Report to
Sancta Sophia College
on Cultural Renewal

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Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Project purpose

This report forms part of The Cultural Renewal Project (the 'Project') conducted by Elizabeth Broderick & Co. to examine the values, systems, behaviours and processes in five residential colleges ('Colleges') at the University of Sydney (the 'University'), including Sancta Sophia College. Put simply, the purpose of the Project was to understand elements of the existing culture of each College. To do this, the Project Team sought to understand the great strengths of College life – the sense of community; how academic excellence inspires students; pastoral care; extracurricular activities; the building of deep and lasting friendships; and networking opportunities and connection to College alumni.

The Project Team also sought to identify those areas of the culture in need of strengthening or renewal. For example, how easy it is to fit in? What are the traditions and are they still relevant? What part does alcohol play? Does an individual have to be a particular type of person to succeed? How are College students treated by the broader University community? What are the experiences of students in engaging and socialising with residents at other Colleges? How safe is the College? Are there instances of sexual harassment and sexual assault?

In those areas identified as requiring further action, strong recommendations for strengthening have been made.

This Project has been undertaken at the request of five Colleges, including Sancta Sophia College, its Council and the University of Sydney. Both the College and the University recognise the importance of institutional cultural reform as a catalyst for the development of skills, knowledge and values necessary for students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

In this report, the Project Team sets out its understanding of the prevailing cultural life of Sancta Sophia College, acknowledging the changes made in recent times to strengthen the College's culture. It uses this understanding to formulate recommendations that build on the reforms already underway at Sancta Sophia College. Building on existing reforms in a more systematic way will ensure that participation in this Project benefits not only current students but those who will reside at Sancta Sophia College in the future.

The Project Team acknowledges the support of the Principal, the staff and student leaders, who were critical to the success of the Project. This leadership group ensured strong levels of engagement in the cultural renewal process.

The Project has been conducted at an important time for Australian tertiary institutions, as universities and colleges across the country are focusing efforts on ensuring the safety, respect and well-being of students. This Project represents one of the first in Australia to examine and respond to these issues specifically in the context of university residential colleges. To that end, Sancta Sophia College, the four other independent Colleges and the University of Sydney are leaders in this area and it is hoped that this report and associated recommendations will serve as a blueprint for other colleges, in Australia and internationally, to strengthen and evolve their culture.

1.2   Project approach

1.2.1 General

The findings and recommendations contained in this report are underpinned by evidence obtained from both qualitative and quantitative data. Data from an online survey ('the Survey'), discussion groups and one-on-one interviews with students, staff and recent alumni, a review of academic literature and a review of Sancta Sophia College's own policies and statistics, as well as advice from staff and student leaders, all contributed to building a substantial evidence base for this Project.

All participation in the Project was voluntary and the diversity of opportunities to contribute to the Project allowed students a choice as to how they engaged. It also ensured students could be involved in the Project on a confidential basis. The Survey instrument was developed in collaboration with the College Heads and the Social Research Centre, a leading research institution affiliated with the Australian National University. The Social Research Centre also performed all analysis of the Survey data. Approval to administer the Survey was sought and granted by the University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee. See Appendix A for further details on the methodology of the Survey.[1] Students who participated in the Survey and in discussion forums were provided with contact details for relevant referral and support services.

This report, along with the individual reports delivered to each of the other four participating Colleges, is complemented by the report 'Cultural Renewal at University of Sydney Residential Colleges' that provides further detail on the evidence base for the Project's findings and best practice approaches to addressing many of the issues contained in this report.

1.2.2 Specific to Sancta Sophia College

In summary:

- Seven discussion groups were held with Sancta Sophia College students, with 75 students participating over 2016 and 2017 across first, second and third year and postgraduate students, student leaders and Resident Assistants.
- Three recent alumni who contacted the Project Team were interviewed.
- A total of 197 Sancta Sophia College students participated in the Survey, with the Survey attracting a 70% response rate (on par with the 69% response rate across the five residential Colleges).

The Survey results of Sancta Sophia College are compared to the combined results across the five residential Colleges participating in this Project. Statistically significant differences between the reported experiences of students surveyed at Sancta Sophia College and the experience of students across the five residential Colleges are highlighted in this report.

Of note: The Project Team conducted a broad review of culture and as such did not investigate or make findings about any incidents or allegations raised by individual students.

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1   It is important to note that the Survey is not comparable with results reported in the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Change the Course* report, where the sample of students tested and the questions posed were different.

1.3   Background and context

1.3.1 Life at Sancta Sophia

Sancta Sophia College has been empowering and supporting students, predominantly women, for nearly a century. It has a rich and illustrious history, exemplified in its motto '*Walk in Wisdom*'. The deep pride of students in the College and the richness of College life emerged as key themes throughout the Project.

Gender: Sancta Sophia College is a co-educational College, women-only at the undergraduate level and men and women at the postgraduate level. In 2017, undergraduate students account for approximately 67% of the student population. The postgraduate population is housed in a separate building with around 60% women and 40% men.

Geographic and other forms of diversity: Of Sancta Sophia College students, 39% are from NSW regional or remote areas; 28% are international students; 19% are from interstate; and 14% are from the Sydney metropolitan area. In terms of diversity across other areas, 7% of Survey respondents identified with a sexuality other than straight/heterosexual (including bisexual, asexual or undecided/unsure/still questioning) and 8% identified as living with a disability. Two Sancta Sophia College students identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Leadership: Sancta Sophia College is headed by a Principal who is supported by a professional team with a range of expertise. With both undergraduate and postgraduate student populations, Sancta Sophia College has an undergraduate House Committee and a postgraduate Senior Common Room Committee. The House Committee, of which there are 13 members including the Senior Student, is the organising arm of the Students' Club. The Senior Common Room Committee, of which there are 7 members including the President, is the organising arm of the Senior Common Room. All undergraduate students are members of the Student Club and all postgraduate students are members of the Senior Common Room. Leaders for both the House Committee and Senior Common Room Committee are elected at their Annual General Meetings. The Student Club and the Senior Common Room are both unincorporated associations with their own constitutions, reflecting their significant autonomy and power as well as their strong responsibility to properly discharge their duties.

Support for students: Sancta Sophia College offers students a range of support and assistance to enhance their sense of belonging and assist their personal development; their academic achievements; their College and University experience; and, for the first year students particularly (the 'freshers'), their transition into adulthood. Support and assistance is offered in relation to the following areas:

- Academic support
- Pastoral care and well-being
- Spiritual life
- Leadership and career development
- Cultural and sport programs
- Social activities
- Health, safety and security.

The support network at Sancta Sophia College includes 14 Resident Assistants (RAs), including a Senior RA, who are senior students with leadership capability. They are appointed and trained to ensure that students are supported during their time at College. Similar models of peer support have been shown to be effective because, as students themselves, RAs can understand many of the issues which students are experiencing. This support network also includes key staff, including the Principal and Vice Principal.

Activities: Sancta Sophia College offers a wide range of extracurricular activities including a diverse range of sport and cultural pursuits. Sancta Sophia College is the only College that participates in the University of Sydney Intramural Sport and Arts competitions.

O Week: Orientation week, or 'O Week', at Sancta Sophia College involves a number of celebratory activities, as well as activities which orient students to the policies, values and systems of the College. This includes presentations on issues relating to mental health, first aid, alcohol use, and sexual harassment and sexual assault.

1.3.2 Previous changes and particular strengths

In recent years Sancta Sophia College has made a number of changes to life at the College, these being instituted prior to the commencement of this Project. The Project Team acknowledges the College's strong progress on cultural change and it notes that a number of the Project's recommendations build on Sancta Sophia College's initiatives. These include:

- Stricter rules concerning activities in O Week.
- Strong training, including bystander education and training, for leaders and RAs.
- A strengthened focus on the management of alcohol.

In making such changes, Sancta Sophia College has built on its considerable strengths. Key strengths identified during the course of the Project include the diversity of its student body, the deep sense of belonging felt by the majority of students and the strong support and pastoral care offered to students.

In addition to this, the Project Team notes that, importantly, all student leaders at Sancta Sophia College, including RAs, receive training on such issues as first aid, mental health and bystander training. It also notes that Sancta Sophia College's policies on unacceptable behaviours, including bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault and alcohol consumption have particular elements that reflect best practice approaches.

