and reporting.
- 5 In collaboration with the EDI team, Mannix should strengthen training for student leaders and Mannix staff to support priority populations at higher risk of sexual harm and gender-based violence.
- 6 Mannix should build greater awareness of and willingness to use the SCU among all residents and collaborate with the SCU to expand its partnership.
- 7 In collaboration with the EDI team, Mannix should consider opportunities to enhance mandatory online training to make it more engaging for residents.
- 8 Mannix should ensure that mandatory training delivered to residents provides information on:
  - Toxic masculinity as a driver of sexual harm and gender-based violence.
  - The negative consequence of gossip.
  - The consequences of the negative attitudes held among men, heterosexual and international student residents.
  - The risk involved in off-site events and activities and how to negotiate off-site city safety.



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