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WE WILL NOT BE SILENT - CONSENT MATTERS TO USYD STUDENTS

The National Union of Students Women's Department, The University of Sydney Students' Representative Council and the University of Sydney Women's Collective are disappointed with the University of Sydney's approach to consent education and cynically using consent as a cheap PR stunt.

The Daily Telegraph's article today included comments from USyd students who view consent education as condescending and inconvenient. "This is a minority view in the student body" says Imogen Grant, President of USyd Students' Representative Council. "Asking for consent is not awkward or inconvenient. It encourages students to seek enthusiastic consent and ensure sex is a mutually positive experience."

The Human Rights Commission survey found that 9 percent of undergraduate students at the University in Sydney had been sexually assaulted in 2015/16. "53 USyd undergraduate students are raped every week" says Kate Crossin, NUS National Women's Officer, "The introduction of evidence based consent education has never been more important than right now."

However, the online module *Consent Matters* has been criticised heavily by student representatives at USyd. "The evidence is clear that one-off programs don't work in changing behaviour. So it seems as though the University is not following its own standards of best practice when it comes to selecting primary prevention programs" says Grant.

"The University should seek the assistance of international leaders in sexual violence prevention education, such as Professor Moira Carmody, and launch evidence based programs such as *Sex & Ethics*" says Grant. "The University is using *Consent Matters* over evidence based programs as it is cheaper and quickly assuages public criticism around sexual assault at university" says Grant.

Although all commencing students will have to take the module, they will only have to complete it before graduation. "This means that most students will never access the module in their first semester, but will instead access it a week before graduation as a 'tick the box' exercise" says

Kate Crossin, “These students will rush through the module without exposing themselves to any of the content, resulting in exacerbating the very attitudes we are trying to alter in the student body.”

The AHRC and HRC reports recommend that education programs be based on best practice and research. The National Union of Students and USyd Students’ Representative Council urge the University to closely review these recommendations and implement evidence based primary prevention such as those provided by the Full Stop Foundation.

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