1.3.3 Areas for strengthening

While noting the many positive aspects of cultural life at Sancta Sophia College areas for strengthening were also identified in the course of the Project. These areas are not necessarily unique to Sancta Sophia College but left unaddressed will limit the College's ability to provide a safe, supportive and inclusive environment in the future. Areas identified include:

- Ensuring the election of student leaders is democratic as well as transparent and rigorous. The process should ensure that those students with the best leadership qualities or potential are selected, rather than those who may be the most popular.
- Continuing to ensure that female postgraduate students are given tangible opportunities for leadership roles, both as a matter of fairness and equality but also because considerable research confirms that gender-diverse leadership teams in any organisation perform more effectively and have better outcomes than homogenous teams.
- Continuing to foster a respectful and safe environment and when unacceptable behaviours occur, there is at all times a safe reporting environment and a rigorous complaints handling and support system.
- Ensuring the better integration of Sancta Sophia College students into the broader University of Sydney community.

In relation to this last point, Sancta Sophia College students stated that they experienced marginalisation and, on occasion, hostility from students and staff from the broader University of Sydney community.

2. Principles and Findings

A number of principles informed a set of overarching recommendations which the Project Team has made to all the Colleges participating in this Project. This approach has been taken because while distinct strengths and challenges were evident in the life of each participating College, *all* Colleges will benefit from building on their strengths in a more systematic and sustainable way. A common set of recommendations acknowledges that a cohesive and collaborative intercollegiate community will have a united response to culture, one that benefits individual Colleges, the University and in particular, the students.

The following findings about Sancta Sophia College are grouped under and take their lead from these principles.

Principle 1: Successful and sustainable cultural renewal depends on strong and courageous leadership

Within Sancta Sophia College there are three tiers of leadership: the College Council, staff leadership and student leaders. All three tiers of leadership should visibly commit to the next phase of the cultural renewal journey as they demonstrated when committing to involvement in the current Project. The Project Team observed a strong enthusiasm for ongoing cultural renewal among Sancta Sophia College staff and students, and recognition of the need for leadership at all levels to be responsible for driving meaningful reform.

Sancta Sophia College students felt supported by staff, peers and the student leadership team. Indeed, 87% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I feel supported by peers and staff' (on par with the experience across the five residential Colleges). However, only 69% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I feel supported by student leaders' (significantly lower than the 77% of students across the five residential Colleges). This discrepancy is likely explained by the smaller proportion of undergraduate students in their second year or higher at College (68%) and postgraduate students (61%) who agreed or strongly agreed that they felt supported by student leaders compared to undergraduate freshers who agreed or strongly agreed (78%).

While many aspects of the overall model for selection of student leaders work well, the Project Team believes that ultimate responsibility for the welfare of students should lie with the Principal, Council and, in appropriate cases, other staff.

There was a view that the current model enables supportive and good leaders to be elected. However, an alternative view is that the election process may not consistently ensure the most effective leaders or those with the most promising capability are elected. Rather, there is a risk that students could be elected based on their popularity.

2.1   Best practice student leadership

Best practice recognises that student leadership is integral, not supplementary, to the successful operations of educational institutions. Developed specifically for university student leadership, the 'social change model'[2] sees all people as potential leaders and leadership as involving collaborative relationships which lead to collective action. This suggests that 'a conscious focus on values should be at the core of any leadership development effort'.[3] Best practice affirms the importance of leadership development programs, as well as transparent and rigorous selection processes.[4]

This means that election processes need to ensure that candidates share and emulate the values of the Sancta Sophia College community, including respect and inclusion. Formal role descriptions should be developed together with clear criteria for selection that candidates must address. Student leaders also benefit from ongoing support via mentoring, team-building exercises and feedback.

2.2   Gender diversity in student leadership

The postgraduate community at Sancta Sophia College is co-educational and, as noted above, includes 60% women and 40% men. To continue to strengthen the student leadership, the Project Team believes that ensuring that at least one woman holds one of the top leadership roles in the Senior Common Room is crucial in terms of reflecting the diversity of the group they lead.

A 40:40:20 model is one that a number of organisations adopt to ensure this balance – 40% are male; 40% are female and 20% are either gender. This model known as a "gender neutral target" allows for gender diversity and importantly, allows for a diversity of views and thoughts, a key element for good leadership and decision making. Without a diverse leadership group, the College runs the risk of not accessing the best talent for leadership roles. It is important to recognise that the above model is not inconsistent with merit. As stated in a letter co-signed by the organisation, Chief Executive Women and the coalition, Male Champions of Change:

> *adhering to an un-interrogated idea of merit means there is no examination of biases, and it reinforces the idea that gender inequality is about supply side problems rather than demand. So organisations miss out on the best talent and are fishing in an ever smaller pool of candidates. A pool that fails to reflect the community our organisations serve. If we continue to define 'merit' as people 'like us' who have done what we did, we will get more of the same.*[5]

2.3   Resident Assistants

Sancta Sophia College's RA model mirrors similar peer assistance programs that exist in many college residential settings across the nation and internationally. Such programs have been the subject of considerable research and have been described as the 'eyes and ears' of the institution. RAs simultaneously fulfil the roles of a student; role model; counsellor; teacher and administrator.[6] What's more, the occasionally serious issues to which RAs frequently respond, including mental health concerns, alcohol-related issues and sexual assault, have been described by some observers as a role 'more akin to that of a professional's or first responder's.'[7]

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2   Astin, H & Astin, W 2000, *Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change.*
3   Astin, H & Astin, W 1996, *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development: Guidebook,* Version III, Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, p. 16.
4   See, e.g., Astin, H & Astin, W 2000, *Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change*; Hilliard, A 2010, 'Student Leadership at the University', Journal of College Teaching & Learning (TLC), 7(2); Dugan, J & Komives, S 2007, *Developing Leadership Capacity in College Students: Findings from a National Study*, National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, College Park, MD; Astin, H & Astin, W 1996, *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development*: Guidebook version III, Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles; Cress, C, Astin, H, Zimmerman-Oster, K & Burkhardt, J 2001, 'Developmental outcomes of College students' involvement in leadership activities', *Journal of College Student Development*, 42:1, pp. 15–27.
5   Male Champions of Change 2016, *In The Eye of The Beholder: Avoiding the Merit Trap*. Accessed 1 August 2017. http://malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/ uploads/2016/08/MCC-CEW-Merit-Paper-FINAL.pdf.
6   Letarte, CM 2013, 'Keepers of the Night: The Dangerously Important Role of Resident Assistants on College and University Campuses in Kentucky', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Practice*, Volume 2, Issue 2, December, p. 5.
7   ibid., p. 24.

Students at Sancta Sophia College valued the RA model at their College and felt that as students themselves, RAs have a deeper awareness of issues impacting on individuals of their age. They can observe and reach out to a student who may, for example, be struggling with academic studies or College life, isolating themselves or drinking excessively.

While acknowledging the benefits of students supporting other students but echoing concerns documented in the research, the Project Team considers that the responsibilities of providing this support can be onerous for RAs. RAs' age, their level of life experience, and their lack of technical experience in dealing with sometimes-complex issues, including mental health issues and sexual assault, can place significant pressure on them. RAs should be provided with appropriate support to debrief on issues that might distress them, so as to minimise any risk of vicarious trauma.

2.4   Student hierarchy

In many residential college environments, both in Australia and overseas, a student hierarchy exists beyond the formal student leadership system. This student hierarchy generally involves seniority and power increasing as people progress through year levels. Rather than formal rules that operate to define the hierarchy, it operates largely by way of convention or through a set of unspoken rules and accepted norms.

Elements of a hierarchy at Sancta Sophia College have been eliminated and the Project Team noted much collegiality among students:

> We don't have that clear delineation between year groups. It's not so rigid here. Second years and third years make an effort to be friendly to the new freshers.

> It is just the culture here that you speak to people that are in lower years.

However, another view was that:

> The culture of the college is very much focused on the autocratic power of the House Committee.

The Survey revealed that 16% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'student leaders have too much power' (on par with students surveyed across the five residential Colleges).

Student hierarchies which are not a part of the proper and accountable student leadership system can undermine the inclusiveness of the College and, for some students, be detrimental. Unchecked, a negative hierarchy can result in, at best, an inequality between individuals and, at worst, abuses of power. The Project Team commends Sancta Sophia College for its efforts in eliminating the negative elements of the student hierarchy and believes it is vital that such reforms are not wound back.

Principle 2: Inclusive institutions foster and celebrate diversity, respect and non-discrimination

An inclusive College is one where there is respect for all, where diversity is core to its operation, and fairness and equality underpin decision-making. Inclusive practice values the unique contribution that every student makes and is defined as much by what an institution does not accept as what it does. Students at Sancta Sophia College spoke positively about the overall inclusive nature of their College:

> Sancta is unique. We look after our community, it's very personal, genuine, integrated with postgrads …a very encouraging environment.

