



THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

VICE CHANCELLOR      PROFESSOR K. R. MCKINNON

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Deans and Department Heads  
**FROM:** K. R. McKinnon, Vice Chancellor  
**DATE:** July 24, 1990  
**RE:** Sexual Harassment

From time to time I am made aware of rumours of sexual harassment involving University personnel. A recent unconfirmed case brought to my attention has necessitated this reminder of our responsibilities.

The Campus Sexual Harassment Policy clearly states that such behaviour will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is illegal in education and employment under the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act and the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act. Employers may be held responsible for their own behaviour and the behaviour of the people they employ. Senior staff can be held responsible for sexual harassment in their departments, particularly if they fail to take appropriate action to prevent its occurrence or continuation. Please ensure that this message is conveyed to your staff.

Sexual harassment is defined as any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which would normally be considered offensive, that is unsolicited, unwelcome and unreciprocated. It can range from intimidating sexist comments to criminal sexual assault. Of particular concern in Universities are situations with students when positions of privilege are abused. For instance, normal social relationships among staff and students must never develop into closer individual relationships in which students may feel their academic progress depends upon compliance with the wishes of a staff member or members.

While we do have a grievance procedure which is designed to protect individuals from malicious accusations, should incidents of a criminal nature occur and we receive a formal complaint, we would have no recourse but to call in the proper authorities.

K. R. McKinnon,  
Vice Chancellor.