> [Sancta] was inclusive and diverse from the beginning and is still incredibly inclusive.

2.5   Belonging

A strong and consistent theme was the sense of belonging and inclusion felt by Sancta Sophia College students. The Survey revealed that 82% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I feel a sense of belonging' and 85% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I get involved in activities and social events organised by Sancta Sophia College' (on par with students surveyed across the five residential Colleges). This strong sense of belonging also featured in many of the discussions with Sancta Sophia College students, in group sessions and individual interviews:

> I feel as if Sancta is a family away from home.

> I think that College is…a safe and supportive environment in which I am constantly encouraged to grow and become my 'best self'.

> The postgraduate environment at Sancta is highly conducive to the demands of a stressful degree. I have always felt extremely supported by my peers and the staff at the College and for this I will always be grateful.

Research confirms that belonging is vital to a positive student experience. However, it also confirms that residential College students can also feel pressure to 'fit in' to the prevailing environment.[8] The Survey showed that 6% of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I don't fit in at Sancta Sophia College' (on par with the experience of students across the five residential Colleges). Asked why they do not feel they 'fit in', the most common reason given was due to social isolation or other students being unwelcoming, with a smaller number mentioning it was due to their socioeconomic background.

A further 13% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed stated that they had experienced 'being excluded or isolated' since starting at Sancta Sophia College (on par with the experience of students across the five residential Colleges):

> It's hard for me to approach people and get to know them so due to this I keep to myself.

> I'm slow to grow comfortable with people, and as such I have been ostracised because it takes too much time for people to spend with me to feel comfortable.

2.5.1 Diversity and fitting in

Sancta Sophia College has a diverse student population of which students were particularly proud:

> We have so many students from the country, from out of Sydney. We have students from overseas. I think it adds so many good and interesting layers to the College than, I guess, drawing everyone from Sydney.

According to information provided by the College, just over one-third of Sancta Sophia students are domestic students from regional or remote areas (39%), 28% are international students, 19% from interstate, and 14% are from the Sydney metropolitan area.

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8   While academic literature on fitting in and belonging in residential colleges is limited, studies that address this issue in the context of university campuses more broadly, can be instructive. See, e.g., Hamrick, FA, Evans, NJ & Schuh, JH 2002, *Foundations of student affairs practice: How philosophy, theory, and research strengthen educational outcomes*. John Wiley & Sons; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017, *Supporting Students' College Success: The Role of Assessment of Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Competencies*, The National Academies Press: Washington, DC; Tinto, V 1993, *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*, 2nd ed, University of Chicago Press, Chicago; Pittman, L & Richmond, A 2008, 'University Belonging, Friendship Quality, and Psychological Adjustment During the Transition to College', *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 76:4, pp. 343–362; Cooper, R 2009, 'Constructing Belonging in a Diverse Campus Community', *Journal of College and Character*, Vol X, No.3, February.

Approximately 7% of Survey respondents identified with a sexuality other than heterosexual (including bisexual, asexual and undecided/not sure/questioning); and 8% identified as 'living with a disability that has lasted or is likely to last 6 months or more that has an impact on your day-to-day life'. According to data provided by the College, two Sancta Sophia College students identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Students also stated:

> There are many students from different cultures and countries. It is a great College for international students. Everyone is so warm and welcoming and very respectful.

> …two [students] did come out as being together…[and] everyone was very, very accepting. Everyone was just like 'Oh yeah, righto, they're together, that's fine'. There wasn't a huge drama.

However, a small percentage of students surveyed (4%) reported experiencing 'intolerance of diversity' including 'racist slurs directed at you', 'homophobic slurs directed at you', or 'pressure to hide or deny your sexual orientation and/or gender identity to fit in or be accepted' (on par with the experience of students across the five residential Colleges). A further 5% of students reported that they had witnessed or observed behaviour amounting to intolerance of diversity directed at another Sancta Sophia College student and 4% reported that they had witnessed or observed this of both a fellow Sancta Sophia College student and a student from another University of Sydney College (on par with the experience of students across the five residential Colleges).

2.5.2 Alcohol and fitting in

Access to alcohol and its excessive consumption are concerning features of residential college life. Though students rightly noted that alcohol as a social lubricant is a significant factor for the broader Australian community, among college student populations, research confirms that excessive and potentially harmful consumption of alcohol is a substantial feature of student life.[9]

The Survey revealed that 30% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'drinking alcohol helps me to socialise and make friends at College'. This is a significantly lower result when compared to the 49% of students reporting this across the five residential Colleges.

Furthermore, 13% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'there is too much focus on drinking at Sancta Sophia' (on par with the experience of students across the five residential Colleges).

While this did not necessarily lead to a sense of pressure to drink, a clear theme was that drinking was critical to finding one's 'place' at College:

> I don't want to party like a lot of others and this can make me feel excluded.

> There are still many small events at the college where the main focus is drinking alcohol (in excessive amounts) that are uncomfortable for students who choose not to drink alcohol.

2.6 Relationship with the intercollege community

Intercollege relations play an important role in students' College experience. The intercollege community provides opportunities for students to meet, socialise and make friends with residents from other Colleges, to play sport competitively and to perform in plays and musical groups, to name but a few activities. Intercollege activities are at a height during O Week.

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9   See, e.g., Kypri, K, Cronin, M & Wright, C 2005, 'Do university students drink more hazardously than their non-student peers?' Addiction, 100, pp. 713–714; Ham, L & Hope, D 2003, 'College students and problematic drinking: A review of the literature', *Clinical Psychology Review*, 23, pp. 719–759; Gill, J 2002, 'Reported levels of alcohol consumption and binge drinking within the UK under-graduate student population over the last 25 years', *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 37, pp. 109–120; McAlaney, J & McMahon, J 2007, 'Normative beliefs, misperceptions and heavy episodic drinking in a British student sample', *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 68, pp. 385–392; Schofield, T 2014, *Alcohol use and harm minimisation among Australian university students: Final report to University Colleges Australia*; Hughes, C 2012, 'All Beer and Skittles? A Qualitative Pilot Study of the Role of Alcohol in University College Life', *Australian Universities Review*, 54, p. 22–28; and Leontini, R 2016. *Alcohol use and harm minimisation among Australian university students*. Paper presented at the Second Collegiate Way International Conference, 13–17 Nov 2016, ANU, Canberra. Accessed 19 July 2017. https://universitycollegeaustralia.edu.au/conferences/papers

Sancta Sophia College has an important and valuable role in the University of Sydney intercollege community. The Project Team was concerned to learn that Sancta Sophia College students can experience negative and disrespectful behaviours and attitudes from other College students:

> When you're together, you're talking to someone, generally it's fine, but then sometimes you kind of mention 'Oh yeah, I'm from Sancta', and there would be this look, and there'd just be comments like – 'I'm not sure if you guys know the nickname for Sancta, which is "Skankta".'

> The two kinds of perceptions of Sancta girls – we are kind of seen as being sluts, because of 'Skankta', but then we are also like seen as being very religious and kind of…prudes.

These comments highlight the need for all College heads and student leaders to strengthen efforts to create a respectful intercollege community.

2.7 Relationship with the broader University of Sydney community

A strong theme emerging throughout the Project was College students' sense of marginalisation by other students and staff from the wider University of Sydney community. While less of a concern for Sancta Sophia College students, nevertheless 27% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I feel stigmatised by University of Sydney students and staff because I go to College' (significantly lower than the experience of students surveyed across the five residential Colleges (51%)). Postgraduate students were significantly less likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement (5%) than undergraduate freshers (36%) or undergraduate students in their second year or higher (37%).

Students stated that they can be unfairly targeted for negative treatment irrespective of what College they attend or whether media reports of poor behaviour relate to Sancta Sophia College. There was a sense that students would not identify themselves at University as residing at Sancta Sophia College:

> I'm proud I go to College but you just get this sense that other non-resident students look down on you or put you in a box of being like out-of-control party animals.

> I have found that the most [negative] issue that I have had in attending College is the reactions of others who do not attend College, such as university staff and other students. It is to the point where I generally don't mention that I attend College for a while once I meet someone and I don't wear College merchandise around campus.

That said, there was a perception that College residents more broadly may contribute to or compound this isolation by confining themselves to only College-based activities or engaging with the broader campus during O Week in a way that draws negative attention. To this end, it was suggested that a greater level of interaction with those on the broader University campus be encouraged by College staff and student leaders.

Principle 3: A lively, exciting and dynamic culture that also ensures the safety, dignity, health and well-being of students is critical to a thriving and progressive College

Colleges are places where students should feel 'at home', be supported to undertake their university studies and be able to engage with the dynamic intellectual, cultural and social life of the College community. Attitudes and behaviours that reflect the values of the College should be modelled and practised at all times.

O Week: Sancta Sophia College offers students a wide range of extracurricular activities that enable new students to explore new opportunities and experiences and establish friendships. This includes during O Week, with a strong theme throughout the Project being how enjoyable students found this period. Changes to O Week have meant that it is more inclusive and fosters greater bonding:

I think Sancta does O Week really, really well, and especially this year. There was a dramatic difference between ours and everyone else's, because we came in on the Saturday. So we have a good four or five days without any other Colleges… and that was really important for us. I think that's where that community comes from, like you're friends from the start, and have that kind of internal situation before you're thrown into intercol.

O Week was good because we were all on the same playing field. Any previous hierarchy from high school doesn't exist.

However, O Week was challenging for some students, particularly in relation to what some believed was the strong focus on drinking:

[I was] surprised at the amount of alcohol on offer every night.

O Week was intense, insane and I think a lot of it was because of the drinking.

The Project Team has made recommendations about reforms to O Week across the Colleges which include an emphasis on harm minimisation while at the same time retaining its celebratory nature. A number of the recommendations build on reforms already made at Sancta Sophia College. Best practice suggests that there is no 'one size fits all' model for student orientation. Rather, programs should be tailored to the students and the institution, and should consider the social and academic needs of the students, the mission and goals of the institution, and how best to integrate the students in light of these.[10] The recommendations of this report reflect these priorities.

2.8   The place of alcohol at Sancta Sophia College

As noted in 2.5.2, the Survey indicated that 30% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'drinking alcohol helps me to socialise and make friends at College' (significantly lower than across the five residential Colleges (49%)). Significantly more undergraduates than postgraduates agreed with this statement, with 40% of undergraduate freshers and 31% of undergraduate students in their second year or higher agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement compared with 19% of postgraduates.

Furthermore, 13% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'there is too much focus on drinking at Sancta Sophia College' and 14% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed reported experiencing 'pressure to drink alcohol when you didn't want to' (on par with the experience of students across the five residential Colleges). In relation to such pressure, some students stated:

At Sancta… nobody has pressured me into drinking during O Week or any other time because I have friends who don't drink. They were never forced to drink. It is a friendly environment. Drink if you want to or you can have soda if you want to and no one judges you for it.

People will not drink if they don't want to. For me personally, I have attended a lot of events and never once felt that I had to drink, to be cool or whatever.

In contrast, other students commented that they can feel excluded if they do not drink:

Not drinking to socialise sets me apart from the rest of the College. I do feel different from the others by not drinking.

Sancta Sophia College does not have a College bar but students have access to a number of bars at other University of Sydney Colleges. Like other College students, Sancta Sophia College students can consume alcohol in their rooms. Excessive alcohol consumption can put students at risk of harm to themselves (e.g. alcohol-related injury) or harm to others (e.g. sexual assault or other assault). Given that opportunities for alcohol consumption at Sancta Sophia College are frequent (as they are across other Colleges), the Project Team has made recommendations for a uniform harm-minimisation approach across the Colleges. This includes reforms to the demand and supply of alcohol to the student body, as well as recommendations regarding how it is managed.

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10   HigherEdJobs n.d. 'New Student Programs: A Look Inside Orientation, Transition and Retention Programs', Interview with Dr. Cynthia L. Hernandez of Texas A&M University. Accessed 7 Nov 2017. https://www.higheredjobs.com/HigherEdCareers/interviews.cfm?ID=402.

Principle 4: Unacceptable and disrespectful attitudes and behaviours negatively impact on individuals, Colleges and the College community

All students in a residential College have the right to feel and be safe, included and respected. Sustaining a culture of respectful relationships is key to a zero-tolerance approach to any unacceptable attitudes and behaviours.

Safety in the College environment, both psychological and physical, was a key theme in discussions with Sancta Sophia College students and in the Survey. The transition from home into even semi-independent living can be daunting for students. A sense of safety is therefore critical to allow students to settle successfully into college and to remain there.

2.9   Psychological and physical safety

Many Sancta Sophia College students told the Project Team that they feel safe and secure at the College:

> *This is a safe environment. I have felt this from the beginning. I feel as if Sancta…is a very safe environment.*

> *We feel very safe here and are surrounded by supportive people who watch out for you.*

In relation to psychological safety specifically, students commented:

> *I always feel that I can express how I feel here without being judged. Sancta really encourages us to speak out on issues and to have an opinion.*

However, when asked to agree or disagree with the statement 'I do not always feel safe at Sancta Sophia College', 8% of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (on par with students surveyed across the five residential Colleges). Those students were then asked why they did not always feel safe. The most common responses included the drinking culture or binge drinking and worries about campus security and strangers coming on site.

The issue of mental health was raised by students in discussion groups. While assessing responses to student's mental health was not within the purview of the Project, the Project Team acknowledges the referral pathways and options provided to students who experience mental health issues or who may suffer psychological or emotional distress. The Project Team also acknowledges the provision of support options to RAs. Such options are important to ensure these student leaders do not feel overwhelmed by their roles and to minimise their risk of vicarious trauma.

2.10 Bullying and 'hazing'

So-called 'hazing', a term used by students themselves, can often be associated with the so-called traditions and rituals of an institution. Hazing can be defined as:

> *…any action taken or any situation created intentionally that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group or team, whether new or not, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.*[11]

Notably, willingness to participate or the giving of consent does not mean that an activity is not deemed to be hazing. Common characteristics of hazing include power differentials based on hierarchy and social dominance between freshers and more senior students; and intentional initiation rites usually based upon College-specific traditions and rituals.[12] In many instances, alcohol and other substance abuse is a common feature of hazing.[13]

11   Hazingprevention.org '*What hazing looks like*'. Accessed 10 July 2017. http://hazingprevention.org/home/hazing/facts-what-hazing-looks-like.
12   ibid.
13   Diamond, A, Callahan, S, Chain, K & Solomon, G 2016, 'Qualitative review of hazing in collegiate and school sports: Consequences from a lack of culture, knowledge and responsiveness', *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 50, pp. 149–153.

The Project Team had no evidence of any student being seriously injured from activities that could be characterised as hazing. Of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed, only 4% reported experiencing 'hazing' (significantly lower than the experience of surveyed students across the five residential Colleges (13%)) and 7% reported experiencing 'pressure to participate in activities that were humiliating or intimidating to you or other students' (on par with the experience of surveyed students across the five residential Colleges).[14] Further, 47% of students surveyed reported witnessing or observing 'hazing', 'pressure to participate in activities that were humiliating or intimidating to them or other students' or 'bullying or intimidation', with 12% of these students stating that this was directed at a Sancta Sophia College resident; 17% stating that this was directed at a Sancta Sophia College resident and resident of another College; and 29% stated this was directed at a resident of a different College (on par with the experience of surveyed students across the five residential Colleges).[15]

The Project Team acknowledges that hazing can be subject to a number of different interpretations by students, some of whom consider it to be 'fun' and not dangerous or demeaning. Others said that the safety of first years is a high priority for student leaders and they should not be subjected to anything unsafe or humiliating:

> *A lot of the incidents, such as the hazing, were very minor, like 'fresher fitness' where freshers are woken up at 5am and made to run a lap of the oval, or making them do their fresher dance (which is very silly, not even sexual) in random places like at other Colleges.*

> *We treat freshers like our little sisters. We don't make them do things just because it's a tradition.*

However, when asked in the Survey what made them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, some Sancta Sophia College students cited hazing as the reason:

> *Hazing of other College students. Forced into ritualistic things for freshers.*

The Project Team acknowledges that the lines between positive activities on the one hand and those that may be considered hazing on the other can be blurred, particularly when injury or harm is not obvious; when extreme forms of hazing are not evident; and when consent by participants is given. This ambiguity can be compounded when organisations, including Colleges, do not provide a clear definition of what constitutes hazing. As a result, it can be difficult to separate or 'unpack' activities that might legitimately and positively challenge and connect students from those that present risk of harm or can be humiliating. While the Project Team does not recommend eliminating the many positive and affiliative activities, it does believe that Colleges and their students in particular, would benefit from identifying and then reforming those activities which pose risk.

In relation to bullying specifically, the benchmark definition is that proposed by Olweus[16] who pioneered work in bullying among school students. He suggested a student is being bullied when the individual:

> *…is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students… An additional criterion of bullying is an imbalance in strength (an asymmetric power relationship).*[17]

The Survey found that 6% of Sancta Sophia College students have experienced 'bullying or intimidation' since commencing at Sancta Sophia College (on par with the experience of surveyed students across the five residential Colleges). A further 17% of students surveyed reported 'being excluded or isolated' or experiencing 'malicious or hurtful rumours' since commencing at Sancta Sophia College (on par with the experience of surveyed students across the five residential Colleges).[18]

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14   Note, in total, 11% of surveyed students reported experiencing 'bullying or intimidation', 'hazing' or 'pressure to participate in activities that were humiliating or intimidating to you or other students' (significantly lower than the 19% of students across the five residential Colleges).
15   As students could select more than one category, the sum of the categories may amount to greater than the total.
16   Olweus, D 1995, 'Bullying or peer abuse at school: Facts and intervention'. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 4 (6), pp. 196–200.
17   ibid.
18   13% of Sancta Sophia College students reported experiencing 'exclusion or isolation', and 8% reported experiencing 'malicious or hurtful rumours about you'.

The College's policy on bullying is found in the Code of Conduct (the 'Code') in the Student Guide.[19] The policy clearly enunciates that any form of bullying (including cyber-bullying) is not tolerated and is a breach not only of the College's rules but also its ethos:

> *It is the expectation and responsibility of every resident to ensure they uphold the College values, aspire to demonstrate the highest level of personal integrity at all times, and do not promote or engage in harassment, discrimination or bullying.*[20]

The policy gives a clear definition of bullying as well as a number of examples of conduct that could amount to bullying. However, hazing is not explicitly addressed in the Code.

2.10.1 Best practice responses to hazing and orientation

Studies in the United States and the United Kingdom have established best practice standards on the management and prevention of hazing and other orientation rituals that can cause harm to students. Allan and Madden's 2008 National Study of Student Hazing is the most comprehensive survey to date of hazing at US tertiary institutions.[21]

Examples of hazing practices provided in the study include:

- Drinking games, including to the point of getting sick or blackout.
- Chanting songs publicly and out of context.
- Sleep deprivation.
- Being shouted at and/or called names by senior students.
- Games designed to humiliate participants or outsiders to the group.[22]

Four key themes to combat hazing and promote student safety emerge from the evidence:

- Clear policies which communicate zero tolerance for hazing or any other behaviour that compromises student safety.
- Comprehensive education about hazing and alternatives to it provided for all students.
- Support for victims, including through appropriate reporting options and discipline for perpetrators.
- Support by institutional leadership that models values; enforces and is accountable to its policies; and that works in concert with students.

Hazing prevention policies need to be implemented carefully and with student involvement to avoid backlash. Sancta Sophia College has already demonstrated its willingness to work with students by involving them substantively in cultural reform to date.

2.11 Sexual misconduct

Recently, there has been considerable media attention both in Australia and overseas about sexual misconduct in residential College settings. Incidents ranging from sexism and misogyny right through to sexual harassment and sexual assault have been reported. Some incidents have resulted in College policy changes, including the implementation of stronger disciplinary and accountability measures.

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19   Sancta College (2016). *Student guide.* Internal document.
20   ibid., p. 23.
21   Allan, EJ & Madden, M 2008, 'Hazing in View: College Students at Risk', *National Study of Student Hazing*, March 11, p. 36.
22   ibid. Also, de Klerk, V 2013, 'Initiation, Hazing or Orientation? A case study at a South African University', *International Research in Education*, July, 1:1, p. 99; Indiana Dept of Education n.d. *Sexual Harassment and Hazing: Your Actions Make a Difference!*; LaFerney, MC, 2016. 'You Can Help Victims of Hazing Recover from Psychological and Physical Harm', *Current Psychiatry*, 15(3), p. 72; Sonoma State University n.d. *Helping Students in Distress*, p. 15; Senate Orientation Activities Review Board 2016, *Orientation Week Policy Manual*, Queens University; Campo, S, Poulos, G & Sipple, JW 2005, 'Prevalence and Profiling: Hazing Among College Students and Points of Intervention', *American Journal of Health Behaviour*, March 21.

The issue of sexual misconduct was explored in discussion groups and during one-on-one interviews with Sancta Sophia students. While no disclosure of sexual assault was made directly to the Project Team in one-on-one interviews and in discussion groups, students were keen to share their views on the issue, as well as on sexual harassment.

The Australian Human Rights Commission's *National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities* reported that:

- Alcohol was often identified as a factor that contributed to people's experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

- The Commission received a number of submissions that reported sexual assault while the person being assaulted was unconscious or severely impaired due to the influence of alcohol.

- A particularly large number of submissions identified alcohol as a factor contributing to sexual assault and sexual harassment that occurred in Colleges.[23]

The Survey revealed that 5% of Sancta Sophia College women surveyed reported that they had experienced sexist remarks directed at them since starting at College (significantly lower when compared with 14% of women across the five residential Colleges). Of these students, approximately one-third reported that they experienced the behaviour from fellow Sancta Sophia College students, while the majority experienced the behaviour from students from a different residential College. In addition, 6% of Sancta Sophia College women surveyed indicated they had experienced 'feeling like you should have sex in order to fit in or be accepted' (on par with the experience of women across the five residential Colleges).

2.11.1 Sexual harassment and sexual assault

The Survey results revealed that 15% of Sancta Sophia College women have experienced sexual harassment[24] since commencing at the College (significantly lower when compared with women surveyed across the five residential Colleges (25%)). Undergraduate students in their second year or higher at Sancta Sophia College were significantly more likely to report this (29%) compared with undergraduate freshers (7%) and postgraduates (7%).

Importantly, when a list of behaviours that constitute sexual harassment were presented, 14% of Sancta Sophia College students acknowledged they had experienced one of more of the behaviours. However, when students were directly asked if they had experienced sexual harassment, only 9% indicated they had experienced sexual harassment showing a gap in some students' knowledge of what constitutes sexual harassment.

For women,[25] the most common forms of sexual harassment included 'unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing' (9%); 'inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel uncomfortable' (6%); 'sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended' (5%); 'intrusive questions about private life/comments about physical appearance that made you feel offended' (4%); 'requests or pressure for sex, or other sexual acts' (4%); 'sexual gestures, indecent exposure, or inappropriate display of the body' (3%); and 'inappropriate physical contact' (3%).

The vast majority of incidents of sexual harassment occurred during the academic year, outside of O Week. Around one-half occurred at a different University of Sydney College residence or grounds, and about one-third at the College residence or grounds. In the majority of incidents, students from a different University of Sydney residential College engaged in the behaviour and in around one-third were fellow students who were in a more senior year at their College. Almost all incidents involved males only engaging in the behaviour.

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23 Australian Human Rights Commission 2017, *Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities*, Australian Government, Sydney.

24 Sexual harassment was defined in the Survey as: 'Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which, in the circumstances, a reasonable person, aware of those circumstances, would anticipate the possibility that the person would feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.' Behaviours that are likely to constitute sexual harassment include: 'unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing'; 'inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated'; 'sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body'; 'sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended'; 'sexually explicit pictures, posters or gifts that made you feel offended'; 'repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates'; 'intrusive questions about your private life or physical appearance that made you feel offended'; 'sexually explicit emails or SMS messages'; 'inappropriate physical contact'; 'repeated or inappropriate advances on email, social networking websites or internet chat rooms'; 'inappropriate commentary, images or film of you distributed on some form of social media without your consent'; 'requests or pressure for sex, or other sexual acts'; and 'any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature (please specify)'.

25 Given the small number of postgraduate men reporting an experience of sexual harassment, details of their experience is not available.

Students commented:

> *We hear from the boys 'You dirty slut' … I think they think that it's just like common language… If you pick up on it, if you call it out, you're like too political, you know?*

> *[There are] events such as girls being harassed or worse by other College students [and] when walking home from parties.*

The Survey also highlighted the importance of bystander intervention in responding to and preventing unacceptable behaviour, including sexual harassment: 40% of Sancta Sophia College students surveyed reported that they have witnessed or observed sexual harassment since commencing at College.[26]

Furthermore, 4% of Sancta Sophia College women surveyed reported that they have experienced actual or attempted sexual assault since commencing at the College (on par with the experience of women across the five residential Colleges).[27] Most occurred during the academic year at a different University of Sydney college residence or grounds and student/s from a different University of Sydney college engaged in the behaviour. However, unlike other Colleges, two of the eight reported incidences of actual or attempted sexual assault occurred either at a different University campus or a private home, and involved individuals that were not University of Sydney College residents. All those who engaged in the behaviour were males only. A further 8% of surveyed students reported that they had witnessed or observed 'actual or attempted sexual assault' (on par with the results across the five residential Colleges).

Sancta Sophia College's policies addressing sexual misconduct are interwoven into the College's harassment policies found in the Code of Conduct. The Code provides a definition of sexual harassment, and includes examples of behaviours that constitute such harassment. These include 'sexual or suggestive remarks' and 'unwanted sexual propositions' as forms of verbal behaviour that could be considered harassment, and 'touching the sexual or other parts of someone else's body' and 'unnecessary physical contact such as pinching, patting, touching, kissing…against their will' as physical behaviour that could amount to harassment.[28]

While not a stand-alone policy, which is considered best practice, the policy has a number of positive attributes. It is easily accessible and includes very comprehensive definitions of harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying and discrimination and, as such, is a powerful education resource to inform students of the breadth of these behaviours. The Code of Conduct also includes guidelines and procedures for making a complaint, the investigation process and the possible outcomes for someone who engages in these behaviours and breaches the Code.

The policy does not refer to sexual assault. Rather it describes the prohibition of certain behaviours that would come within the scope of sexual assault. The Project Team considers it imperative that sexual misconduct policy statements clearly indicate zero tolerance towards sexual assault and that sexual assault be clearly defined.

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26   Of the 40% of Sancta Sophia students that reported that they had witnessed or observed sexual harassment, 22% reported that the subject of the sexual harassment was another Sancta College resident; 18% reported that the subjects included a Sancta Sophia College resident and a resident of another College; and 14% reported it was the resident of another College. The most common forms of sexual harassment witnessed or observed included 'sexually suggestive comments or jokes that could be offensive' (18%); 'inappropriate staring or leering that would be intimidating' (17%); 'unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing' (16%); 'inappropriate physical contact' (12%); 'sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body' (11%); 'requests or pressure for sex, or other sexual acts' (10%); 'intrusive questions about private life/physical appearance that could be offensive' (9%); and 'repeated/ inappropriate advances on email, social networking/chat rooms' (9%). Note, as students could select more than one category, individual categories may sum to more than the total.

27   Sexual assault was defined in the Survey as: 'Sexual assault occurs when a person is forced, coerced, tricked or intimidated into sexual acts against their will or without their consent, including when they have withdrawn their consent. It also includes any attempts to force, coerce, trick or intimidate a person into sexual acts against their will or without their consent. Sexual assault can also occur if you are incapacitated by alcohol or drugs and therefore unable to consent.'

28   Sancta College 2016, 'Code of Conduct' in *Student Guide*. Internal document.

2.11.2 Best practice for combatting sexual misconduct

Best practice standards for preventing and managing sexual misconduct have been established by international and Australian studies. Five key principles emerge:[29]

1. Residential colleges must adopt a whole-of-community **integrated and holistic framework for preventing and responding to sexual misconduct**.

2. The institution must have a **stand-alone zero-tolerance policy** about sexual misconduct which is clear, well-communicated and readily accessible. This should clearly articulate consequences for any breach.

3. **Survivors must be supported**, including through appropriate reporting options and trauma-informed professional support.

4. Appropriate **evidence-based education and training** must be provided for staff and for student leaders. Staff and student leaders should be trained in trauma and survivor-centred responses. Prevention education programs should be grounded in an understanding of gender, other identities and related power dynamics, as well as ethical relationships.

5. Institutions must **implement procedures to ensure transparency and disclosure, and conduct self-assessments to track policy efficacy**.

2.12 Disclosure and reporting

Literature on disclosure and reporting practices of college students identifies that students are generally cautious about telling someone, particularly someone in authority, if they have experienced unacceptable behaviour, especially sexual assault. These findings are consistent with the findings of the Survey of Sancta Sophia College students and with the insights arising from discussion groups and one-on-one interviews. Of the 28 students who reported experiencing sexual harassment since commencing at Sancta Sophia College, just under one-half sought assistance for the most recent incident, mainly from another College resident (who was not a Resident Assistant). Only one student formally reported the incident. Of the eight students who reported experiencing actual or attempted sexual assault since commencing at Sancta Sophia College, the majority sought support or assistance, mainly from another College resident (who was not a Resident Assistant), or friends and family outside of College. No students made a formal report. The main barriers to formal reporting both sexual harassment and sexual assault included the student thinking they could sort it out themselves or thinking they did not need help.

Highlighting the importance of bystander intervention in addressing sexual harassment, of Sancta Sophia College students who reported witnessing or observing sexual harassment, 55% stated that they took action as a result. Of those students, 38% talked to the target of the behaviour; 12% talked to the offender; and 12% spoke to a Resident Assistant.

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29 See, e.g., Culture of Respect 2017, *CORE Blueprint: A Strategic Roadmap for Addressing Campus Sexual Violence*; Leidig, M 1995, 'The continuum of violence against women: Psychological and physical consequences', *Journal of American College Health*, 40, pp. 149–155; MacDonald, P & Flood, M 2012, *Encourage. Support. Act!: Bystander Approaches to Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*, University of New South Wales; Australian Human Rights Centre 2017, *On Safe Ground: Strengthening Australian University Responses to Sexual Assault and Harassment*, p. 60.; and Our Watch 2017, *Putting the prevention of violence against women into practice: How to change the story*. End Rape on Campus has also developed a comprehensive model for building what it calls a 'survivor-centric policy' in End Rape on Campus Australia 2017, *Connecting the Dots: Understanding Sexual Assault in University Communities*; see also Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences 2016, 'Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment Policy and Procedures for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Harvard University', pp. 21–22; and Culture of Respect 2017, *CORE Blueprint: A Strategic Roadmap for Addressing Campus Sexual Violence*, pp. 31-44. For sample language and definitions of sexual misconduct, see White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault 2014, 'Sample Language and Definitions of Prohibited Conduct for a School's Sexual Misconduct Policy'; Center for Changing Our Campus Culture 2016, 'Addressing Gender-Based Violence on College Campuses: Guide to a Comprehensive Model', p. 21. See also Jewkes, R, Sen, P & Garcia-Moreno, C 2002, 'Sexual Violence' in Krug, EG, Dahlberg, LL, Mercy, JA, Zwi, AB & Lozano, R (eds.), *World Report on Violence and Health*, Geneva: World Health Organization; and DeGue S, Valle L, Holt MK, Massetti GM, Matjasko JL & Teten Tharp, A 2014, 'A systematic review of primary prevention strategies for sexual violence perpetration', *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 19:4, July–August, pp. 346–362.

A strong theme emerging from the discussions was whether students felt confident about the process for reporting at Sancta Sophia College. Some students expressed confidence in the process:

> *I would always go to my RA.*

> *[The Vice Principal] is so supportive so I would go to her.*

Others were concerned with issues of confidentiality and privacy, that if alcohol was involved the issue would be minimised, or that they would somehow be blamed:

> *There's not much privacy across all Colleges so I would be worried that if I reported something other people would know about it.*

> *I was too scared to report to staff because I felt it would just make my life more difficult and so just put up with it for the rest of the year.*

The Project Team has some concerns about the level of responsibility placed on RAs and their limited expertise in dealing with serious matters, such as sexual misconduct. Staff may also lack professional experience when serious disclosures are made, so it is vital that all first responders are properly trained and have a number of appropriate referral pathways for individuals seeking assistance. The first disclosure by a victim of sexual harassment, sexual assault or even hazing can be the most important and so it is critical that the first response is the right one. In any setting, including a College, an inadequate or even punitive response can often result in silencing and retraumatising victims. It can also prevent others from coming forward if they do not feel that they will receive a sensitive response.

Students in discussion groups and interviews lacked awareness of the University complaints system and counselling service. There was a view that they would use their personal or the College support network before reporting and seeking support from the University.

3. Conclusion

Sancta Sophia College is an important and impressive institution within the College and University of Sydney community. It has a rich and proud history and its graduates have contributed across a range of fields and disciplines to enhance life for Australians and for others around the world. While Sancta Sophia College nurtures the intellectual and cultural minds of its students, it also offers students spiritual growth and support through its Catholic foundation.

The Project Team was provided a deep and honest insight into Sancta Sophia College life. The Sancta Sophia College community has much of which it should be proud, including the commitment of its staff and student leaders; the involvement of its student body in rich extracurricular activities; its academic achievements; and the breadth and diversity of College life. In particular, the Project Team noted the deep sense of community, connectedness and belonging felt by students. This is core to a positive College experience.

In recent years, the Sancta Sophia College community has done much to strengthen its culture, focusing efforts on making the College diverse and inclusive. However, as with all long-established institutions, there remain some traditions and conventions that require renewal in order to provide a college culture where students continue to thrive. While all areas for action identified in the recommendations are critical areas for reform, the Project Team particularly notes the importance of a strong and rigorous election process for student leaders as an opportunity for focus. This election process must be one that consistently allows for students with the best leadership capabilities or potential to be selected.

The Project Team has no doubt that through its ongoing reforms, Sancta Sophia College will continue and enhance its position as a leading and influential College within the University of Sydney. It will be a role model for other Australian and international university colleges showcasing a number of best practices for creating residential cultures where all students thrive.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations build upon the promising strategies currently underway at Sancta Sophia College and the other Colleges. They are designed to ensure that those strategies are sustainable in the long term.

These recommendations are intended to be common across all Colleges, recognising that a cohesive and collaborative intercollegiate community will have a united response to culture, one that benefits individual Colleges, the University and in particular, the students.

The Project Team recognises that a number of recommendations have already been progressed one way or another by Sancta Sophia College and the other Colleges. It commends Sancta Sophia College and the other Colleges for taking proactive action in advance of the report. Where there has already been progress by a College in line with a particular recommendation, this progress is acknowledged in the individual College's report.

It is intended that Sancta Sophia College and the other Colleges receive the recommendations as either building on their own progress or as providing new and practical levers for reform that will ensure all students have a rich, rewarding and safe experience.

Principle 1: Successful and sustainable cultural renewal depends on strong and courageous leadership

Leaders set the tone of organisations.

The College leadership team plays a critical role in shaping standards and driving reform. The University of Sydney also plays a vital part in supporting the Colleges as they strengthen and renew their culture.

Within Colleges there are three tiers of leaders – the College Council, the staff leadership team and the student leaders. Each has important leadership functions – what they say and do has a profound impact on the culture of the College. Led by the Council, all three tiers of the College leadership must visibly commit to the cultural renewal journey. Council, staff and students should work collaboratively to ensure that the culture of their College is one where all students can thrive.

Student leaders can be extremely influential and in this regard are the Colleges' cultural ambassadors. Given this influence, it is imperative that student leaders are selected through a transparent and rigorous process and are supported by staff to develop their leadership skills and capacity. This process provides a role for the student body in electing student leaders while also ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place so that elected student leaders demonstrate leadership capability or potential.

Diverse leadership teams, including gender-diverse teams in co-educational/co-residential Colleges, allow for increased access to the best talent. This results in a diversity of thinking and improved decision-making compared to teams with no or limited diversity. A plethora of research confirms this. For this reason, it is important over time for co-educational/co-residential Colleges to work towards gender-balanced leadership teams.

Collective action is more powerful and sustainable than individual action. Collective action will also demonstrate to the College communities and the University of Sydney the strong commitment the Colleges have to evolving their culture and to addressing behaviours that are inconsistent with respectful and inclusive environments.

Leadership of the reform process

1. The recommendations contained in this report should be owned and championed by the College Council, Principal, staff and student leaders.

2. The Council should champion cultural reform. Council should regularly review and discuss cultural renewal at Council meetings and ensure adequate resources are allocated to progress the reform process.

3. To demonstrate their visible commitment to cultural renewal, the Principal and the incoming Senior Student, House Committee Executive, Members of the House Committee, the President and members of the Senior Common Room should develop and deliver a clear and strong written statement (signed by all) that articulates the importance of cultural renewal and its benefit to individual students and the College more broadly. This statement, disseminated widely internally and externally, should also:

   - Include strong messages about the College's zero tolerance to hazing and sexual misconduct as well as policies on alcohol misuse, harassment and damage to property.

   - Be reiterated and restated each year with incoming student leadership groups.

   - Be incorporated into orientation for first years and into student leadership training.

4. Recognising that collective action can be more powerful and sustainable than individual action, it is recommended that the Colleges adopt a cross-College approach and continue to work collaboratively to align and amplify efforts to achieve cultural renewal. This would include a standing agenda item on cultural renewal at the Heads of College meeting, including sharing best practice initiatives and problem-solving challenges.

5. To assess progress in relation to cultural renewal, the Colleges should readminister the Survey used in this Project, together with any appropriate modifications, every three years. The results of that Survey should be used to inform additional strategies that may be required to further strengthen and sustain a positive culture.

Student leadership

6. The principal role of student leaders should be to foster and champion a culture of inclusion, respect and safety. The Student Club/Senior Common Room Constitutions, charters, policies and role descriptions should reflect this.

7. To ensure that the College promotes and supports strong, inclusive and responsible student leadership, students and staff should, in collaboration, amend the current process for electing student leaders by:

   - Ensuring formal role descriptions for student leadership positions include responsibility as ambassadors of the College values and their obligations to uphold and model these values at all times. The Student Club/Senior Common Room Constitutions should ensure accountability and consequences for House Committee and Senior Common Room Committee members that breach their role as ambassadors.

   - Developing clear criteria for selection that includes candidates' demonstrated commitment to inclusion, respect and safety.

   - Ensuring candidates for leadership roles have the express support of the Principal in relation to their demonstrated ability to foster and champion a culture of inclusion, respect and safety.

   - Enhancing the transparency, anonymity and confidentiality of the voting process for students, by, for example, utilising an online process with an external provider.

   - Commencing the selection process in early Semester Two to allow proper planning, training, mentoring and leadership development for successful candidates.

   - Ensuring that in co-educational Colleges, over time a gender balance of student leadership teams is achieved including by:

     » Implementing a 40:40:20 rule for House Executive, House Committee and the Senior Common Room, which ensures that there is good gender balance at student leadership levels. The basis of this model is that 40% of leaders are men, 40% are women and 20% are either gender.

» Ensuring that the roles of Senior Student and President rotate on an equitable basis between male and female students. The Project Team recommends that the College considers a range of options to achieve this outcome, including (but not limited to): (a) rotating the role between male and female students each year; (b) over a five-year period applying the 40:40:20 rule; (c) structuring the candidate pool in such a way to ensure that neither male nor female can ever be in post for more than two years in succession; (d) electing male and female joint Senior Students and Presidents; (e) electing male and female joint Senior Students and Presidents, one of whom takes the Senior Student or President role and the other the Secretary role for the first six months, switching roles for the second half of the year.

» Ensuring that there is compulsory training for all elected student leaders, including (but not limited to) ethical leadership and decision-making, respectful relationships, leading diverse and inclusive teams, and bystander interventions.

Consideration should also be given to ongoing mentoring for elected student leaders by a member of College staff.

8. To enhance inclusion and equality within the student community, any practice that reinforces negative elements of student hierarchy should be reviewed with a view to modification.

Staff leadership

9. Council should continue to support the Principal and all staff to implement the recommendations and champion cultural reform, including by ensuring staff resources are adequate and by providing staff with access to additional training or skills development as needed.

10. To better reflect the leadership role and status of staff, the collective term for those who lead and manage the College should be changed from 'Administration' to either 'Staff', 'Executive Leadership' or 'Management'.

Principle 2: Inclusive institutions foster and celebrate diversity, respect and non-discrimination

An inclusive College and University is one where there is respect for all, where diversity is celebrated as a core feature of the institutions, and where fairness and equality underpin decision-making.

Culture is set by the behaviours and attitudes that an institution does not accept or tolerate.

Inclusive practice values the unique contribution that every student can bring to College and campus life and enables:

- The College to attract and retain a diverse student population that reflects the diversity of the University campuses.

- All students to participate fully in the life of the College and the University.

11. Colleges, in consultation with the University of Sydney, should develop targeted strategies to attract and retain a diverse population of students that reflects the University population and broader community.

12. Colleges should foster a culture of respect and fair play in all intercollege social and competitive interactions, by College Heads:

- Ensuring the intercollege code of conduct for students, including players and spectators of College sport and cultural activities, is grounded in respect for the inherent dignity of all.

- Eliminating and prohibiting all demeaning or degrading chants, songs and heckling.

- Enforcing appropriate penalties for any breach of the code, including suspending players from their team or spectators from watching events, who breach the code of conduct.

- Engaging with their University partners including University of Sydney Union (USU) and Sydney Uni Sport and Fitness (SUSF) to ensure a culture of respect and fair play is embedded in all activities.

- Exploring broader, non-competitive opportunities for positive interactions between the Colleges.

13. The University of Sydney and Colleges should work together to foster greater connection between Colleges and the broader campus community including by:

- Developing, in collaboration with the Colleges, and investing in a positive campaign that raises awareness among the University of Sydney campus community of the value of and strong contribution by the Colleges to campus life.

- Creating shared learning communities, including the creation of learning spaces within the Colleges, where College students and non-College students can come together for academic tutorials or other forums.

14. The University of Sydney should make it clear in its code of conduct that disrespectful, demeaning or unethical behaviours from University staff and other students towards College students and staff are strictly prohibited.

Principle 3: A lively, exciting and dynamic culture that also ensures the safety, dignity, health and well-being of students is critical to a thriving and progressive College

Colleges are places where students should feel 'at home' while being supported to engage in their university studies as well as the dynamic intellectual, cultural and social College community. Colleges should foster a lively and exciting culture that enhances students' overall university experience. In building such a culture, the safety, dignity, health and well-being of students must be paramount and risks must be minimised. Attitudes and behaviours that reflect the values of the College should be modelled and practiced at all times.

Orientation

15. 'O Week' should be renamed to signal a shift towards induction and welcome and away from the problematic connotations and expectations of the past.

16. Orientation should be closely overseen by College staff with assistance from Resident Assistants and select student leaders.

17. Each College should develop a policy that clearly articulates the purpose of orientation with a focus on induction and inclusion into the College and University community. The policy should be underpinned by respect and safety, inclusion and equity, and ethical leadership. Student leaders involved in the program should be required to sign a code of conduct that reflects the intent of the policy. The orientation policy should include or continue to include:

- The strict prohibition of practices that may be demeaning or place students at physical or emotional risk, including hazing.

- The inclusion of alcohol-free days (number to be determined by individual Colleges) during the period of orientation.

- Appropriate training in areas such as first aid, sexual misconduct, responsible consumption of alcohol, and the proper and ethical exercise of authority (student power).

- The requirement that appropriate events should be subject to a risk assessment. Other events in the academic year should also be subject to a risk assessment.

- The alignment, as far as practicable, with faculty-based activities and information sessions for new students.

Alcohol

18. The Heads of College should develop a common approach to alcohol harm minimisation. This approach should consider best practice interventions to reduce access and supply to and the demand for alcohol, and to reduce harm caused by alcohol. The Heads of College may also seek advice from an expert in harm minimisation and drinking patterns of the College age cohort to assist in developing this approach. In particular, the Project Team recommends:

- The positions of licensees and bar management should be held by qualified individuals or organisations independent of the Student Club and contracted by College staff.

- Commercial bar rates should be charged for all alcohol at College events and venues and as such the use of Student Club fees for the purchase of alcohol should be prohibited.

- A zero-tolerance approach is visibly practised for alcohol-related behaviour that causes disturbance, damage or harm to any student or property.

- The Student Club should be responsible for any non-accidental property damage, including alcohol-related property damage. This would include the cost of replacement or repair, where the alleged offender cannot be identified.

Once developed, the policy should be widely disseminated among the intercollege community with an explanation of its objectives.

Principle 4: Unacceptable and disrespectful attitudes and behaviours negatively impact on individuals, Colleges and the College community

The vast majority of students feel respected by their peers and have a strong sense of safety at their College. Some students however experience behaviours that make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. For some, particularly female students, experiences such as sexual harassment by other students and for a few, sexual assault, create significant distress and trauma.

All students in College have the right to feel and be safe and respected. Sustaining a culture of respectful relationships is key to a zero-tolerance approach to any unacceptable attitudes and behaviours.

19. Each College's policies on bullying and harassment should explicitly include provisions that prohibit hazing or any other behaviours that compromise students' physical or psychological safety and well-being. The provisions should include a clear definition and scope of hazing behaviours. In line with best practice approaches to the prohibition of hazing:

- The Colleges should provide comprehensive education about hazing.

- Victims must be supported, including through appropriate reporting options.

- Students who engage in hazing behaviours should be appropriately held to account.

20. Each College and the University of Sydney should develop, with guidance from an expert in sexual harassment, sexual assault and respectful relationships, a stand-alone policy that addresses sexual misconduct. The stand-alone policies of the Colleges and the University should be underpinned by best practice principles.

21. Each College's policy should articulate a zero-tolerance approach to sexual misconduct, a commitment to trauma-informed victim/survivor support and, where possible, to holding perpetrators to account. Specifically, the policy should:

- Expressly prohibit sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment and sexual assault) and make clear the consequences of breaching the policy.

- Define key terms and concepts illustrated with relevant examples in order to clarify the meanings of and behaviours that constitute sexual harassment, sexual assault and consent.

- Acknowledge the institution's responsibility to provide a safe and respectful environment for all.

- Articulate expectations that all members of the College community (including the College Council, staff and students) have a role in creating a safe and respectful environment.

- Provide clear details on processes for reporting and responding to sexual misconduct, including with specific names and contact details, and how to support someone who has experienced sexual assault.

- Provide clear guidance and a variety of options for survivors/victims to disclose experiencing sexual misconduct; to seek support, counselling and health services; and to identify procedures and timeframes for investigations.

- Ensure reports are dealt with sensitively and expeditiously and that the parties to a complaint are advised of progress and outcomes while ensuring confidentiality is maintained.

22. All relevant staff and Resident Assistants should undergo first responder training by an expert in trauma and survivor-centred approaches, to ensure they have the skills to respond sensitively and appropriately to a sexual assault or sexual harassment disclosure. Evidence-based prevention education and awareness about sexual assault and sexual harassment, and bystander interventions, should be provided to all students and relevant staff. All relevant staff and students should receive this education during their orientation and then refresher training each year they are at College.

23. In recognition of the psychological and emotional needs of some students, the College should provide and widely advertise referral pathways to specialist psychological support services for students, including for students who have experienced trauma. This support should also be offered to Resident Assistants to minimise the risk of vicarious trauma or distress that they may experience through their role.

Appendix A: Survey methodology and interpreting results

An online survey (the Survey) was administered to all students (over the age of 18 years) across the five residential Colleges between 18 May and 9 June 2017.

A total of 197 Sancta students participated in the Survey. Students were emailed an invitation to take part and received up to two reminders during the course of fieldwork. All Sancta students (over the age of 18 years) were invited to take part (n=281). Student details were passed onto the Social Research Centre from Sancta Sophia College for the purpose of the research. Students who took part were provided with a $10 e-voucher as an acknowledgement of the time taken to complete the Survey. The Survey took, on average, 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

The Survey attracted a 70% response rate[1] (on par with the 69% response rate across the five residential Colleges).

The aim of the Survey was to gather quantitative data on perceptions and experiences of students on a range of areas related to College life, including strengths of College life, and areas they find challenging. It also aimed to understand the prevalence of inappropriate behaviour, sexual harassment and bullying, and any patterns in the experience of particular groups of students, for example women and first year students.

The Survey provided an alternative avenue for Sancta students to engage with the Project and confidentially report on their views and experiences. The findings are reflected throughout this report.

The Survey instrument was developed by the Project Team in collaboration with the College Heads and the Social Research Centre – a highly regarded social research organisation based in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University. The Survey instrument built upon existing survey instruments including the National Sexual Harassment survey,[2] and the *Respect Now Always* survey,[3] and the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Personal Safety Survey*.[4] However, due the different population bases and variations in survey methodology, the results cannot be compared to these other surveys.

The Survey responses were weighted to ensure they reflected and were representative of the make-up of the College student population including by gender, undergraduate/postgraduate and year at College.

Approval was sought and granted to administer the Survey by the University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee (Ethics Approval Number: 2017/234). The Survey data was analysed by the Social Research Centre on behalf of the Project Team. A list of appropriate referrals and supports were provided to students who participated in the Survey.

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1   Response rate was defined as the number of interviews divided by the total number of students invited to take part.
2   Australian Human Rights Commission 2012, *Working Without Fear: Results of the Sexual Harassment National Telephone Survey*, Australian Government.
3   Australian Human Rights Commission 2017, *Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities*, Australian Government.
4   Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012, *4906.0 – Personal Safety, Australia*, 2012.

Interpreting the results

The table below presents margins of error associated with various survey estimates. These take into account both the achieved response rate (70%) and population of Sancta students (n=281). This table should be used to assist with the interpretation of results. For example, if 50% of Sancta students agree with a statement, we can be 95% confident that the true estimate is between 46% and 54%.

Survey estimate	Associated margin of error, at the 95% confidence level (p<.05)	Associated margin of error, at the 95% confidence level (p<.05)
	Sancta Sophia College	All Colleges
50%	+/- 3.8%	+/- 1.7%
40%/60%	+/- 3.7%	+/- 1.7%
30%/70%	+/- 3.5%	+/- 1.6%
20%/80%	+/- 3.0%	+/- 1.4%
10%/90%	+/- 2.3%	+/- 1.1%
5%/95%	+/- 1.6%	+/- 0.8%

Significance testing was done at the 95% confidence level (p<.05). Significant differences have been highlighted throughout the report.